



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection



Federal Agency for
Nature Conservation

KLAUS TOEPFER FELLOWSHIP

FOR FUTURE LEADERS IN NATURE CONSERVATION FROM THE
COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, THE CAUCASUS
AND CENTRAL ASIA

FELLOWS 2023 – 2025



Imprint

Published by:

Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, BfN)

Konstantinstr. 110

53179 Bonn, Germany

Phone: +49 228 8491-0

E-mail: info@bfm.de

Internet: www.bfn.de

Authors:

Andrea Strauss, BfN

Bonn, July 2024

Klaus Toepfer Fellowship

The Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme is an extra-occupational training programme for emerging nature conservation leaders from Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. It is funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and implemented by its Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, in collaboration with IUCN, the CBD Secretariat, the Secretariat of the CMS, UNEP - WCMC and additional international partners.

The programme takes an integrated approach to the development of the personal capacity of early-career conservation professionals, by combining technical learning, management training and network development support. It focuses on individuals with outstanding leadership potential while promoting the participants' commitment and contribution to their home institutions.

The programme aims at enabling its fellows to work effectively in leading positions in the biodiversity conservation sector of their home countries, and to be actively involved in international conservation processes and networks. After graduation, fellows become part of a growing network of leaders in the field of nature conservation.

TARGET GROUP

The programme aims at emerging conservation leaders that have the support of their home organizations to attend the course, and a clear commitment to a career in their country of origin:

Early-career conservation professionals (Government, NGOs or Academia), from Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, who have at least three years of professional experience and are preferably not older than 35 years.

Programme Structure

The 18-month course consists of four ten-day training modules at the Federal Agency's International Academy for Nature Conservation, Isle of Vilm (including excursions to leading nature conservation institutions in Germany) or online, a transfer project with relevance to the work of the participants at their home institution, as well as tests, e-learning and additional assignments between the modules. Training language is English.

The modules combine joint learning on key conservation topics with management and leadership training:

Module 1, Informing Conservation, introduces types and distribution of biodiversity, trends, causes and root causes of biodiversity loss and conservation rationales. It furthermore discusses concepts of evaluating and monitoring biodiversity; information management and communication for biodiversity conservation. It also introduces strategic and project planning methodologies through the Conservation Standards.

Module 2, Conservation Economics and Financing, deals with conservation economics, resource mobilization and sustainable financing of conservation measures; fundraising, proposal writing and technical writing.

Module 3, Conservation Management in a Spatial Context, focuses on protected areas, national systems of protected areas, ecological networks and integrated land use planning. Trainings in engaging stakeholders and building collaborative partnerships and on facilitation as well as leadership complement the course.

Module 4, Conservation Governance and Policy, discusses decision making processes and structures relevant to conservation at the local, national and international level, as well as user-based approaches to resource conservation. In addition, negotiation and lobbying & advocacy skills for nature conservation are trained.

Transfer Projects and Mentors

As part of the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme, participants develop a transfer project with relevance to the work of their home institution. Throughout the programme, fellows continuously work on their transfer projects, applying the training received during the training modules. The transfer project, once implemented, is expected to improve the effectiveness of their organisation or a specific project. It should address a technical or management challenge that the home institution is facing and suggest solutions or innovative ways how to overcome this.

Participants receive assistance and technical input by trainers, mentors and the KTF team throughout the entire elaboration process. Highly experienced conservation professionals from the programme region and beyond provide guidance and subject-specific advice as mentors for the transfer project development.

Trainers and Excursions

The trainers of the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme are renowned professionals from leading nature conservation institutions in Europe and beyond. According to the thematic focus of the training modules, they provide technical input and train the Fellows in specific management competencies.

The application of case studies from nature conservation practice as well as the use of participatory and interactive training techniques, are crucial elements for the delivery of the course modules. Through excursions and site visits to key nature conservation institutions and sites in Germany, the fellows receive hands-on information on conservation practice in Germany and get the opportunity to discuss potential ways of cooperation and build networks.

PATRON



"I hope that what we see in the little island of Vilm is a kind of symbol, a signal of change; that we remain aware of the great diversity of creation and the great possibilities of nature both for their own sake and for the wellbeing of nine billion people"

Dr. Klaus Toepfer, the Former Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme UNEP, was the patron for the Fellowship.

Dr. Toepfer was a renowned environmental politician in Germany and a versatile environmental expert worldwide. After holding several political offices, from 1987 to 1994 he served as Environment Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany. In this position, he was one of the founding fathers of the Rio Summit of 1992, and started intensive bilateral cooperation between Germany and the newly emerging countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Following his political career in Germany, Dr. Toepfer was appointed Executive Director of the Environmental Programme of the United Nations (UNEP) for the time of 1998 to 2006.

As Environment Minister, Dr. Toepfer played an important part in establishing and opening the International Academy for Nature Conservation Isle of Vilm where the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme is being implemented. As patron of the programme, he was a motivating example of persistent environmental commitment and passionate dedication to address both national and global nature conservation challenges for the future nature conservation leaders.

Funding and Partners

The Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme is financed by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection with means of the Advisory Assistance Programme for Environmental Protection in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the

Caucasus and Central Asia. The Advisory Assistance Programme was launched in 2000 as an instrument for knowledge transfer to support the countries in the target region to introduce ambitious environmental standards.

For the fellows, participation in the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme is free of charge. The twenty participants per course receive free accommodation and full board at the training venue and during excursions, as well as a contribution towards their travel expenses.

As cooperation partners of the fellowship programme, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) support the conceptual design of the training modules, e.g., by providing technical input on current conservation topics and latest training methodologies, or by granting access to their extensive network of stakeholders in the nature conservation field.



Training Venue

Trainings are conducted at the International Academy for Nature Conservation on the Isle of Vilm of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), Germany, or online. Located in the South-east Rügen Biosphere Reserve, the 94 ha island is not only of exceptional natural beauty, but also an ideal venue for concentrated course work. Since its inauguration in 1990, the International Academy for Nature Conservation has provided a forum for the discussion of national and international nature conservation issues. Equipped with modern workshop and accommodation facilities, the academy has been a centre for dialogue between representatives of many different fields, including science and public administration, politicians and the private sector, associations and foundations.

Javokhir Abdukhalikov

**Age & Country of Origin**

born 1996 in Uzbekistan

University Degree

Diploma on Chemical-Technologies, Diploma on International Economic Relations

Field

International environmental affairs

Current Position

Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan, International Cooperation and Grants Department, Chief Specialist

Javokhir Abdukhalikov is currently working at the government authority responsible for implementing all multilateral environment agreements in Uzbekistan. His primary duties include resource mobilization and grant project management, and strengthening institutional cooperation with international environmental organizations and government institutions. He believes that the environment has no borders so he wants to contribute to a future for the Central Asian region with interconnected well-preserved ecosystem where people live in harmony with nature. Currently, he is a key member of the team hosting the 14th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Javokhir would like to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to improve his capacity for multilateral environmental agreements, stakeholder engagement and building nature conservation partnerships, to strengthen his negotiation skills and further develop his outreach and advocacy skills.

Iryna Burbylo

Age & Country of Origin

born 1993 in Ukraine

University Degree

MA in Management of Non-profit Organizations

Field

Management of environmental NGOs

Current Position

Subsidiary of the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) since 1858,
Project Officer



Iryna Burbylo is currently working as a project officer at the Ukrainian Carpathian Program of the Subsidiary of the Frankfurt Zoological Society since 1858, which works with 13 protected areas in the Carpathians towards adaptive management and better governance. Iryna's main duties include the coordination of various building projects to improve the infrastructure in these protected areas – from renovating an old palace into a protected area office to converting a car workshop for maintaining protected area vehicles and improving visitor and environmental education facilities. Therefore, the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme will be useful in enhancing her skills in transforming the technical input of experts into project objectives and implementation, as well as in planning and participatory management in protected areas, e.g. for upgrading or establishing educational facilities.

Iryna Burbylo was a part of the organization that launched the climate movement in Ukraine.

Barbora Chmelova

**Age & Country of Origin**

born 1988 in Czech Republic

University Degree

Master of Science in Agriculture and Development

Field

Biodiversity policy, Nature conservation and Governance

Current Position

Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic,
Department of Species Protection and Implementation of
International Commitments, Senior Policy Officer – EU Biodiversity

Barbora Chmelova currently serves as a Senior Policy Officer at the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic. In her role within the EU Biodiversity Conservation Unit, she is dedicated to supporting the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Her key responsibilities include overseeing the implementation of the Nature Restoration Law, coordinating the participatory process for developing the Nature Restoration Plan, and strengthening the EU Nature Directives and the Natura 2000 network in Czechia.

Barbora is passionate about participatory conservation governance and policy making and has extensive experience working with stakeholders around the globe. Barbora perceives the KTF as a fundamental step towards her professional development and an immense opportunity for greater networking and cooperation across regions. Through the programme, she hopes to broaden her knowledge of the global biodiversity policy and instruments for nature conservation, as well as strengthening good governance for benefits of nature and people.

Dunja Delić Božić

Age & Country of Origin

born 1988 in Bosnia and Herzegovina

University Degree

Master of Environmental Sciences

Field

Environmental Impact Assessment, Environmental Management, Protected Areas

Current Position

Freelance at Wise for Nature – Nature Conservation Consultancy



Dunja Delić Božić is currently working as a freelance conservationist, focusing on nature conservation in the Balkan region. The development of this region puts nature at risk, as the procedures to protect natural resources are mostly not sufficiently advanced and most countries place very few areas under state protection.

Given the strong and rapid development in the renewable energy sector, a better understanding of its impact on biodiversity in the Balkans is very important, and improving environmental impact assessment procedures is a must. Dunja is working to improve these procedures, mainly by working with stakeholders on guidelines and education.

Being part of KTF programme will greatly improve her skills in approaching decision-makers, and give her more insight into best ways of advocacy for nature conservation within other sectors in the Balkan region.

Anastazija Dimitrova

**Age & Country of Origin**

born 1992 in North Macedonia

University Degree

Master of Science in Sustainable Agriculture

Field

Sustainable forestry, Afforestation and Reforestation

Current Position

Hans Em Faculty of Forest Sciences, Landscape Architecture and Environmental Engineering, Research Associate

Anastazija Dimitrova is a Research Associate at the Hans Em Faculty of Forest Sciences, Landscape Architecture and Environmental Engineering, with an interdisciplinary background in forestry, sustainable agriculture, and applied plant biology. At the Department of Seed Science and Forest Stands, her work is focused on research, teaching and projects development that aim to support the sustainable forest establishment and management in North Macedonia. She is particularly interested in exploring opportunities for combined approaches, co-creation and cooperation for climate-resilient forests establishment.

Anastazija expects to gain practical and applicable knowledge about conservation during the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme, which she hopes to apply in her future work, both through project management and sustainable policy recommendations. She also wants to use the opportunity to expand her network with the other fellows and lay the seeds for future collaborations.

Mihaela Fratila

Age & Country of Origin

born 1980 in Romania

University Degree

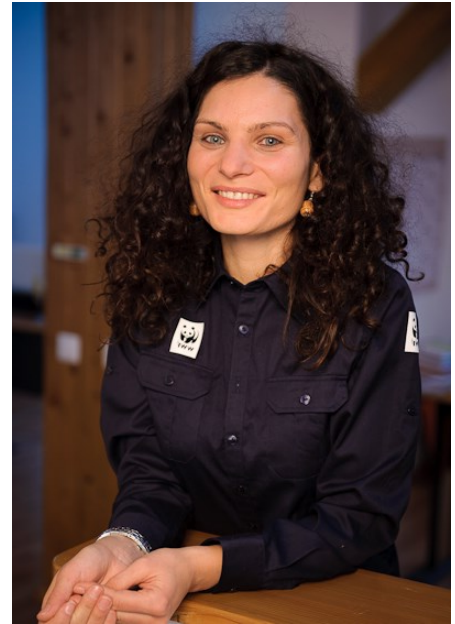
MA in Law and Sociology

Field

Legal aspects of conservation

Current Position

WWF Romania, Sustainable Development Expert & Project Manager



Mihaela Fratila started her professional experience as a volunteer and later as an employee at WWF Romania, having expertise in legislation and public procurement. She transitioned her work focus to sustainable development and food policy, coordinating work on agriculture and farming practices. Mihaela is now exploring the role of project management in an organisation and believes that at this stage of her career she needs to gather more information and knowledge about conservation practices, socio-ecological systems, economic and financial models in other protected areas.

In this context, she would like to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to acquire more knowledge about technical and management aspects of protected areas. Contacts with other conservationists will help her to broaden the scope of networking, to better disseminate her activities of her organization and perhaps to introduce new ideas and concepts for effective measures that she will implement.

Jonáš Gaigr

**Age & Country of Origin**

born 1997 in Czech Republic

University Degree

Master in Science in Zoology

Field

Biodiversity Monitoring

Current Position

Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic,
zoologist & data analyst

Jonáš Gaigr is currently working as a zoologist and data analyst at the Department of Biodiversity Monitoring of the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, a governmental body established to protect and conserve nature and landscape on the territory of the Czech Republic. His main duty is to develop a semi-automatic system for assessing the status of species and habitats within the Natura 2000 network in Czechia. This includes the monitoring and assessment of target characteristics as well as the analysis of the fulfilment of management plans.

In this context, he would like to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to improve his understanding of both adaptive and evidence-based conservation practices, prioritization of actions, and negotiations with stakeholders to improve the efficiency of protected areas management.

Jonáš is also currently setting up an NGO working on protected area management, ecosystem restoration and biodiversity monitoring.

Martina Hervat

Age & Country of Origin

born 1982 in Croatia

University Degree

Master of Marine Biology and Ecology

Field

Management of Protected Areas, Marine Protected Area Networking, Ecological Restoration

Current Position

Public Institution Brijuni National Park, Senior Expert Advisor



Martina Hervat is currently working as a senior expert advisor for nature protection at Brijuni National Park in Croatia. Her main duties include the evaluation and improvement of the conservation status of habitats and species in the marine and coastal area and ecological restoration project development. Furthermore, Martina is coordinating the Croatian Marine Protected Area Network and is actively engaged in strengthening the cooperation of managers at the Mediterranean level on key conservation challenges.

In this context, she would like to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to enhance her understanding of international nature conservation policy, science, and management through engaging with renowned experts, while simultaneously strengthening her proficiency in the field of international biodiversity. Moreover, she anticipates the invaluable opportunity to exchange perspectives and gain fresh insights from peers hailing from diverse countries, thereby broadening her horizons and nurturing innovative ideas for future conservation endeavors.

Volha Kaskevich

**Age & Country of Origin**

born 1985 in Belarus

University Degree

MA in Industrial ecology and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

Field

Natural Sciences and Engineering; Geosciences

Current Position

Estonian University of Life Sciences, Junior Researcher

Currently serving as a Junior Researcher at the Estonian University of Life Sciences, Volha Kaskevich specializes on landscape management, specifically focusing on the assessment of the potential of natural ecosystems on the Estonian coast. Volha is actively involved in scientific research on coastal wetlands, and her work centers around the concept of Blue-Green Infrastructure and its role in land-use evaluation. She employs remote sensing and GIS applications for mapping, assessment, and mitigation of coastal ecosystems.

Volha seeks to enhance her leadership potential and management capacities through the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme, aiming to develop customized solutions utilizing geospatial tools for effective and sustainable ecosystem management.

Before her current position, she founded the public organization Bahna in 2013, dedicated to the sustainable management of natural resources, wildlife protection, and conservation. Volha has also been involved in international conservation projects, advocating for wildlife conservation and education.

Nana Khelkhelaury

Age & Country of Origin

born 1993 in Georgia

University Degree

MA in Environmental Protection Management and Policy

Field

Management of Protected Areas

Current Position

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Protected Areas Policy Division, Consultant



Nana Khelkhelaury is currently working as a consultant at the Protected Areas Policy Division, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. Her main duties include Participation in a coordination of the project on updating Georgia's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and a project on Biosphere Reserves as model regions for sustainable development – capacity development for coordinated and effective management of the Three Alazani Rivers Biosphere Reserve in Georgia. She contributes to the development of legislation documentation, environmental strategies and policy documents.

In this context, Nana Khelkhelaury would like to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to improve her technical and management capacities, to gain knowledge and to develop her expertise in nature conservation. She hopes that participation in this programme will be helpful for sharing international experience and for building partnerships with colleagues from different countries.

Marija Lekić



Age & Country of Origin
born 1987 in Montenegro

University Degree
Master of Science in Ecology

Field
Advocacy, Communication and
Education for Nature Conservation

Current Position
NGO Center for Protection and Research of Birds, Head of the
program for advocacy, communication, and education

Marija Lekić is currently working as the Head of the Programme for Advocacy, Communication and Education at the Center for Protection and Research of Birds (BirdLife Montenegro). Her main duties include coordination of the work on many projects tackling areas of advocacy for nature conservation, mostly combating illegal bird killing, monitoring of negotiation procedure under Chapter 27 of the EU accession process, and implementation of activities for the protection of wetland areas in Montenegro.

She would like to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to strengthen her management capacities and improve her knowledge of strategic planning, sustainable conservation financing and fundraising. Moreover she wants to use this opportunity to gain insight into the situation regarding nature conservation on the international level and also network with other fellows and alumni.

Marija received the NGO Green Home Award for Excellence as the best student in the graduate program of Biology.

Andrijana Mićanović

Age & Country of Origin

born 1994 in Montenegro

University Degree

Master of Science in Ecology

Field

Wildlife Research and Conservation

Current Position

Montenegrin Ecologists Society project manager & researcher; Environmental Protection Agency in Montenegro, part-time expert for Natura 2000



Andrijana Mićanović is currently working as a biodiversity researcher at the Montenegrin Ecologists Society and coordinates projects related to endangered species and habitat conservation. She also cooperates with other NGOs, scientists, national authorities, and other stakeholders to initiate or improve the management and protection of endangered species and habitats. In addition, she is included in the process of mapping and establishing the Natura 2000 ecological network.

Therefore, she applied for Klaus Toepfer Fellowship to gain international experience and knowledge on biodiversity conservation as well as management of protected areas which can be applied and integrated at national level.

She plans to apply knowledge as part of the governing body of one protected area or as someone who will coordinate efforts to manage endangered species and habitats, the implementation of action plans for endangered species and habitats or to work on the development and implementation of communication strategies of protected areas.

Mirzonazar Mirzoev

**Age & Country of Origin**

born 1987 in Tajikistan

University Degree

Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering

Field

Nature Conservation in Tajikistan

Current Position

Tajikistan Nature Foundation TNF, Director

Mirzonazar, or Mirzo, started his career as a conservationist at the Association of Nature Conservation Organizations of Tajikistan, where he developed conservation tourism and managed a CEPF project for several years. During his work as a project manager and conservation tourism coordinator, Mirzo achieved sound conservation results and became passionate about wildlife, specifically birds. Under the guidance of his peers and leadership, he established a bird club in Tajikistan and coordinates it to this day.

Mirzo has recently taken a leadership role at the Association of Nature Conservation Organizations of Tajikistan which has now rebranded itself as Tajikistan Nature Foundation. Mirzo is motivated and excited to continue his predecessors' remarkable conservation efforts in this new role. The Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme will enable him to improve his technical and managerial skills to achieve his goals.

Niloufar Raeesi Chahartaghi

Age & Country of Origin

born 1992 in Iran

University Degree

Master of Science in Conservation Science

Field

Sustainability, Participatory Conservation

Current Position

Head of Sustainability at Sunich Group



Niloufar Raeesi is currently serving as the Head of Sustainability at Sunich Group, a leading Food & Beverage holding company in Iran. In her role, she is responsible for developing and implementing sustainability strategies across the group, creating policies that drive the company's growth while ensuring adherence to social and environmental responsibilities. Her efforts are focused on promoting sustainable practices throughout the organization and enhancing the group's reputation for environmental stewardship.

Niloufar seeks to leverage the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to deepen her expertise in innovative financing instruments, negotiation and advocacy, and biodiversity conservation. She is particularly keen on strengthening her leadership skills, enhancing decision-making processes, and learning advanced methods for evaluating and monitoring biodiversity.

She has previously been awarded the prestigious Chevening Scholarship for her master's degree and has led significant conservation projects in Iran, including collaborative efforts with local NGOs to study and protect endangered species like the Persian leopard.

Gulshad Shagiakhmetova



Age & Country of Origin
born 1982 in Uzbekistan

University Degree
Master of Biology

Field
Management of Protected Areas

Current Position
Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate
Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan,
Specialist on Protected Areas.

Gulshad Shagiakhmetova is currently Specialist on Protected Areas at the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Her responsibilities include the coordination of scientific research, ecological education and ecotourism activities in protected areas and the provision of methodological and practical assistance.

Therefore, she is interested in participating in the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship in view of obtaining international experience on the management of protected areas and biodiversity conservation for integration at the national institutional level.

Furthermore, Gulshad Shagiakhmetova is also the person in charge of implementing the UNESCO “Man and Biosphere” program and the UNESCO World Heritage Convention within the competence of the Committee.

Kenzhekan Sultanbaeva

Age & Country of Origin

born 1988 in Kyrgyzstan

University Degree

Master of Arts in NGO Management

Field

Management of NGOs

Current Position

Ilbirs Foundation Public Fund, Project manager



Kenzhekan Sultanbaeva is currently a project manager at the Ilbirs Foundation, a snow leopard conservation NGO in Kyrgyzstan. The foundation focuses on preserving biodiversity by encouraging and supporting local communities in the country's high mountain regions to conserve their natural resources and develop sustainable livelihoods.

Kenzhekan holds a Master of Arts in NGO Management and has completed the Conservation Leadership Program, which has enhanced her expertise in project management and grant coordination. She is responsible for successfully implementing projects in pilot areas across the country, with a strong emphasis on community engagement.

In her role, Kenzhekan collaborates closely with local communities to develop Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and climate-smart conservation interventions for snow leopard conservation. Her expertise in linguistics, combined with her background in NGO management, equips her to address the diverse challenges of conservation and community development.

To further enhance her technical and management skills, Kenzhekan aspires to participate in the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme. This opportunity would allow her to promote nature-friendly and socially acceptable ecological management concepts that provide sustainable economic benefits to local residents.

Madina Tauykelova

**Age & Country of Origin**

born 1993 in Kazakhstan

University Degree

Bachelor of Ecology, Environmental Management and Law

Field

Wildlife Conservation and combatting illegal wildlife trade

Current Position

Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of
Kazakhstan, Project coordinator

Madina Tauykelova is currently working as a Project coordinator at the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, one of the largest public organization in Kazakhstan. Her main duties include the project management on combatting illegal wildlife trafficking in Kazakhstan, supporting capacity-building training to law enforcement officers, participating in research and field work on wildlife.

She would like to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to improve her skills that will strengthen the impact of her work in managing projects that protect and restore wildlife and knowledge and skills in understanding conservation strategies and policies and in general to increase her problem-solving and networking abilities.

Alona Varukha

Age & Country of Origin

born 1992 in Ukraine

University Degree

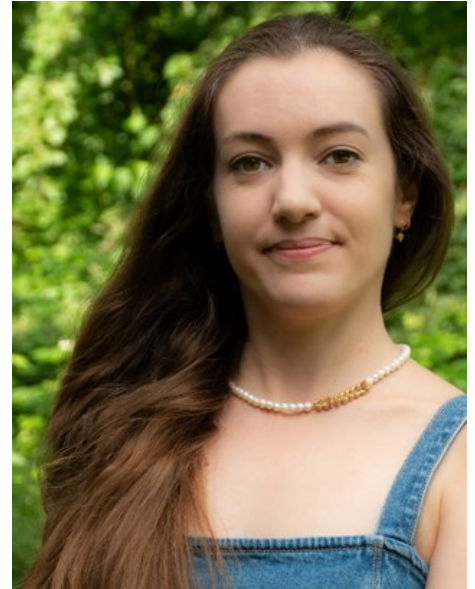
Master of Science in Geography

Field

Management of Protected Areas

Current Position

Chornobyl Radiation and Ecological Biosphere Reserve,
Researcher



Alona Varukha is currently working as a researcher at the Chornobyl Radiation and Ecological Biosphere Reserve, one of the largest protected areas in Ukraine. Her main duties include the development of the scientific capacity of the relevant department, conducting research and publishing the results; providing scientific justification of nature protection management. In this context, she would like to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to improve her management capacities for promoting more efficient conservation management approaches and technics in the reserve and in the country.

Alona Varukha is a stipendiate of Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU) CEE Fellowship Programme. She was awarded Andriy Novikov Prize, in 2021, for the Promotion of Open Data and Open Access to Natural History Collections in Ukraine.

Mergen Yusupov

**Age & Country of Origin**

Born 1990 in Turkmenistan

University Degree

Master of Science in International Economic Relations / Economic Theory

Field

International relations, Policy

Current Position

Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, Deputy
Head of Department on Coordination of
International Environmental Cooperation and Projects

Mergen Yusupov is currently working as Deputy Head of the Department on Coordination of International Environmental Cooperation and Projects of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan. His main duties include international relations in the field of environmental protection, and the coordination of international projects in this field. In this context, he would like to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to improve his technical and management skills for designing, implementing and coordinating projects in the field of environmental protection.



Federal Agency for Nature Conservation

International Academy for Nature Conservation

Website: <https://www.bfn.de/klaus-toepfer-fellowship>

Contact: ktf@bfn.de