



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Climate Action,
Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety



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 2026 – 2027



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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, Climate Action, 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, that have the support of their home organizations to attend the course, 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.

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

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 programme 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, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety 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. Located in the Southeast 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.

Mohammad Abdel Latif Alaqra'



AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1998 in Jordan

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Bachelor of Science in Biology

FIELD

Ecological & Ornithological Research

CURRENT POSITION

The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature,
Ecological Researcher

Mohammad Abdel Latif Alaqra' is currently working as an Ecological Researcher at the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). RSCN is a non-governmental organization that establishes, manages, and advocates for a national network of protected areas to conserve Jordan's biodiversity and support local community development, while fostering broader public engagement in environmental protection within Jordan and neighboring countries. Mohammad's main responsibilities include assessing the status of biodiversity -particularly birds- across Jordan, especially within protected areas, as well as serving as a scientific reference point for other departments by providing the data, analysis, and guidance needed to support their decision-making and conservation initiatives.

In this context, he aims to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to strengthen his technical and leadership capacities in ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation, enabling him to design and implement more effective strategies that support sustainable land use and enhance long-term ecological resilience in his region.

Tina Anić

AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1995 in Bosnia and Herzegovina

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Science in Biology

FIELD

Biodiversity Assessment and Conservation

CURRENT POSITION

Enova d.o.o. Sarajevo, Strategic Operations Manager



Tina Anić is a biodiversity consultant at Enova, based in Sarajevo and working throughout the Western Balkans. Over the past five years, she has worked at the interface of biodiversity assessments, protected area planning and environmental consulting, supporting infrastructure projects financed by international financial institutions (IFIs) and nature conservation initiatives. In addition to her technical work, she has had the opportunity to lead consultations, workshops and stakeholder engagement and contribute to sustainable and green cities initiatives. Through her work to date, she has realized that conservation can be easily undermined by poor planning, limited enforcement and poor management, highlighting the need for stronger strategies and decision-making processes that integrate biodiversity considerations. Tina aims to lead conservation initiatives, strengthen institutional and public capacities, and translate science into practical action while enabling development.

As a Klaus Toepfer Fellow, Tina looks forward to applying new knowledge on leadership, governance, and EU policy to advance inclusive, science-based conservation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Islam Annamamedov



AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1993 in Turkmenistan

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Bachelor of Business Administration

FIELD

Management of Conservation projects

CURRENT POSITION

Program manager at Conservation X Labs & Team Bars
Turkmenistan

Islam Annamamedov currently works as a Program Manager for Conservation X Labs and Team Bars Turkmenistan. In 2019, he made a decisive career shift from the banking sector to conservation, driven by a lifelong passion for nature and the conviction that environmental protection delivers greater value to society. In a short time, he progressed to managing diverse conservation projects and co-founded a team that has successfully implemented several initiatives.

In this context, Islam aims, by participating in the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship, to hone his skills in international policy, protected area management and enhance strategies for local community engagement in conservation. He views the program as a unique opportunity to learn from world-leading experts and to integrate international best practices into his work. Equally important to him is the networking potential of the fellowship. Islam believes that connecting and collaborating with other promising professionals from the region will foster meaningful partnerships and bear fruit for future regional environmental cooperation.

Aynura Babaliyeva

AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1999 in the Russian Federation

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Bachelor of Science in Geography and Environment

FIELD

Geographic Information Systems and Mapping

CURRENT POSITION

WWF Azerbaijan - Conservation team, GIS Officer



Aynura Babaliyeva is currently working as a Geographic Information System (GIS) Officer at WWF Azerbaijan, a branch office of WWF International. Her main duties include developing and maintaining GIS databases on key habitats and species distributions, as well as conducting remote sensing and spatial modeling to identify priority intervention areas for conservation. Aynura also works as a Senior GIS Specialist at the State Tourism Agency of Azerbaijan, where she is part of the Reserves Management Center, which develops UNESCO Cultural Heritage Site files for the country.

She sees the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme as a transformative step in her career—an opportunity to grow from a technically skilled specialist into a conservation leader capable of bridging data, policy, and practice to advance biodiversity conservation in her region.

Gantulga Bayandonoi



AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1987 in Mongolia

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Ph.D. in Zoology

FIELD

Wildlife Research and Conservation,
Management of conservation projects &
programmes

CURRENT POSITION

WWF-Mongolia, Biodiversity manager

Gantulga Bayandonoi is currently working as Biodiversity manager at WWF-Mongolia, the largest non-governmental conservation organization in Mongolia. His main duty is planning and implementing conservation programmes for the endangered wildlife in Mongolia. His work involves developing conservation projects, securing funding, managing a range of biodiversity conservation projects and initiatives.

In this context, he would like to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to deepen his expertise in environmental governance and policy, strengthen his leadership skills, enhance his understanding of global biodiversity framework and conservation instruments. He seeks to apply what he learnt to advance more effective biodiversity conservation efforts in Mongolia.

Irina Grigoryeva

AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1994 in Kazakhstan

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Science in Landscape Ecology
and Nature Conservation

FIELD

Wildlife Conservation and Human-Wildlife Conflict

CURRENT POSITION

Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, Specialist



Irina Grigoryeva is currently working as a specialist at the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, one of the largest public organizations in Kazakhstan. Her main duties include supporting the management and optimization of rangeland ecosystems to harmonise nature conservation and agricultural development objectives, and contributing to human-wildlife conflict mitigation in Kazakhstan. In this field, she builds cooperation with international NGOs, scientists, national authorities, and other stakeholders to contribute effectively to rangeland management. In addition, she regularly participates in wildlife research and fieldwork.

Therefore, she has applied for the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to further strengthen her management capacities for effective collaboration with government and local communities to protect nature, and to enhance her ability to engage in collaborative research and fieldwork.

Maria Gurscaia

AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1990 in Republic of Moldova

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master in Applied Cultural Sciences

FIELD

Rangering for Nature Conservation and
Protected Areas Management

CURRENT POSITION

Secretary in the Board of the European Ranger Federation (ERF) and ERF Project Coordinator



Maria Gurscaia is currently acting as the European Ranger Federation Secretary and as Coordinator of the “European Female Rangers Network” and “Rangers’ Knowledge & Competences Database” projects. These projects aim to networking and exchange among rangers and to increase the number of women in the ranger profession – because more rangers, especially from local communities, are crucial to achieving the “30 by 30” CBD target. In 2025, Maria was part of the core organizational team of the 6th European Ranger Congress that brought together more than 250 rangers from 33 countries. At the congress, Maria gave a speech on Natural & Cultural Heritage Interpretation as a tool for greater involvement of local communities in nature conservation.

Participation in the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme will help Maria better understand existing nature conservation strategies and policies so that she can advocate more efficiently at the European level for the well-being of rangers and for better nature conservation in her home country Moldova.

Levon Harutyunyan



AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1993 in Armenia

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Science in Nature Protection
and Natural Resources Management

FIELD

Biodiversity Conservation, Ornithology

CURRENT POSITION

Research Assistant and PhD student at the
Scientific Center of Zoology and Hydroecology

Levon Harutyunyan is a conservation biologist with experience in wildlife research and project coordination. His work includes conservation planning and implementation, ornithological research, and coordination of biodiversity surveys in natural ecosystems, including protected areas, as well as activities related to a bird rehabilitation, ranger trainings on biodiversity data collection. He led the first systematic national assessment of bird electrocution threats in Armenia together with the country's largest energy company, identifying high-risk infrastructure and proposing mitigation solutions. His research experience spans Armenia, Georgia, Russia, Bulgaria, and Saudi Arabia, involving bird monitoring and tagging. Levon co-founded a community-based environmental NGO, promoting biodiversity awareness and youth engagement.

Through the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship, he aims to strengthen his leadership in strategic planning, conservation management, and resource mobilization to support effective nature conservation in Armenia and the region.

Inga Jurin

AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1993 in Croatia

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Economics in Entrepreneurship in Tourism

FIELD

Sustainable Development & Community-based
Environmental Management

CURRENT POSITION

Dalmatian Islands Environment Foundation, Executive Director



Inga Jurin is currently serving as the Executive Director of the Dalmatian Islands Environment Foundation. She leads initiatives that integrate environmental conservation with the needs of island communities. Drawing on her academic background in Culture and Tourism and Entrepreneurship in Tourism, she specializes in developing sustainable tourism models tailored to island contexts. Her professional experience in the NGO sector has strengthened her ability to design and manage projects that support both ecological preservation and community wellbeing.

Through the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme, Inga aims to further enhance her technical and leadership capacities to advance resilient, community-rooted environmental solutions across the Adriatic region.

Bakhromjon Kholkhujayev



AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1992 in Uzbekistan

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Science in Environmental Protection

FIELD

Environmental Protection

CURRENT POSITION

Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan, head of department

Bakhromjon Kholkhujayev currently serves as the Head of the Department for Forestry, Biodiversity and Ecotourism Policy of Uzbekistan. He is responsible for developing and implementing national policies aimed at sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, and the promotion of ecotourism. His work focuses on improving the ecological resilience of landscapes, expanding protected areas, and strengthening interagency cooperation on nature conservation. Bakhromjon closely collaborates with international organizations to introduce best practices, support restoration programmes, and enhance scientific research for effective decision-making. He believes that well-preserved ecosystems are essential for human well-being and climate resilience, and he is committed to advancing policy solutions that harmonize economic development with environmental protection.

Bakhromjon sees the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme as an important opportunity to deepen his knowledge of multilateral environmental agreements, enhance his negotiation and leadership skills, and improve his ability to engage stakeholders at national and international levels. He aims to use the acquired expertise to strengthen Uzbekistan's contribution to regional and global biodiversity conservation efforts.

Burcu Lacin Alas

AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1992 in Türkiye

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Science in Wildlife Ecology

FIELD

Wildlife Conservation, Biodiversity
Management, and Environmental Policy



CURRENT POSITION

Expert Wildlife Biologist – General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks,
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Burcu Lacin Alas is currently working as a Biologist at the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks in Türkiye. She is responsible for developing, reviewing, and supervising conservation and wildlife management and development plans to ensure the protection of species and habitats in accordance with national and international biodiversity frameworks. She provides expertise on environmental permit applications for major infrastructure projects and coordinates conservation initiatives with local communities.

Through the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme, Burcu aims to deepen her understanding of international conservation policy and governance, strengthen her leadership and policy-making skills, and engage with experts and peers to develop collaborative, science-based strategies for biodiversity conservation.

Marija Lekić



AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1987 in Montenegro

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Science in Ecology

FIELD

Nature Conservation

CURRENT POSITION

NGO Center for Protection and Research of Birds,
Head of the programme for advocacy,
communication and education

Marija Lekić is currently working as the Head of the Programme for Advocacy, Communication and Education at the NGO Center for Protection and Research of Birds (BirdLife Montenegro). In this role, she coordinates projects focused on improving protection of wetlands in Montenegro, with a strong emphasis on combating illegal bird killing. Marija received the NGO Green Home Award for Excellence as the best student in the graduate program of Biology.

Through the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme, Marija aims to further develop her leadership and management skills, and strengthen her expertise in strategic planning, sustainable conservation financing, and fundraising. She also seeks to gain deeper insight into international nature conservation efforts and build a strong professional network with other fellows and programme alumni.

Belma Nahić

AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1996 in Bosnia and Herzegovina

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Science in Biology - Ecology

FIELD

Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Area Governance

CURRENT POSITION

Forestry and Environmental Action (FEA), Project Coordinator



Belma Nahić works as Project Coordinator at Forestry and Environmental Action (FEA), a leading environmental NGO in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her work focuses on biodiversity conservation, ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change, and the sustainable management of protected areas. She has coordinated national and transboundary projects, led the development of sustainable management and valorization studies for future protected areas, and contributed to scientific research on aquatic ecosystems. Belma has been actively engaged in the science-policy interface, participating in the IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) Youth Capacity-Building Workshop in Namibia, the TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) Flagship Workshop on Biodiversity Policy, and the CBD Regional Dialogue on Biodiversity Monitoring and Reporting for Central Asia and Eastern Europe, representing the Global Youth Biodiversity Network on behalf the CEE region.

Through the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme, she aims to further strengthen her leadership and policy capacities to advance climate-resilient conservation governance and integrate nature-based solutions into the management of protected area management.

Mara Ioana Nilca



AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1991 in Romania

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Science in Geomorphology and
Cartography with Survey Elements

FIELD

Freshwater Restoration and GIS-based Planning

CURRENT POSITION

WWF Romania, Freshwater Expert

Mara Nilca works as a Freshwater Expert at WWF Romania, where she contributes to projects focused on restoring and reconnecting freshwater ecosystems and implementing Nature-based Solutions in the Danube Basin. Her work combines GIS-based analysis and planning with applied restoration design, monitoring and stakeholder engagement. With her background in geomorphology and environmental sciences, she is particularly interested in how data-driven approaches can enhance restoration planning and decision-making.

Through the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme, she aims to strengthen her leadership and project design skills in order to more effectively integrate spatial data management into freshwater conservation and planning efforts.

Dossymzhan Nurmagambetov

AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 2003 in Kazakhstan

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Bachelor in Wildlife Management and Fur Farming

FIELD

Ecology



CURRENT POSITION

Specialist of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Dossymzhan Nurmagambetov is a conservation and environmental policy professional from Kazakhstan. He is working on issues related to biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of natural resources and the implementation of international environmental agreements at national level.

In this context, he would like to use the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme to further develop his technical, leadership and project management skills. He is particularly interested in learning about effective approaches to protected area management, species conservation and regional cooperation, and in applying this knowledge in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. He hopes to contribute to better-informed decision-making and more ambitious conservation initiatives in his home country and the region.

Aida Papikyan



AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1993 in Armenia

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Science in Sustainable Resource
Management

FIELD

Management of Wildlife and Protected Areas

CURRENT POSITION

American University of Armenia (AUA) Acopian Center
for the Environment, researcher & project officer

Aida Papikyan is a researcher and project officer at the AUA Acopian Center for the Environment, a private university in Armenia. Her work focuses on coordinating citizen science initiatives that promote water literacy and environmental advocacy, as well as developing partnerships and projects related to protected and conserved area management in Armenia and Europe. Aida previously received a DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) scholarship to pursue her Master's degree at the Technical University of Munich. Her proposed panel, "Measuring the Intangible: The Social Impact of Citizen Science on Participants and Communities," selected for the ECSA 2026 Conference, received one of the highest numbers of abstract submissions and will advance methodologies for assessing the societal impact of citizen science.

She views the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme as an excellent opportunity to strengthen her skills in promoting equitable governance in protected area management and advancing the development of the OECM (Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures) network in Armenia.

Nino Peradze

AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1989 in Georgia

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Business Administration in Natural Resources Management

FIELD

Species Conservation,
Environmental Project Management



CURRENT POSITION

WWF Caucasus Programme Office; Project Coordinator

Nino Peradze is currently working as the Coordinator of the Sturgeon Conservation Project at the WWF Caucasus Programme Office in Georgia. Her work involves close engagement with diverse stakeholder groups, ensuring that conservation priorities remain on their agenda through effective communication and advocacy. She coordinates scientific monitoring and field activities, helping to translate collected data into evidence-based decisions. Working with community members is her passion, as she considers them the closest partners to nature and essential for effective conservation outcomes.

Through the Klaus Töpfer Fellowship Programme, Nino seeks to strengthen her management capacities and broaden her strategic skills to better present and promote the environmental conservation agenda among policymakers and practitioners. She also believes that the programme will enhance her ability to address operational and financial challenges, contributing to the long-term sustainability of conservation initiatives in her country and region.

Tamar Uguzashvili



AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1994 in Georgia

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Science in Behavioural Ecology and Wildlife Management, Master of Science in Ecology

FIELD

Wildlife Conservation, Biodiversity Monitoring, Human-wildlife Conflict Mitigation

CURRENT POSITION

Society for Nature Conservation SABUKO, Conservation Program Manager

Tamar Uguzashvili currently serves as a Conservation Program Manager at SABUKO (BirdLife's partner in Georgia), managing conservation programmes and biodiversity projects across Georgia. Her key responsibilities include developing conservation strategies, overseeing field research teams, analyzing wildlife data, and building partnerships with local communities and conservation organizations. Tamar is passionate about evidence-based conservation and has extensive experience in wildlife research across Georgia and Europe. Her work spans camera trap monitoring, human-wildlife conflict assessment and large-scale biodiversity analysis, including contributions to ungulate density estimation across 16 European countries. She has published peer-reviewed research and regularly presents her findings at international conferences.

Tamar perceives the Klaus Töpfer Fellowship Programme as a fundamental step towards her professional development and an opportunity for greater networking and cooperation across regions. Through the programme, she hopes to broaden her knowledge of conservation strategies and strengthen participatory approaches for the benefit of biodiversity and local communities in the Caucasus region.

Xeniya Zyukova

AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1993 in Kazakhstan

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Ecology and Environmental Management

FIELD

Wildlife Conservation, Science-policy Management

CURRENT POSITION

Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), Senior specialist



Xeniya is a Senior Specialist at the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), where she coordinates conservation projects within the Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative. She leads research assessing threats to raptors in Kazakhstan and measures to mitigate them, works with government agencies and the energy sector, and is involved in developing policy frameworks that advance Kazakhstan's commitments under multilateral environmental agreements. She is active at the science-policy interface, ensuring that research findings are translated into effective high-level decisions.

Through the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme, Xeniya aims to strengthen her competencies in conservation planning, governance and strategic communication to become a highly capable manager who leads major projects and advocates for and implements science-based solutions at the national, regional and international levels.

Gulnura Zhumabai kzy



AGE & COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

born 1981 in Kyrgyzstan

UNIVERSITY DEGREE

Master of Science in Ecology and Environmental
Management

FIELD

Community-based Conservation and
Human–wildlife Interactions

CURRENT POSITION

Ilbirs Foundation, Community researcher

Gulnura Zhumabai kzy works at Ilbirs Foundation, a non-governmental organization in Kyrgyzstan focused on conserving biodiversity and the ecosystems that sustain it. Gulnura is a community researcher who works closely with local communities. She explores how conservation affects their daily lives, identifies the challenges they face, and helps develop solutions that support both the communities and wildlife. Her work plays an important role in protecting biodiversity, especially by strengthening anti-poaching efforts.

Within the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship, Gulnura aims to further strengthen her practical skills in biodiversity assessment and monitoring, to apply tools from conservation economics, and to explore innovative approaches to financing and resource mobilization. These skills will help her design effective mechanisms that better engage local communities in biodiversity conservation and support the sustainable use of natural resources.



Federal Agency for Nature Conservation

International Academy for Nature Conservation

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