



GUIDE FOR FIELD WORKERS OR LOGISTICS CO-ORDINATORS INTERESTED IN COLLABORATION

Biosphere Expeditions is a volunteer organisation that runs expeditions for the growing number of people who would like to do something active towards wildlife conservation. Volunteers are usually from Western Europe or North America, between 17 and 75 years old, highly motivated, with above average education. About 20% have some sort of biology background, but they are not usually trained in survey techniques. **Volunteers do NOT need luxuries and basic field conditions are usually acceptable. They DO need projects where they can do useful work and are kept busy with tasks that are directly connected to wildlife conservation.**

Biosphere Expeditions is always looking for **reliable** field workers (or logistics co-ordinators - all called "field workers" below) with access to projects involving flagship species in interesting and challenging environments that would benefit from volunteer involvement. Field workers need to be able to communicate to volunteers the impact their work is making, how their work makes a difference, what the data collected by volunteers are being used for and what the long- and short-term implications of the research are.

Support: Biosphere Expeditions always sends an expedition leader with the volunteers. The expedition leader stays with the expedition for its duration and is there to manage volunteers, control quality, support the field worker, and deal with problems as and when they arise so that the field worker may continue to work as freely and unencumbered as possible whilst at the same time benefiting from the extra manpower.

Duration, timing & group size: To fit in with usual holiday patterns, expeditions are organised in two-week slots. One expedition can consist of several such two-week slots, usually organised back-to-back. Group size depends on the field worker's requirements, but groups larger than 12 volunteers per two-week slot are difficult to recruit. However, this is an indication only and Biosphere Expeditions is prepared to fit in with the field worker's projects and timings as much as possible.

Scientific work: Biosphere Expeditions has the following priority ratings: Safety (of the expedition team), science (the main aim of the expedition will be to conduct the research), satisfaction (whilst conducting the research Biosphere Expeditions will aim to provide an enjoyable, pleasurable and memorable experience for its volunteers).

Biosphere Expeditions can either continue ongoing research designed by the field worker or design a new project together with the field worker. Biosphere Expeditions has trained biologists available to assist the field worker in designing or adapting projects. Biosphere Expeditions will expect a report on the data collected on each expedition within three months of the end of the expedition and will expect to collaborate on any research papers that may arise as a result of any collaboration.

Biosphere Expeditions is always looking for long-term involvement and will give preference to projects that are set up to run for a minimum of five years, with expedition teams helping the field worker at those times of the year when their assistance is most needed and useful for the field worker.

Financial and other assistance: The field worker will be expected to organise in conjunction with Biosphere Expeditions details of logistics, support, research plans etc. In return field workers are usually paid for their time spent on the expedition, their expenses, etc. Payments are decided on an expedition-by-expedition basis and field workers will be expected to provide full financial details as part of their collaboration proposal.

In addition to financial assistance, Biosphere Expeditions can also provide equipment and other assistance in kind. Any such requests should be part of the field worker's collaboration proposal.

How to approach Biosphere Expeditions and how expeditions are organised: In the first instance, field workers should have a look at the Biosphere Expeditions website and in particular the summaries of existing expeditions at www.biosphere-expeditions.org/expeditions. An initial collaboration proposal should give Biosphere Expeditions a good idea of how the proposed project would fit into the Biosphere Expeditions format. Field workers should use a current expedition summary as a template and fit their proposed project around it (for example by using the headings "expedition aims", "background", "typical day" as given on the website). In addition field workers should provide an indication of the duration of the expedition and when it is to take place, some basic cost calculations, their proposed payments, and any other equipment or assistance in kind required. Field workers should also submit information on themselves, their qualifications, the project, its past and future direction, relevant publications, and how collaboration with Biosphere Expeditions can add to their current research programme. There is no strict format or required length for this initial proposal, but submissions not adhering to the above guidelines will not be considered.

Biosphere Expeditions will then assess the proposal and start discussions with the field worker. If both sides agree that the proposal warrants further investigation, the field worker will be asked to (1) write a full research proposal, (2) a detailed budget, (3) a risk assessment and full safety procedures and (4) convert the first proposal into an expedition dossier (this expedition dossier is the "bible" that every expedition team member receives when they join their teams. It contains full details on the research methods, aims and objectives, safety procedures, the local field worker, advice on how to prepare for the expedition, what to bring, what to expect and how to get to the team assembly point). This process of making a first proposal into a dossier will be interactive and involve both the field worker and a member of staff from Biosphere Expeditions. If documents are of sufficient quality and progress on all issues is satisfactory, then at some stage a member of staff from Biosphere Expeditions will visit the worker in the field to finalise the dossier, research proposal, assess conditions and safety procedures, check budget calculations etc. During this reconnaissance visit, Biosphere Expeditions will pay for international travel of one or more of its staff into the field worker's country of research, but would expect the field worker to provide free national travel, board and lodging for the member(s) of staff from Biosphere Expeditions for the time it takes to conduct the reconnaissance visit (usually 1-2 weeks).

Once the dossier and all other documents are written and both parties formally agree to a collaboration, the expedition will be promoted by Biosphere Expeditions through its usual channels in an effort to recruit an expedition team.

Timings: Please note that it typically takes a year or more to recruit a full expedition team before the first expedition can be run. Depending on the field worker's organisational skills and reliability, the process from making first contact to sending the first expedition team into the field typically takes between 16 and 36 months.

Contact & submission: Send your first proposal to Dr. Matthias Hammer, m.hammer@biosphere-expeditions.org. Remember that simply submitting generic documents about your research programme is not sufficient and any such submissions will not be considered. You must follow the guidelines above and submit a customised project proposal. By all means submit generic background information as well, but you must show us that you are seriously thinking about this by coming up with original documents and ideas.

A final word: The aim of the process described here is to organise well-run, safe, effective and efficient expeditions that produce results and help field workers engaged in wildlife conservation. It is NOT the aim to produce lots of paperwork and engage in a highly bureaucratic process of organising an expedition. Biosphere Expeditions is a highly flexible organisation with access to decision makers and is always interested in new ideas and proposals. You do need to adhere to the proposal guidelines as described above before your project can be considered, but please do not let the above put you off from coming to us with your ideas.