Freshwater Conservation Request for Proposals (RfP)
Funding Opportunity Overview

Pre-application deadline is Monday, March 25, 2024, 11:59pm EDT

To start a new pre-application, visit https://www.nationalgeographic.org/society/grants-and-investments/rfp-freshwater/ and select the "Apply now" button.

If you already started an application for this opportunity, return to the grants portal and login to continue your application: https://grants.nationalgeographic.org

Description

Freshwater is essential to the functioning of our planet; it's necessary to sustain healthy and biodiverse ecosystems, it's inextricably linked to climate change, and humans depend on water to drink and grow crops and raise livestock. Several human activities (e.g. large-scale agriculture, resource extraction, infrastructure, and domestic uses) threaten the spatial connectivity of water, the quality and quantity of water for biodiversity, and the function and resilience of ecosystems. These stressors are compounded by current and projected climate change trends. Freshwater supply is increasingly unable to meet ecological and anthropogenic demand.

The World Water Map visualizes areas of **global water gaps**, which is the difference between how much water is needed and how much is naturally available. The **global water gap Hotspots** are regions where human demand for freshwater is outpacing renewable supplies. This leads to depletion of freshwater resources and the risk of **water scarcity**. Please read the FAQs for a description of how the Hotspots were determined.

In the context of this RfP, **water scarcity** is the demand for freshwater exceeding the renewable supply in a region due to water quantity, quality, and connectivity (hydrology), and communities may be experiencing water scarcity in the global water gap Hotspots. **Freshwater resources** include surface water and groundwater, including springs, reservoirs, ponds, rivers, streams, wetlands, peatlands, glaciers, lakes, etc., at any scale (e.g., river basin, watershed, lake).

The goal of this RfP is to help highlight the real-life stories about water scarcity by funding on-the-ground, community-led conservation projects addressing freshwater scarcity challenges through impactful solutions.

Who should apply

This opportunity is best suited for individual project leaders with demonstrable experience co-creating or collaborating with the community or communities that are most impacted by the freshwater scarcity issue and proposed conservation project. These grants are highly competitive and reserved for select projects located in one of the 20 water scarcity / water gap

Hotspots, as defined by the modeled water gaps in the World Water Map. Interested applicants should review the FAQs for more information about the water gap Hotspots.

This funding opportunity is open to applicants over the age of 18, including individuals who are already National Geographic Explorers. Funding requests for this RfP can be up to USD $50,000. Projects can be up to two years in length.

To ensure that invited applicants are prepared to submit competitive full applications, we recommend that applicants already understand — or are prepared to assemble — the methods, dissemination strategies, and proposed outputs of the full project. We also recommend that applicants are already collaborating with the community or communities that are most impacted by the freshwater scarcity issue and the proposed conservation project. Applicants who are invited to submit a full application will be requested to present evidence of local community participation, from start to finish, in the development and implementation of the project.

You may submit a proposal as the project leader for only one project. We only accept applications that are submitted through our online portal. Please do not mail or email your application.

Priority will be given to applicants proposing projects in the areas highlighted in bold in the list below, where historically the Society has funded fewer projects. In addition, competitive projects will include tangible freshwater conservation goals such as creating resilient and sustainable solutions for improved water quantity, quality, and/or water connectivity (hydrology), for example, through green-infrastructure or nature-based solutions.

Hotspot Locations, see also the image on page 3

Europe and Western Asia

- **Greece**
- **Turkey**
- **Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain**
- Italy
- Spain

Asia-Pacific

- **Central and South Thailand**
- Ganges/Brahmaputra river basins, India/**Bangladesh**
- **Mekong Delta, Vietnam**
- Indus River Basin, Pakistan
- Java, Indonesia

- Murray-Darling Basin, Australia
- **Japan**
- North China Plain

Latin America

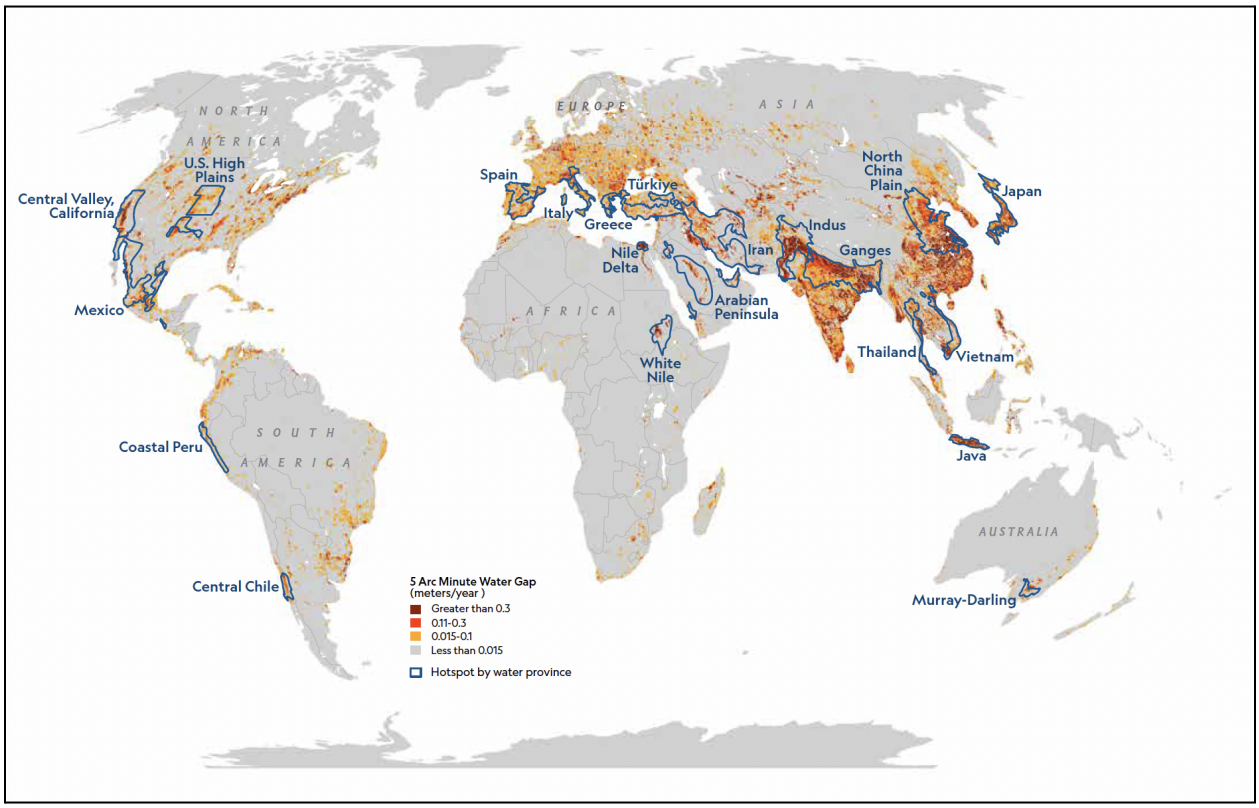
- **Central Chile**
- Coastal Peru
- Mexico (various locations)

Northern North America

- Central Valley, California
- US High Plains (Ogallala Aquifer)

Africa

- **Nile River Delta, Egypt**
- **White Nile, Sudan**



(Image credit, created by Martin Gamache for M Leijnse, M F P Bierkens, K H M Gommans, D Lin, B Droppers, A Tait and N Wanders. In Review. The key drivers and pressures of the global water scarcity hotspots).

Instructions

To be eligible, all candidates must submit a pre-application by the deadline of **March 25, 2024, 11:59pm EDT.** All candidates will receive a notification in mid-April with either a declination or an invitation to submit a full application. Invited candidates will have until **May 22, 2024, 11:59pm EDT** to submit a full application.

Projects are eligible if they meet the following criteria:

- Project must align to the Conservation primary focus
- Project must align to the Land focus area
- Candidate must not be a current National Geographic staff member
- Candidate must be over the age of 18
- Project budget may not exceed $50,000
- Project must be completed within 2 years of receipt of funding
- Project must occur in a National Geographic Society World Water Map water scarcity hotspot
- Project must be focused on freshwater conservation and must not include large-scale gray infrastructure (for example, municipal-scale stormwater or wastewater infrastructure, or desalination plants)
- Application materials must be complete enough to be able to assess candidate's skills and experience, as well as the project idea

Pre-applications

The National Geographic Society is accepting pre-applications for the Freshwater Conservation RfP. Pre-applications are due by **March 25, 2024, 11:59pm EDT.**

To ensure that invited applicants are prepared to submit competitive full applications, we recommend that applicants already understand — or are prepared to assemble — the methods, dissemination strategies, and proposed outputs of the full project. We also recommend that applicants are already collaborating with the community or communities that are most impacted by the freshwater scarcity issue and the proposed conservation project. Applicants who are invited to submit a full application will be requested to present evidence of local community participation, from start to finish, in the development and implementation of the project.

For more information about this RfP, please consult our Frequently Asked Questions **here**.

If you have questions not answered here or in the Frequently Asked Questions**,** please email us at funding@ngs.org with "Freshwater Conservation RfP" in the subject line.

Benefits

Awardees will receive funding up to USD $50,000. Awardees will join a cohort of 2023 Freshwater Storytelling Explorers. Funded projects will be global examples of community-led solutions to water scarcity issues and the projects will be highlighted on the Society's

Freshwater Initiative website and map assets. Grant recipients become members of the Explorer Community and eligible for future funding, learning, and networking opportunities.

Why become a National Geographic Society Explorer?