The Zoological Society of London's EDGE of Existence Fellowship 2025

Application Guidelines

1) EDGE Fellowship Application Procedure

1. Read this document.
2. Check your eligibility and that your species is on the curated list of eligible species.
3. Complete the application in English.
4. Prepare other required documentation.
5. Arrange for two references, one of which must be from your in-country supervisor, to be emailed to fellows@edgeofexistence.org
6. Submit your application by **23:59 (BST), 7th July 2024,** to the EDGE team at fellows@edgeofexistence.org

A panel of experts reviews all applications. Shortlisted applicants will be announced in October 2024. For those who are unsuccessful but reach the latter stages of the selection process, we will try to provide feedback by the end of October, but please be patient.

2) EDGE Fellowship Documentation

All applications must include the following documentation:

☐ Completed and signed application form.

☐ A map of the project site.

☐ A copy of your CV (no more than two A4 sides).

☐ A recent photograph of yourself.

☐ A copy of your risk assessment (using the ZSL template).

☐ Evidence of English competency (*only if English is not your first language*).

☐ If applicable, you must provide proof of your SCUBA diving skills (a scanned copy of your qualification card/certificate is sufficient).

☐ You must arrange for two letters of support from referees to be emailed to fellows@edgeofexistence.org, with "EDGE Fellowship Reference_*your name"* as the subject, by 23.59 (BST) on July 7, 2024. One of these references must be from your in-country supervisor. These should be in Word or PDF format and not in the body of the email.

3) Eligibility

Project

- The project must focus on species found on the [2024 curated EDGE list](#).

- Priority is given to EDGE species where limited research has been done and/or currently receives little or no conservation attention.

- Projects should fit into the following categories: (1) applied research and conservation planning; (2) implementation of recommended conservation actions.

- EDGE fellowships must include both an ecological and a social component. Therefore, we look for both in a successful application.

Applicant

- Fellowships are aimed at early-career (*less than ten years paid experience*) conservationists. No formal qualifications are required, but preference will be given to candidates with at least an undergraduate degree in a relevant subject or equivalent experience.

- Applications will only be accepted from nationals or residents of the countries listed within the target range of the species on the curated list. Unfortunately, if your country is not listed on this list, you will not be eligible to apply. Projects in all countries inside the G10 Nations, the EU, New Zealand, Australia, and South Korea are unlikely to be considered. However, if you are from one of these countries and feel you can justify your need for training, please contact the EDGE team at fellows@edgeofexistence.org before applying.

- Applicants should be nationals and/or residents of the country where the proposed focal species occurs. If you live in the country where your project will take place but are not a national, you must demonstrate that you will remain there and have a long-term commitment to conservation in that country.

- We do not usually accept applications from nationals of higher-income countries temporarily residing in an eligible country. If this applies to you and you believe you can make a case for support, please get in touch with the EDGE team to check your eligibility at fellows@edgeofexistence.org before applying.

- Individuals must be able to communicate in English. If the applicant is not a native English speaker, they must provide evidence that their English skills meet the minimum requirements (IELTS score 7.0, or TOEFL score 600, or internet based TOEFL score 100, or Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English grade C, or equivalent) **OR** please ask two referees to comment on your English ability, as well as your ability to work in English. We hold all interviews in English.

- EDGE Fellowships are awarded as two-year projects and are non-transferable.

- Support must be provided to the applicant by an in-country supervisor, such as a university project supervisor, senior colleague, or associate. The in-country supervisor must commit to supporting you over the two years.

- Individuals must be computer literate and able to use basic Microsoft packages (Word, Excel and PowerPoint).

- Those applying for a project that involves diving should:
    - Be "fit to dive" and able to pass a PADI diving medical.
    - Hold a PADI Advanced open water SCUBA Diving certification or equivalent.
    - Have at least 30 logged dives.

4) Project type

Your proposed project should fit into one or both of the following categories:

(1) *Applied research and conservation planning.*

- A novel piece of scientific research that fills a knowledge gap and contributes to the conservation of an EDGE species. The key output will be the production (and potential publication) of a scientific study, such as an update of the species' population, distribution and extinction risk or a social and political situation analysis or work that contributes to a better understanding of local ecological knowledge and human interaction with the species.

- Development of conservation action planning recommendations arrived at through stakeholder consultation. These recommendations will inform the production of the key output of all EDGE Fellowships: a species conservation strategy known as an "EDGE Survival Blueprint."

(2) *Implementation of recommended conservation actions*

- The implementation of conservation actions to reduce threats to the species and improve the conservation status of the species and its habitat. An appropriate participatory planning process should have recommended the conservation actions. The key output would be a report outlining how the project progressed towards achieving its aims and the conservation benefits achieved for the study species.

5) Selection criteria

Successful projects must:

- Contribute to the vision of the EDGE of Existence programme.

- Propose appropriate research and relevant conservation actions.

- Maximise stakeholder participation.

- Have strong in-country support.

- Provide evidence the project will contribute toward a more favourable conservation status for the species.

- Demonstrate feasibility and value for money.

- Highlight the individual's leadership quality and dedication to conserving the species.

6) Reporting, assessment, and evaluation

Reporting and Assessment

We expect a significant commitment from EDGE Fellows, particularly when communicating their work. Reporting allows us to provide individual feedback and monitor the progress and success of EDGE Fellows' projects. If these are not provided as set out below, funding will be withdrawn, and the Fellowship will be terminated.

- Monthly update reports: At the end of each month, a brief report (no more than ½ pages) on your activities will be requested. A template will be sent out each month.

- Blogs: You will be expected to write short blogs at least three times per year. Blogs should contain approximately 300 - 500 words of text with associated images/film footage.

- Progress Report: A satisfactory and comprehensive report should be submitted six, 12 and 18 months into your Fellowship. Guidelines for the written report and a financial report template will be provided.

- Final Report: you must complete a satisfactory and detailed final report for your two-year project. Final report guidelines and a financial report template will be provided.

- Survival Blueprint: This conservation plan identifies specific actions required to conserve the focal species. It is a valuable output for the Fellowship and must be submitted alongside your final report.

In addition, by the end of the two years, EDGE Fellows must aim to have completed the following:

- At least two funding proposals submitted for matched funding (EDGE Fellow will lead on proposal development with support from ZSL, if required).

- At least two articles about your work have been published in local/international popular media and/or a peer-reviewed journal.

Evaluation

To monitor the success of the EDGE Fellows' projects and the success of the EDGE Fellowship itself, EDGE Fellows are also required to complete the following evaluation throughout the two-year programme:

- Pre EDGE Fellowship evaluation: expectations and motivation.

- Pre Conservation Tools training course evaluation.

- Module feedback evaluation during the Conservation Tools training course.

- Post Conservation Tools training course evaluation.

- Monitoring evaluation at six months, 12 months and 18 months.

- Post Conservation Impact training course evaluation.

- Post EDGE Fellowship evaluation.

Guidance for completing the application form

Below are some guidance notes for answering questions from the application form requiring additional explanation. Please follow this guide.

Section 1

1. **Applicant name**: Full name

2. **Organisation name**: Who are you currently associated with, and please provide whether it is full- or part-time.

   3, 4, 5. Home address, email, telephone

6. **Nationality:** (if not where the proposed project will take place please give evidence of your long-term commitment to the country)

7. **Applied before:** Yes / No, if yes – please state the year of application & on which species.

8. **Submission date:** (dd/mm/yy)

9. **Project name**: maximum of 12 words

10. **EDGE species involved** (*Common and scientific name, and primary local name, if known*):

    This can be one or more species. They MUST be listed in the 2024 curated list.

11. **Is this species included in the 2024 curated EDGE list? What is the species row number?** Yes/No *(please delete as appropriate).*

    EDGE species row number is the excel spreadsheet row number, found on the far left-hand side of the sheet.

12. **Project advisors/collaborators**

    Have you contacted or been advised by anyone regarding your project? Include names, organisations and the role they have in the proposed project. What support have/will they provide, for example on methods, statistical analysis etc.

Name of advisor and email address	Associated organisation	Role in this proposed project
e.g. Dr A. Jones ; d.jones@conservationNGO.org	*African Reptiles*	*In-country supervisor; Specialist in reptile identification*

13. **Project location**. Include the country and region within the country, with latitude and longitude coordinates (if you are able to). Please insert a map into the application here or attach it separately, indicating the project location.

Section 2

14-18. ONLY for those who will undertake diving in their project otherwise continue to Section 3

Section 3

19. Project background

Maximum 300 words

How has your project come about? What is the need for this project? How was the project developed? What conservation issue/question will be addressed? Why is it important this project is supported? Provide details of any previous research or conservation on the species or in the local area, giving dates and names of the organisations involved.

20. Aim/Vision

Maximum 100 words

The aim is the wider vision towards which the project works and does not have to be achieved by this single project.

21. Project information

Include your SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic & Time-bound).

You should then include a specific methodology for achieving these objectives, followed by what tangible outputs will result from your project.

Finally, if you need specific help with analysis, methods, etc., please put this in the 'Support required' column.

Objective	Method	Output	Support required
e.g. I plan to survey 2 known and three new sites for my EDGE species, by month 18	*I will use transect surveys that I will visit three times each, over a period of 6 months*	*I will update the distribution map of the species*	*I would like support with sampling design and data analysis. I think maybe I could use species distribution modelling but I have never done it before*
e.g. Understand how charcoal production as a livelihood has changed over the last 50 years	*1) Semi-structured interviews about life histories of charcoal producers living next to protected areas 2) Focus groups with charcoal producers to document seasonal changes in livelihood activities*	*1) Report describing how the livelihood of charcoal production has changed over the last 50 years and why 2) Seasonal calendars of resource use and livelihood activities for charcoal producers*	*1) Training in interview techniques*

Section 4

22. Awareness of the EDGE Fellowship

Please let us know how you found out about the EDGE Fellowship opportunity, e.g. from the ZSL website, a recommendation from a colleague, a University, etc.

23. Motivation

Max 200 words

Please explain the main motivations behind your choice to apply for this EDGE Fellowship; this question is open for your own explanation. Examples of motivations could be personal, research / career-driven, monetary, etc.

24. Expectations

Max 200 words

Please outline your expectations for the EDGE Fellowship. This question is again open for your own explanation, but you may include what you expect to experience and learn throughout the Fellowship programme.

25. Personal benefits

Max 300 words

Give details of how completing an EDGE Fellowship will contribute to your conservation experience and future career, as well as any other benefits you expect from completing the EDGE programme.

26. Benefits to an EDGE species

Max 300 words

Please provide details of how your project will positively impact the conservation status of an EDGE species and what the immediate and longer-term impacts will be.

27. Work with local communities and organisations

Max 150 words

Successful conservation projects almost always require the support and assistance of the local community. This involvement might take various forms, such as educational campaigns, contributions to decision-making, assistance with implementing actions, etc. Please explain how you will work with local people during your project.

28. Understand or benefit local peoples' livelihoods or well-being.

Max 150 words

Millions of people worldwide directly depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, health, and well-being. The sustainable use of these resources is of paramount importance both for biodiversity and for the people who rely on them. Please explain how you will engage with these issues during your project.

29. Contribution to wider project.

Max 150 words

An EDGE Fellowship often contributes information or actions to a larger-scale conservation project. If this is the case, please give details here. If you have a proposal for the wider project, you may send this as a supporting document with your application.

Section 5

30. Proposed project start and end date

31. Timetable

Below is an example of how to present an outline timetable. Please follow this format in your proposal for your two-year project.

Activity	2025				
	Mar	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**July**
Data Collection – field surveys	X	X	X	X	X
Lab Analysis					X
Statistical Analysis					
Etc…					

If your project activities depend on activities which are part of a wider project, please include the additional activities and indicate which activities will be funded by the EDGE Fellowship grant. If your project forms a discrete sub-project of a larger project there is no need to include activities from the wider project, but please ensure that you have made clear the link between the two projects in question 29 above.

32. Budget

Please include in the table each aspect of the budget in detail, with justification, costs in Great British Pounds *(£),* and where the funding for each item has been sourced. Include your total project budget, and indicate which aspects you would like to be supported by an EDGE Fellowship grant. Include in your sources funding for which you have applied but have not yet heard the outcome.

We will not contribute to the core running costs of an organisation, administrative overheads, or tuition fees. A contribution of up to £100 per month for the 24 month project (totally £2,400) will be accepted for the applicant if required; this will need to be budgeted within the £10,000 total.

Please follow this format:

Details	Cost calculation	Total (£)	Requested from EDGE	Matched funder 1 (please detail)	Matched funder 2 (please detail) *
E.g. Fuel for 200km boat surveys	*£1.3 per km. 10 surveys in total*	*£2,600*	*£2600*	*0*	*0*

* Please add additional columns as required.

Note: Fellows are awarded a £10,000 grant that will be given in four instalments, each of £2,500. The first instalment will be released upon successful completion of the 4-week training course and the necessary paperwork (approximately April 2025). All subsequent payments will be released at six-month intervals upon completion of the necessary reporting requirements. Please keep this in mind when planning your project and completing your budget.

33. Permissions & permits

If you require permits for your work, e.g. to carry out research on a certain site, to work with a threatened species, or to collect or transport material, then please give details of what permits are required and when you expect to obtain these.

34. Risk Assessment

Include details of your medical skills, health and safety assessment, whether you have assessed the risks presented by your work, and your emergency evacuation plans. Please use the template available on the [EDGE website.](#)

35. Can you attend the 4-week *Conservation Tools* training course outside your country within Quarter 1 of 2025? (A*ttendance on the course is compulsory)*

Answer yes or no. Specific dates will be provided to successful applicants as soon as possible.

36. References

Please include details of the references you have used to support your application.