

2026 ATBC SEED RESEARCH GRANT CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation is a global community of scientists and educators working on the frontlines of biodiversity research and conservation in the tropics. As part of ATBC's mission to promote excellence in the next generation of tropical biologists, The ATBC offers Seed Research Grants to support graduate research projects in tropical biology and conservation.

Every year, the ATBC Seed Research Grant program supports approximately 10 students, depending on the funds available. We encourage graduate students to apply and join a community of like-minded peers and have the opportunity to connect with past awardees who are making an impact. Read about the exciting research of previous Seed Grant recipients [here](#).

Awards and Allowable Expenses

Grants of up to \$1,000 each will be awarded and may be used for travel (domestic or international), lodging, meals, and other research-related expenses. Funds cannot be used to purchase permanent equipment (e.g., computers, etc.), but consumable supplies are allowed.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be an ATBC member **at the time of the application deadline (7 April 2026)**. If you are not already a member, you can join [here](#). Prices for student membership vary from USD \$15-\$45.
- Applicants must be enrolled in a graduate degree program (Master's or Doctoral) at the time of the application deadline. For Doctoral students, applications will be accepted from students in their first three years of their Ph.D. program; a letter of reference from the student's advisor should attest to this.
- Applicants are only eligible for one ATBC Seed Research Grant per graduate degree program.
- ATBC Seed Grant funding prioritizes research involving fieldwork. However, other types of research contributing to biodiversity and conservation will also be considered, including museum-based research or research involving agricultural or urban systems, provided the central focus of the work is on biodiversity and conservation.

Evaluation Criteria

Efforts will be made to distribute awards evenly across applicants from different geographic regions and among groups underrepresented in STEM. Proposals will be reviewed and ranked by the ATBC Grants & Awards Committee based on the following evaluation criteria:

1. Significance of the proposed research

- Quality of the proposed research in the context of tropical biology and conservation
- Description of how the study fills a knowledge or research gap within its field and why it is timely

2. Intellectual merit and conceptual framework

- Demonstration of the student's understanding of the background scientific theory and findings

- Quality and significance of research questions being addressed and/or hypotheses being tested
- Clarity of description and appropriateness of the proposed methods for addressing the research questions and hypotheses
- Explanation of expected outcomes and how the data will be analyzed to address the research questions and/or hypotheses
- Potential for generating novel outcomes (e.g. data generation and/or development of new research methods, publications)

3. Feasibility and budget justification

- Demonstration that the project is achievable and likely to be successful within the given timeframe and budget
- Consistency and coherence between the scope of the work described in the proposal and the budget

4. Broader Impacts

- Description of strategies for disseminating results to a broader audience, including the local community where the research is being conducted,
- Description of the involvement and/or training of local community, local researchers, students, educators, and/or conservation biologists/managers, if applicable.
- Quality and creativity of outreach or scientific communication activities

5. Criteria compliance

- The proposal is within the word limit and follows the formatting criteria of the call
- A letter of support is received by the deadline

Application Requirements

1. Application form (online): Includes student's full legal name, email address, home institution, degree program, project title, location of field work, total amount of funds requested, and **250-word abstract**. Demographic information may optionally be shared to allow ATBC to assess its diversity and inclusion goals.

2. Research proposal: Should be a maximum length of 2,000 words using 1,5 line spacing, 1-inch margins, and a minimum of 11-point font, including all figures and tables. Figures and Tables should not be made so small as to be unreadable.

The inclusion of a conceptual figure or graphical abstract is strongly encouraged, although it remains optional. Please explicitly include the following information, ideally in specifically named sections.

- Introduction/Background
- Research questions and/or hypotheses
- Methods and Study Design (e.g., description of the study site/organism, approaches to data collection and analysis, and any other details necessary to evaluate the proposed research)
- Expected outcomes of the research, including a description of how the proposed project activities specifically address the research questions and/or hypotheses
- Broader impacts and integration with local research efforts and researchers at or near the study site, and research significance and contribution to ATBC's mission

- How the ATBC award will specifically contribute towards the completion of the project
- Timeline of proposed activities

3. *References cited:* A list of all references cited in the Research Proposal. Use 1,5 spacing, 1-inch margins, and a minimum of 11-point font. This section does not count towards the word limit for the Research Proposal.

4. *Budget and justification:* Should include an itemized list of proposed expenses, with a brief justification of how each expense contributes to and is required to conduct the proposed activities. Additional funding sources, if any, and why the ATBC funds are required.

5. *CV:* Include a 2-page curriculum vitae (aka BioSketch). Please do not include personal information, such as marital status, identity card numbers, or photos.

6. *Letter of support:* One letter of support from the student's current graduate advisor indicating: **a)** whether the student is making sufficient progress towards the degree and is capable of successfully carrying out the proposed project and **b)** whether the student is within the first three years of their graduate degree. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact referees well before the deadline, as the letter of support MUST be submitted by the application deadline.**

Submission instructions

- The online application form should be completed in full, meeting all the Application Requirements. Access the application [here](#).
- Document numbers 2-5 listed in the Application Requirements should be combined in **one single PDF file**.

The **letter of support** should be uploaded by the student's graduate advisor or collaborator in a separate form that will be sent after the student's application has been submitted.

The entire application, including the letter of reference, must be received before the deadline. In order for your advisor to receive the link for the letter of reference in a timely manner, you must start the application process well before the deadline so that they receive an email link for the letter. To do this:

1. Start the application [here](#)
2. Fill in the name and email address of the referee (please double-check that these are correct)
3. Provisionally submit it by pressing the submit button; this will send an email to your advisor for the letter
4. Continue to edit/complete the application by the deadline

Additional information

Applicants will be notified by email once funding decisions are made by early June. Awardees will be honored at the ATBC 2026 meeting in Xishuangbanna, China, June 28th - July 3rd, 2026. Recipients are encouraged to attend the annual meeting, but note that this award does not include financial support for travel, registration, or accommodation related to attendance at the ATBC Annual Meeting. Recipients are expected to and responsible for obtaining all research permits required by the country where the research is conducted, and are expected to abide by the [ATBC Resolution on Diversity and Inclusion](#).

Reporting

Seed Grant 2026 Awardees are required to submit a 2-page report by September 2027 summarizing major research findings, challenges, and images, plus an itemized financial report detailing expenses, with a short description of how each expense contributed to the project. Procedures for submitting these reports will be provided after awards are made. Selected awardees may also be invited to write a short blog post for the ATBC website **or** may be contacted to provide additional information or materials for use in ATBC communications and social media.

Deadline for all application materials: April 7, 2026 (5 am GMT)

Questions should be directed to: Imma Oliveras Menor (grantsandawards@tropicalbiology.org, Chair of the Grants and Awards Committee), with the subject “ATBC Seed Grant Question”