



AXA XL Valuing Nature Award

in partnership with the AXA Research Fund

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Award Guidelines

These guidelines provide information for researchers applying for the AXA XL Valuing Nature Award. This guide may be used as a reference by applicants. The information presented overrides any contrary terms that could be found elsewhere.

AXA XL Valuing Nature Award background

How we impact nature affects how nature impacts us. About 50% of the world's GDP is moderately or highly dependent on nature,¹ so disruption to direct operations or supply chains could be widespread across business sectors as diverse as agriculture, manufacturing and real estate. According to a European Commission study, investing to restore a wide range of natural ecosystems e.g. peatlands, forests and grasslands, would deliver a favorable benefit cost ratio of over 8:1.²

For example, mangroves act as natural flood defenses, reducing annual property damage by about \$65 billion and protecting more than 15 million people.³ Urban green spaces have numerous benefits, including reducing urban heat island effects, mitigating storm water and lowering energy usage by shading buildings, with one study calculating the value of these ecosystems to be between \$3,212 and \$17,772 per hectare.⁴ Additionally, if natural pollinators had to be replaced by artificial methods, an EU-funded study estimates that labor and technology costs would reach €153 billion per year.⁵

We know that almost all industries rely on nature to some degree, and at AXA XL and the AXA Research Fund we are committed to inspiring our clients and colleagues to put nature at the heart of their plans. We developed the Valuing Nature Award to recognize this underappreciated and undervalued risk.

AXA XL Valuing Nature Award focus

This call for nominations is looking to recognize innovative, transdisciplinary research, that adopts either a global or regional perspective and highlights the value of nature and its ecosystem services in supporting businesses and communities to strengthen resilience and mitigate the impacts of climate change, particularly in the following areas:

1. Measuring and quantifying the financial value of preserving or restoring ecosystem services to businesses/society.
2. Identifying climate change adaptation and mitigation opportunities from preserving or restoring nature.
3. Empowering local communities through the preservation or restoration of natural environments, including the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge.
4. Evaluating the benefits of restoring degraded ecosystems, including assessing the impact of invasive species on the resilience of ecosystems to climate change impacts.
5. Developing scenarios for future ecosystem changes under various climate change and natural ecosystem scenarios (e.g. the introduction of invasive species), and assessing the potential impacts on businesses and communities.

¹ World Economic Forum, Half of World's GDP Moderately or Highly Dependent on Nature, Says New Report. (2020). <https://www.weforum.org/press/2020/01/half-of-world-s-gdp-moderately-or-highly-dependent-on-nature-says-new-report/>

² European Commission, Impact assessment study to support the development of legally binding EU nature restoration targets (2023).

³ P. Menéndez, I. J. Losada, S. Torres-Ortega, S. Narayan, & M. W. Beck, The Global Flood Protection Benefits of Mangroves. *Scientific Reports*, 10 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-61136-6>.

⁴ T. Elmqvist, H. Setälä, S. N. Handel, S. van der Ploeg, J. Aronson, J. N. Blignaut, E. Gómez-Baggethun, D. J. Nowak, J. Kronenberg, & R. de Groot, Benefits of restoring ecosystem services in urban areas. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 14 (2015) 101–108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2015.05.001>.

⁵ European Commission, Insect Pollination Worth EUR 153 billion a year. (2008). <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/29867-insect-pollination-worth-eur-153-billion-a-year>.

Any related topic that aligns with the themes of the call for nominations can be submitted for consideration for the award, even if it is not explicitly outlined in the above list. Candidates should demonstrate the novelty, innovation, and impact of their research in these areas.

Award Guidelines

Researchers' eligibility

The AXA Climate Transition Award is aimed at supporting an advanced researcher between PhD +five years and PhD + 10 years maximum. Candidates should consider the application deadline to calculate their PhD date and assess their eligibility.

The support should be transformative for the researchers and the advancement of their field. Candidates should be of the highest caliber and have demonstrated outstanding research achievements, as evidenced by the usual indicators for assessing academic excellence such as research outputs (e.g. publications), research activities (e.g. organizing networks, being involved in communities) and research impact (e.g. policy report, specific recognition through awards, etc.).

Award amount and allocation

The total amount of the award is €50,000. The money must be exclusively dedicated to research purposes. The amount of the award will be paid to the university with which the researcher is affiliated.

Engagement

The granted researcher will be required to commit to share a summary of their research with a broad audience including AXA XL colleagues, and if relevant, selected external stakeholders of AXA XL – for example our clients or NGO partners. We will require participation during an event hosted by AXA and AXA XL and the co-development of one thought leadership document (e.g. video, article, whitepaper, etc) highlighting outcomes from the awarded research.

Ethics

AXA places extremely high importance on the ethics of the work it supports. Programs are required to comply fully with ethical review processes and for this compliance to be evidenced. Cases of scientific misconduct (such as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or of inappropriate behaviour towards staff or other parties) will be considered as breaches of the AXA ethical principles⁶ and will be excluded from funding.

Timeline & Application Process

- Nominations can be submitted through: <https://forms.office.com/r/7VjkceuVkJR>
- Nominations and applications must be submitted in English, on time, and complete.
- Additional documents to the ones requested will not be considered.

⁶ AXA Group Compliance and Ethics Code, 2024: <https://www.axa.com/en/press/publications/compliance-ethics-guide>

- The research topic must fall within the scope of the eligible topic focus.

Timeline

Step	Date
Nomination Period	Tuesday 4th March – Tuesday 1st April at 16:00 CET Nominations received after the deadline or that are incomplete will not be considered.
Application Period	Tuesday 8th April – Tuesday 29th April at 16:00 CET Applications received after the deadline or that are incomplete will not be considered.
Results announcement	End of May Results will be sent by email to researchers by end of May 2025 and announced via a press release on a mutually agreed upon date after the contract between the university, AXA, and AXA XL has been signed.
Event	To be determined based on AXA, AXA XL and awardee’s calendar.

Application process

Step 1 – Nomination Period

Nominators will submit the nominee’s name, email, academic affiliation, short description of primary research area (fewer than 50 words), date of PhD, and a fewer than 150 word summary of why this individual’s research is innovative and impactful to the research theme of this prize via an online nomination form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/7VjkceuvkR> from **Tuesday 4th March to Tuesday 1st April at 16:00 CET.**

Nomination Rules :

- Nominators must currently be active in academia.
- Each nominator can nominate up to two eligible researchers.
- Self-nominations are not permitted. Family members and relatives cannot be nominated.
- Nominators cannot nominate a researcher from their team or someone they supervise nor a researcher engaged in a co-publication or close collaboration within the past 5 years.
- Researchers already supported by the AXA Research Fund or by any AXA entities cannot be nominated even if their AXA grant has ended.

Step 2 – Screening

AXA XL and AXA Research Fund will perform an internal pre-selection to ensure requirements are met.

Step 3 – Application Period

Once nominated, selected applicants that meet all researcher eligibility requirements and have relevant research will be contacted by email to inform them that they have been nominated for the AXA XL Valuing Nature Award. They will be invited to provide the items below to valuingnatureaward@axaxl.com from **Tuesday 8th April to Tuesday 29th April at 16:00 CET.**

The **nominees, if they accept, will need to provide the following through the application form that will be shared directly with selected researchers:**

- In addition to basic information such as email and PhD date, requested supporting documents will include:
 1. Short CV (3 pages maximum including a link to an online full CV)
 2. A self-filmed video explaining your research project (in approximately 2-4 minutes) - please email this separate from your application to valuingnatureaward@axaxl.com.
 3. Please ensure your name and research topic is included in the accompanying message.
 4. Main research area with brief explanation (250 words).
 5. Description of three public engagement examples (150 words).
 6. List of 5 most impactful publications, indicating the publication dates and media (e.g. journal, conference etc.).
 7. Further details on current research projects and motivations (250 words).
 8. OPTIONAL: A link to an existing short video presentation e.g. your website or YouTube channel featuring relevant content or evidence of speaking opportunities.

Step 4 – Selection & results publication

The selection committee, which will include external experts, will examine the applications. Candidates will be informed of the decisions by email. The selection committee's decision is final and cannot be appealed. It can neither be disputed nor subject to feedback or justifications. Participation in the award process implies acceptance of the rules and guidelines put forth in this document and the requirements that follow.

Awardee Obligations

The researcher's institution, AXA Research Fund and AXA XL will enter a legal contract for the grant of the award donation. The contract will specify any obligations for the grantee who accepts the award. The award money **must be exclusively dedicated to research purposes.**

[More about AXA XL and AXA Research Fund, part of AXA Group](#)

AXA XL is the P&C and specialty risk division of AXA, known for solving even the most complex risks. From mid-sized companies to the world's largest multinationals, we offer traditional and innovative insurance solutions

and services in over 200 countries and territories. Protecting natural ecosystems is heavily interlinked with addressing climate change and a key consideration in [AXA XL's sustainability strategy](#).

We are committed to going beyond what is expected of us by partnering with academia to back and empower researchers and the scientific community through grants, awards or donations to drive the solutions we need to overcome the world's sustainability problems, in partnership with the AXA Research Fund.

The AXA Research Fund was launched in 2008 to better address the major risks faced by our planet through science. AXA has committed a total of €256M to scientific funding and supported over 720 research projects in the areas of health, climate and environment, and socioeconomics. The AXA Research Fund's mission is to support transformative scientific research and to help inform science-based decision-making in both the public and private sectors.