

## ***Mediterranean Model Forest Network Secretariat***

### ***Call for applications for scholarship***

#### **Premise**

The Mediterranean Forest Model Network (MMFN) is an initiative dedicated to sustainable forest management and knowledge exchange among Mediterranean countries. Since 2019, MMFN has been managed by the Tuscany Region Government with the collaboration of Municipality Union of Valdarno Valdisieve and the Foresta Modello delle Montagne Fiorentine (FMMF) Association in Florence, Italy. The MMFN aims to expand the Model Forests concept, originally from Canada to the Mediterranean area, focusing on studying Mediterranean forests, defining common objectives, and promoting collaboration among Network members. Networking allows Model Forests to play a decisive role in generating, exchanging, and disseminating knowledge, contributing to global environmental goals.

The Montagne Fiorentine Model Forest Association, on behalf of the MMFN Secretariat managed by Tuscany Region, is pleased to announce a **15-month scholarship (01/01/2025 - 31/03/2026) in Landscape and Forest Restoration, offering a gross amount of € 17,000**. This scholarship is open to candidates from Mediterranean countries that are members of MMFN. Funded by Canada's Global Forest Leadership Program, this initiative supports international collaborations and the sharing of Canadian expertise in areas such as climate, biodiversity, sustainable forest management, and the bioeconomy. The scholarship aims to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable development through advanced research and practical application.

#### **Objectives**

The objective of the Scholarship is to tackle critical environmental issues, enhance sustainable forest management practices, and foster collaboration among Mediterranean countries. Through this scholarship, we seek to empower researchers and practitioners to contribute effectively to the restoration and preservation of Mediterranean landscapes. Specifically, scholarship will define principles and criteria to apply in designing of F& L Restoration in the territories of Model Forests in Mediterranean basin also in order to have the most valorization as possible of the peculiar methods and participatory approach used in MFs. Local rural communities are the key for a successful restoration.

## Requirements

The scholarship will be awarded through an open selection process based on qualifications and an interview. It is intended for young citizens from member regions of the MMFN, with a focus on individuals holding a bachelor's degree or equivalent in Environmental Studies, Forestry, Ecology, or related fields. Applicants must be no older than 30 years on the application deadline.

Applicants will be evaluated based on their relevant experience and specific background about forest and landscape restoration activities and/or studies, and/or researches.

Proficiency in using digital tools is also required. Priority will be given to candidates from forest model communities.

All candidates must demonstrate an adequate knowledge of English, equivalent to a B2 level. This can be proven by achieving at least the minimum scores on one of the following recognized English language proficiency tests:

- **TOEFL iBT:** Minimum score of **80**
- **IELTS** (Academic or General Training): Minimum overall band score of **6.0**
- **Cambridge English:** Minimum score of **173** for B2 First, or **180** for C1 Advanced

Only certificates obtained within the last five years before the start date of the selection process will be accepted. Certificates from tests not listed (e.g., Duolingo) will not be considered.

Applicants must attach a copy of their English language certificate with their application.

**Candidates are exempt from submitting an English language certificate if they possess a qualification from a degree program taught entirely in English.**

Proficiency in additional languages is highly desirable and will be given significant consideration, such as Italian.

## Selection

For the selection, the Commission, referred to in Article 5, will evaluate the academic and professional curriculum, qualifications and interview. The total score available to the Commission is equal to 100 points:

- 40 max are for qualifications.

- 40 max points for the interview. (A score above 30 is required to be eligible for the interview)
- 10 points awarded if the candidate is from Mediterranean Model Forest members
- 10 points awarded if the candidate is from Mediterranean Model Forest members in Algeria (Tlemcen), Morocco (Ifrane and Midelt), and Lebanon (Shouf). Eligibility is obtained with a minimum score of 60.

The interview will focus on the candidate's technical and scientific skills, with particular reference to the subject matter of this call. The outcome of the evaluation will be communicated to the applicant's email address, which should be stated in the application.

### **The commission**

The Commission will be named by the MMFN Secretariat and will prepare a detailed report presenting a ranking of successful candidates in order of merit. The composition of the Commission, the dates of selection and the results will be published on the MMFN website [www.medmodelforest.net](http://www.medmodelforest.net).

### **Result**

The Fellowship will be awarded by MMFN Secretariat according to the merit list formulated by the Commission, with the indication of the expected effective date as per Art. 10.

### **Scholarship Grant and Conditions**

The scholarship amount will be disbursed by the FMMF on behalf of the MMFN Secretariat to the selected candidate in equal monthly installments over a period of 15 months. This amount covers all expenses, including those for site visits eventually required by the MMFN Secretariat.

The grantee of the Scholarship must, in addition, give explicit assurance that he or she will not, during the entire period of enjoyment of the Scholarship, benefit from any other similar allowance or subsidy and that he or she does not hold any employment in the employ of the State, other public bodies, or private entities, including the grantee Institution. The grantee is responsible for ensuring that there are no conflicts or compatibility issues with other positions. Failure to comply with these rules may be considered as renunciation of the Fellowship.

Before to start activity of the Fellowship, the grantee shall take out an accident and third-party insurance policy of the same duration as that of the Fellowship.

The Scholarship does not give rise to social security benefits. The enjoyment of the Scholarship does not give rise to a possible employment relationship, being aimed only at the professional training of the fellow.

### **Application Submission**

Applicants are required to submit their application via email to "info@medmodelforest.net" using the attached template (Annex A). All submissions must be received no later than **06/12/2024 at 18:00 CET**. The subject line of the email should read "**Application for Scholarship.**"

In the application, each applicant must declare, under their own responsibility:

1. Surname and first name, date and place of birth, residence, and Social Security Number;
2. Degree, grade, and place of attainment.
3. Thesis title;
4. E-mail address at which they wish to receive all communications regarding the selection, and cell phone number.
5. That they have no criminal convictions and no pending criminal proceedings against them.
6. Candidates must provide proof of English proficiency with a certificate of an English test equivalent to at least B2 level (IELTS, TOEFL, or an equivalent test). Proficiency in additional languages is highly desirable and will be given significant consideration, such as Italian.

The following documents must be attached to the application: a) Curriculum vitae in European format; b) Title of the dissertation and its short abstract (maximum one page); c) Copy of a valid passport; d) Other degrees and certificates.

By participating in this call for applications, the applicant acknowledges and agrees that, if awarded the Fellowship:

- The Network will acquire all rights, if any, related to the ownership and use of the results of the research carried out by the applicant.
- The applicant shall keep strictly private and confidential any information, documents, and/or data received or learned during the course of performing activities under the Fellowship.

The applicant also acknowledges the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016) concerning the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data, which repeals Directive 95/46/EC.

### **Acceptance of Scholarship**

The winner must, within a strict deadline of 14 days from the date of receiving formal notification of the Scholarship award, send a declaration of unreserved acceptance of the

Scholarship under the terms outlined in the call for applications. Failure to comply will result in forfeiture of the award. The statement of acceptance, sent via email to **info@medmodelforest.net** with return receipt, will be considered timely if submitted by the specified deadline.

In case of renunciation by the winner, the Scholarship (or fraction thereof) may be made available to eligible contestants, according to the order of the ranking list.

### **Scholarship Activities and Communication**

The activities under the Scholarship will take place in connection with a specified contact person of MMFN Secretariat. All communication and activities will be held online. Eventual meeting in presence could be planned.

The activities will begin in January 01 2025 and end 31/03/2026.

### **Incompatibility**

This grant cannot be combined with any other scholarship or financial aid awarded by the Italian Government or other Italian public institutions, including scholarships provided by regional educational authorities and agencies.

The grant is compatible with other European programs, such as Erasmus and Erasmus+, as well as scholarships from international institutions. However, payments will only be made for periods of study or project work conducted outside of Italy.

The General Secretary of MMFN



## ***Annex A: Scholarship Application Template***

### **1. Personal Information**

Surname:

First Name:

Date of Birth:

Place of Birth:

Residence Address:

### **2. Educational Background**

Degree:

Grade:

Place of Attainment:

Thesis Title:

### **3. Contact Information**

Email Address:

Cell Phone Number:

### **4. Criminal Record Declaration**

- I hereby declare that I have no criminal convictions and have no pending criminal proceedings against me

### **5. Language Proficiency**

- **English Proficiency Certificate:** (Please attach a copy)
  - Type of Certificate (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS, etc.):
  - Score:
- **Proficiency in Additional Languages:** (Optional)

### **6- Experience in Model Forests and Forest Restoration Projects**

#### **Model Forest Involvement:**

- **Name of the Model Forest:**

- **Describe Your Role and Contributions:** (Max 150 words)
  - Specify your role within the Model Forest (e.g., researcher, coordinator, volunteer) :
  - Outline the specific activities and initiatives you participated in

**Have you participated in any Model Forest projects?** (Yes/No)

- If yes, please provide: (Max 150 words)
  - **Project Title:**
  - **Role in the Project:**
  - **Duration of Involvement:**
  - **Description of Your Responsibilities and Contributions:**

**Have you participated in any other projects related to forest restoration or landscape management?** (Yes/No)

- **If yes, please provide:** (Max 150 words)
  - Project Title
  - Your Role
  - Technical Skills or Methods Applied

-Mention any specialized methodologies, research techniques, or restoration strategies applied during the project (e.g., GIS mapping, remote sensing, landscape planning, community-based approaches)

- Key Achievements or Outcomes

-Highlight any significant achievements, milestones reached, or long-term project outcomes.

-Include metrics or indicators of success if applicable (e.g., hectares restored, species protected, or carbon sequestration levels)

**Other Relevant Forest and Landscape Restoration Projects**

- **Have you participated in other projects related to forest restoration or landscape management?:** (Yes/No)
- **If yes, please provide details:** (Max 150 words)

- Project Title:
- Your Role and Involvement:
  - Describe your contribution and responsibilities.
- Technical Skills or Methods Applied

### **7. Required Documents (to be attached)**

- a) Curriculum vitae in European format
- b) Title of the dissertation and its short abstract (maximum one page)
- c) Copy of valid passport
- d) Other degrees and certificates

### **8. Declaration of Acceptance**

- ***By submitting this application, I acknowledge and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the scholarship call for applications.***

**Signature:**

**Date:**