

Sonian Forest Foundation

Co-ordinator Permanent Secretary Office UNESCO World Heritage 2020 – 2024 'Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe'

Sonian Forest Foundation (m/f/x)

Background

On 07/07/2017 five forest reserves of the Sonian Forest were added to the list of world heritage as part of the serial World Heritage 'Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe'. With regard to Belgium, the following forest reserves were included: two in Brussels (resp. Grippensdelle A consisting of 24,11 ha and Grippensdelle B consisting of 37,38 ha), one in Flanders (forest reserve Joseph Zwaenepoel consisting of 187,34 ha) and two in the Walloon provinces (forest reserves Ticton A consisting of 13,86 ha and Ticton B of 6,5 ha). These five components are surrounded by a buffer zone of 4650,86 ha (this corresponds to the actual perimeter of the Sonian Forest).

Since the decision of the World Heritage Committee of 07/07/2017, the entire serial World Heritage consists of 78 components, spread out over 12 countries, more specifically: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Croatia, Italy, Ukraine, Austria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. More information with regard to the serial world heritage is available on <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1133>.

Currently, another extension dossier has been submitted to obtain advice of the advisory body IUCN. This dossier will complete the series and will thus create an almost comprehensive Pan-European network of primeval beech forests in 20 countries. The new extension dossier is co-ordinated by Switzerland and will be submitted for approval by the World Heritage Committee in 2021.

The recognition of parts of the Sonian Forest is unique in Belgium. The Sonian Forest is the sole Natural World Heritage in Belgium and with this approval, the forest would belong to a select club of highly precious (primeval) beech forests in Europe and, by extension, in the world.

In 1980, the authority with regard to nature conservation was shifted from the national to a regional level. For the Sonian Forest, which was managed by the National Administration 'Waters & Bossen', this reform has split the forest conservation into three regional services. Moreover, no co-ordination structure whatsoever was provided for the three Regions. To solve this problem, the three Regions decided to develop a joint vision for the Sonian Forest, better known as the 'Structural Vision of the Sonian Forest'. The Regions were fully authorized for the conservation and the implementation of the initiatives on their own territory, but the Structural Vision developed a joint framework to face up to the problems threatening the Sonian Forest such as noise and light pollution, infiltration of sewage, the barriers limiting the exchange of animal life and recreation between the parts of the Sonian Forest separated by traffic routes (roads and rail tracks).

For the co-ordination of the Structural Vision, the Regional authorities have decided to set up the Sonian Forest Foundation. The Foundation will take up the following tasks:

- Implementation of the Structural Vision of the Sonian Forest
- Management of all communication with regard to the Sonian Forest
- Improvement of the reception of the public and establishment of an information centre

Recently, the three Regions agreed on a declaration of intent to set up further actions concerning this world heritage. It states the intent to accommodate the permanent secretary office of the series during the period 2020-2024. The declaration of intent decides that the Sonian Forest Foundation will be responsible for the execution of the secretary office of the series.

Job description

You are responsible for the permanent secretary office of the entire serial World Heritage and look after the interests of the entire series.

The task of the secretary office includes at the least:

- The organization of one Joint Management Committee (JMC) a year, alternately in one of the participating countries. The JMC meeting of 2020 will be organized in Belgium (Brussels) from April 27th to April 30d. Practical issues will be covered by the national governments as far as possible. The secretary office will prepare the content of the meeting and will see to it that all agreements are acted on.
- The secretary office conducts all formal communication on behalf of the serial heritage with IUCN and with the national and regional authorities, as well as with the managers of the *component parts* of the serial heritage, on advice of the participating countries.
- The secretary office reports annually to UNESCO in conformity with world heritage regulations and co-ordinates the execution of the periodical report of the series (expected in 2022-2023)
- The secretary office supports potential follow-up missions, only within the available budget, takes up practical arrangements and assures a smooth information flow towards the participating parties and UNESCO headquarters.
- The secretary office actively contributes to the development and submission of proposals by the participating countries as well as third parties, insofar as they are beneficial for the heritage sites of UNESCO. The enhanced protection of the beech forests within the serial world heritage, the publication of biodiversity values of the forests (utilizing the world heritage statute on an educational and touristic level), the scientific research on beech forest ecology and the exchange among managers and authorities of the participating countries will have to be financed by project means mainly. Therefore, as many authorities as possible will have to make use of the possibilities of project financing.

Profile

Degree: Master's degree or equivalent experience ¹

Experience: You have at least 2 years of experience in the following fields:

¹ Insofar as the professional experience obtained is equivalent to the experience of a Master's degree.

- Project management: required
- Reporting: required
- Experience with process guidance, facilitation, negotiation is recommended
- Collaboration in multidisciplinary, multilingual projects in which different levels of authority and different actors of society are involved is recommended

Technical competencies

- You have a basic knowledge of ecological processes and forest conservation
- You are familiar with the convention of UNESCO and the role of the advisory body IUCN in this matter, you have affinities with the theme of natural heritage and you are willing to learn more on the subject matter of heritage.
- Bilingual: French and English, you have an excellent oral and written knowledge of French and English. Knowledge of Dutch is a plus. Required level of knowledge (ERK²). If English / French is not your native language, if you have not obtained a master degree in one of these languages or if you have not obtained the required language certificate, we expect you to obtain these certificates within a year of your possible employment.

Language	Reading	Listening	Interaction	Speech	Written
FR	C1 of B2	C1 of B2	C1 of B2	C1 of B2	C1 of B2
ENG	C1	C1	C1	C1	B2

- You have a driver's licence type B
- You have a good knowledge of Microsoft Office software.

Behavioural competencies

- You are willing to travel.
- You are willing to work evenings and weekends if the job requires so.
- You contribute to the development of a global vision, mission and strategy of the entire series.
- You swiftly switch between different communication styles and you are aware of cultural differences.
- You are pragmatic.
- You are enterprising and you spot opportunities for new projects / initiatives.
- You weigh on a discussion, you negotiate to obtain a win-win situation and you convince stakeholders with various backgrounds.
- You create and maintain a network of international contacts.
- You are flexible and easily adapt to a new context, changing circumstances and different situations. You have an open mind with regard to innovation.
- You act honourably, in concordance with the expectations of the organization, you respect confidentiality, you meet your commitments and steer clear of every hint of partiality.

Terms of employment

- Open-ended contract
- Full-time (38 h/week)
- Pay scale Master's degree, based on the federal wage scale NA22³.

Advantages

- Employment in an ecological and dynamic working environment in the Sonian Forest
- 35 days of leave per year (on a full-time basis)

²Gemeenschappelijk Europees Referentiekader voor Talen:

³ Er zal rekening worden gehouden met maximaal 6 jaar anciënniteit

- Compensatory time off for weekend work (1 for 1)
- Luncheon vouchers (€ 8).
- Subscription public transport
- A service bicycle will be available.
- Flexible working hours

Contact

For more information about the job and the procedure, you can contact Frederik Vaes
0490 66 68 70 – fvaes@leefmilieu.brussels

Or Dries Desloover – 0471/88.05.12 of dries.desloover@vlaanderen.be

Or Gislaine Devillers – 081/20 58 08 of gislaine.devillers@awap.be

Interested?

Please send your cv and motivation by May 17th 2020, at the very latest, to the following
mail address: SollicitatiesANB@vlaanderen.be