

## **Eco Plus! Ecological Harmony Program – TSMC Biodiversity Scholarship and Proposal Grant**

### **I. Background**

The 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15), held in 2022, adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (K-M GBF). The K-M GBF clearly set four long-term goals for 2050 and 23 action-oriented targets to be achieved by 2030, serving as a crucial guiding direction for global biodiversity conservation efforts over the next decade.

Specifically, Action Target 18 calls on countries to expand positive incentives beneficial for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, to improve the efficiency of ecological restoration and adaptation actions.

To fulfill the obligations and responsibilities of biodiversity conservation, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), the Biodiversity Research Institute (TBRI) of the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Taiwan Society of Plant Systematics jointly launched the "Eco Plus! Ecological Harmony Program" collaboration mechanism on International Day for Biological Diversity in 2024. Together, they initiated this Scholarship and Proposal Grant system to support promising talents and crucial ecological research in the field of biodiversity, accelerating ecological restoration and capacity-building for nature education.

### **II. Program Objectives**

- i. To recognize and encourage research and contributions related to biodiversity conservation, enhance public engagement and attention to ecological issues, and promote the mainstreaming of biodiversity.
- ii. To discover and cultivate promising talents in biodiversity, support their growth and development in the field of biodiversity or ecological conservation, elevate the standard of biodiversity professionals, and establish models of excellence in learning.
- iii. To motivate universities, research institutions, and non-governmental organizations or groups to adopt open, innovative thinking, collaborate with cross-disciplinary partners, and propose research and solutions to address biodiversity conservation issues enhance conservation effectiveness and expand influence.
- iv. To encourage biodiversity talents to participate in international exchange, deepen their understanding of global conservation trends, and drive domestic biodiversity development through the absorption, inspiration, and transformation of international experience.

### III. Awards, Eligibility, and Requirements

Applicants must satisfy the eligibility and requirements specified for each award category below. The proposed projects or concepts should focus primarily on biodiversity within Taiwan and align with the 23 Action Targets for 2030 set forth in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Award	Eligibility and Requirements
New Talent Award	<p>i. Currently enrolled university undergraduate students majoring in biology or related fields, both domestically and internationally. Must be engaged in research related to biodiversity conservation in Taiwan.</p> <p>ii. Applications for this award must be submitted under the unit of a university department, research lab, or student club. Applicants may submit proposals as an individual or as a group, and the proposal must be jointly submitted with a supervising advisor.</p> <p>iii. A final thesis or paper summarizing research results must be submitted. Please refer to the specified format guidelines for the "New Talent Award" for detailed rules regarding thesis submission.</p> <p>iv. Action plans previously awarded this grant are ineligible to re-apply with the exact same topic within a two-year period.</p>
Elite Award	<p>i. Individuals currently enrolled in a Master's or Doctoral program in biology or a related field, or having graduated from such a program within the last two years, either domestically or internationally.</p> <p>ii. Master's/Doctoral research must be focused on biodiversity conservation in Taiwan. The research findings must have been published with the applicant as First Author or Corresponding Author in a journal indexed by SCI, SSCI, or A&amp;HCI. The publication date must be on or after January 1, 2020 (including electronic versions with designated volume, issue, and page numbers). Proof must be provided for papers that have been accepted by the academic journals but not yet formally published.)</p> <p>iii. Applicants meeting the above qualifications must obtain consent and recommendation from their supervising professor.</p>
Research Project Proposal Award	<p>i. Proposals may be submitted by domestic or international universities or research institutions.</p> <p>ii. The research duration can be set according to research needs, with a maximum subsidy limit of two years per project. Re-application is required for the third year and beyond, and the outcomes from the previous period will serve as the basis for evaluation. However, the maximum duration for a single topic from the same organization is limited to four years.</p>

In-Depth Cultivation Award	<p>i. Proposals may be submitted by an NGO/NPO/Research Institution/Other Organization. Collaborative applications across different organizations are permitted. As a group entry, proof of the intended implementation site (field) and expected outcomes must be submitted.</p> <p>ii. The program duration may be set according to actual requirements. A site-specific implementation plan (including execution time, resources invested, site location, etc.) and expected results must be submitted, along with tangible outcomes.</p> <p>iii. Proposals are encouraged to present practical implementation plans targeting the previous year's awarded topics (please refer to the official <a href="#">TSMC Biodiversity Scholarship and Proposal Grant website</a>), which will have a greater advantage in the evaluation process.</p> <p>iv. Each project is limited to a maximum subsidy of two years. Re-application is required for the third year and beyond, with previous outcomes serving as the basis for review. However, the maximum duration for a single topic from the same organization is limited to four years.</p>
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#### IV. Submissions

- i. Application Period: From February 1<sup>st</sup> to March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026.
- ii. Award Ceremony: Scheduled to be held in September 2026. (Time and location to be announced later.)
- iii. How to Submit: Online registration website at <https://ecoplus-biodiversityaward.com/>
- iv. Required Application Documents
  1. Documentation required for review of Eligibility and content for each award category
 

**New Talent Award** (1) Application Form (2) Participant Agreement (3) Final Thesis/Paper (4) Final Presentation Slides, (5) Proof of Enrollment.

**Elite Award** (1) Application Form (2) Participant Agreement (3) Research Presentation Slides, (4) Proof of Enrollment or Diploma, (5) Published paper(s) in SCI-level journals and corresponding proof.

**Research Project Proposal Award** (1) Application Form (2) Participant Agreement (3) Research Proposal (Reference can be made to the National Science and Technology Council Project Application Form), (4) Project Presentation Slides, (5) Proof of academic journal publications within the last five years, (6) Details of this project's previous funding and subsidy amounts within the last five years.

**In-Depth Cultivation Award** (1) Application Form (2) Participant Agreement (3) Implementation Plan (Reference can be made to the National Science and Technology

Council Project Application Form), (4) Project Presentation Slides, (5) Details of this project's previous funding and subsidy amounts within the last five years

2. Refer to the Appendix for writing samples.

## V. Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation will generally consist of three stages: **Document Screening, Preliminary Review, and Final Review.**

- i. **Document Screening:** Program organizers will conduct a review of all submitted documents to ensure that the requirements on eligibility, required preparatory materials, and application forms have been met.
- ii. **Preliminary Review:** Applicants who pass document screening will proceed to the preliminary review stage. The evaluation committee will score the document and rank the applications, selecting the most outstanding candidates to advance to Final Review.
- iii. **Final Review:** This stage will be conducted through an oral presentation and an on-site Q&A session. The Evaluation Committee will review, score, and rank the candidates to determine the final award recipients or vacancy. If a recipient is disqualified for any reason after the announcement, no substitutes will be appointed.

## VI. Criteria

- i. **New Talent Award** Applicants shall submit a final dissertation and will be evaluated according to the following criteria:
  - Background and Significance\_25%
  - Promotion Process and Innovative Actions\_25%
  - Substantive Impact or Contribution of the Research Outcome to Taiwan's Biodiversity Conservation\_25%
  - Potential for Future Application or Continued Development\_25%
- ii. **Elite Award** Applicants shall submit a representative publication (paper) that has been published or accepted for publication in an **SCI, SSCI, or A&HCI indexed journal**, along with a description covering the evaluation items, and will be evaluated according to the following criteria:
  - Quality and Significance of the Publishing Journal\_25%
  - Originality and Benchmark Role of the Work\_25%
  - Substantive Impact or Contribution of the Research Outcome to Taiwan's Biodiversity Conservation\_25%
  - Potential for Future Application or Continued Development\_25%

**iii. Research Project Proposal Award** Applicants shall submit a research proposal and will be evaluated according to the following criteria. For continuing proposals addressing the same topic from the same organization, prior achievements will also be considered in the review. Furthermore, the same research project must not be simultaneously submitted to other units or institutions.

- Research Background and Significance\_20%
- Methodology and Implementation Steps\_20%
- Project Timeline and Budget Rationality\_20%
- Innovative Actions and Cross-disciplinary Collaboration\_20%
- Expected Results and Contribution\_20%

**iv. In-Depth Cultivation Award** Applicants shall submit an implementation plan and will be evaluated according to the following criteria. For continuing proposals addressing the same topic from the same organization, prior achievements will also be considered in the review. Furthermore, the same research project must not be simultaneously submitted to other units or institutions.

- Significance of On-Site Conservation Actions\_15%
- Methodology and Implementation Steps\_10%
- Project Timeline and Budget Rationality\_10%
- Cross-Sector Collaboration, e.g., co-proposal between academic institutions and NGO/NPO\_10%
- Expected Results and Contribution\_25%
- Alignment with Topics Awarded in the Previous Year\_30%

## VII. Awards Details

### i. New Talent Award

1. **Winners:** 5 recipients. Each awarded one **trophy** and a prize of **NT\$80,000**.
2. **Selected:** 5 recipients. Each awarded one **Award certificate** and a prize of **NT\$4,000**.

### ii. Elite Award

1. **High Distinction:** 1 recipient. Awarded one trophy and a prize of **NT\$250,000**.
2. **Excellent:** 2 recipients. Each awarded one trophy and a prize of **NT\$150,000**.
3. **Honorable Mention:** 3 recipients. Each awarded one trophy and a prize of **NT\$50,000**.
4. **Selected:** 10 recipients. Each awarded one certificate and a prize of **NT\$6,000**.

**iii. Research Project Proposal Award**

**Winners:** 3 projects. Each project will receive a maximum total subsidy of **NT\$2,000,000** over a **two-year funding period**

**iv. In-Depth Cultivation Award**

**Winners:** 3 projects. Each project will receive a maximum total subsidy of **NT\$2,000,000** over a **two-year funding period**.

**VIII. Entrant Notes, Responsibilities, and Obligations**

- i. Applicants must guarantee that all application materials submitted or provided are true, accurate, and contain no false statements, violations of environmental protection or industrial safety/hygiene regulations, academic misconduct, infringement of others' intellectual property rights, or other legal violations. Any false or inaccurate statement will lead to disqualification. If the lack of authenticity or accuracy prevents the Accepting Unit or the Organizer from providing notification or impacts on the applicant's rights, the Accepting Unit and the Organizer bear no responsibility, and the applicant shall assume all legal liabilities. If the winner violates the above, their application or award status will be revoked upon verification, and they shall return all awarded funds and the trophy/certificate. Furthermore, applicants assume all legal responsibility for any unauthorized use or misappropriation of any third party information or intellectual property rights that results in damage to the Accepting Unit, the Organizer, or any other third party.
- ii. Applicants agree to permanently authorize the Accepting Unit, the Organizer, and their licensees to use the texts, photos, images, videos, personal portraits, and related works or outputs provided during the application and submission process for the promotional purposes of this Grant Program, on a non-exclusive and gratuitous basis. Applicants also agree that the Accepting Unit and the Organizer may use the content without limitation of time, region, or frequency, in ways including but not limited to the following, for subsequent physical or electronic publications:
  1. Public display, broadcast, presentation, recital, screening, transmission, and performance.
  2. Use, copy, reproduce, adapt (including but not limited to digital file formats, conversion into various language versions), or partial editing.
  3. Recording and filming, converting the original work into an audio-visual work and audio work, and using it in promotional materials and media applications (e.g., advertisements, posters, leaflets, magazines, print media, online platforms, etc.).
- iii. All application documents provided by the applicants will not be returned, regardless of whether they are selected or not. All personal information must be identical to the personal information filled out on the application website. Any discrepancy will be considered grounds for non-compliance by the Accepting Unit or the Organizer, and the application will not be accepted or forwarded for review.

- iv. Winners agree to gratuitously cooperate with the Organizer in the production of digital promotional materials, including but not limited to specialized albums, or provide relevant materials. They must also attend the award ceremony, seminars, and other related activities. Winners are required to give speeches or participate in discussions during the events to establish and pass on the spirit of this Grant Program, and assume the responsibility of setting an exemplary learning standard. Qualification as a winner is non-transferable to any third party.
- v. For winners of the Research Project Proposal Award and In-Depth Cultivation Award, the subsidized amount will be disbursed in three installments. The funds must be used entirely for the approved project and cannot be diverted for other purposes. Prior to each disbursement, the following steps must be completed respectively: signing of the contract (including the proposal), submission of the mid-term and final reports, and approval by the Biodiversity Research Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture. If the winner fails to comply or the project is canceled for any reason, the Accepting Unit or the Organizer reserves the right to cancel financial funding and associated resources, and revoke the current year's award status. The winner shall not demand any form of compensation or indemnity from the Accepting Unit or the Organizer.
- vi. Winners of the In-Depth Cultivation Award must submit documentation proving the project's execution site to the TSMC Biodiversity Scholarship and Proposal Grant official website application system for review within two months after the review results are announced on July 11th (Any changes to the announcement date will be based on the revised date). Failure to submit within the deadline, incomplete documentation, or insufficient verification content will lead to the Accepting Unit or the Organizer reserving the right to cancel financial funding and associated resources, which shall be deemed as forfeiting the award. Should this affect subsequent operations or rights, the applicant shall bear the sole responsibility and cannot demand compensation from the Accepting Unit or the Organizer.
- vii. Winners must pay the required tax liability according to the laws of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and complete prize collection procedures as stipulated by the Accepting Unit or the Organizer. Failure to comply will be considered as forfeiting the award, and the winner shall not demand any form of compensation or indemnity from the Accepting Unit or the Organizer.
- viii. The Accepting Unit or the Organizer shall not be liable for any delay, loss, error, inability to recognize, or damage of data logged or transmitted by the applicants due to computer, network, telephone, technical issues, or any event not attributable to the Accepting Unit or the Organizer, which prevents the applicant from participating in this event. Applicants shall not raise any objection based on such circumstances.
- ix. Any applicant who registers for and participates in this program is deemed to have fully read, understood, and agreed to all relevant terms and conditions of this event's plan, and willingly complies with them completely. In case of any violation, the Accepting Unit or the Organizer reserves the right to disqualify the participant and seek compensation for any damage incurred from the applicant.

## **IX. Miscellaneous**

- i. Applicants who register to participate in this Program shall be deemed to consent that the Accepting Unit and the Organizer may collect the applicant's personal data for the purpose of implementing this Program. Before providing any personal data, applicants must thoroughly read and agree to the Personal Data Collection, Processing, and Use Notification Statement issued by the Accepting Unit and the Organizer (detailed below).
- ii. Personal data collected by relevant organizations (including committee members) during official contact and the implementation of this Program must comply with the Personal Data Protection Act and other relevant regulations. To protect the applicants' personal data, all related documents will be handled as confidential material.
- iii. Relevant application forms will be simultaneously published on the websites of TSMC, the Biodiversity Research Institute (TBRI), and the Taiwan Society of Plant Systematics (TSPS).

The Accepting Unit or the Organizer reserves the right to amend, suspend, or cancel the contents of this Program, and any matters not covered in this guideline may be revised and announced later.

## **Personal Data Collection, Processing, and Use Notification Statement**

In accordance with the relevant provisions of the **Personal Data Protection Act**, the Accepting Unit and the Organizer (hereinafter collectively referred to as "the Units") are collecting, processing, and utilizing your personal data for the purpose of implementing the "**Eco Plus! Ecological Harmony Program – TSMC Biodiversity Scholarship and Proposal Grant**" (hereinafter referred to as "the Program"). The Units hereby inform you of the following matters pursuant to the Personal Data Protection Act and related laws. Please read carefully:

- I. The personal data collected and used includes your name, school/institution name, contact information (including but not limited to phone number, email, address), photographs and videos, online media information, and other data that can directly or indirectly identify an individual.
- II. If the personal data you provide is incorrect, outdated, or requires any modification, you must immediately and proactively apply to the Units for correction to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data you provide.
- III. Period, Area, Recipients, and Method of Personal Data Utilization:
  - i. Period of Utilization: The duration necessary for specific purpose, the period stipulated by relevant laws (e.g., Personal Data Protection Act, etc.), the necessary retention period for executing the Program, or the retention period stipulated in individual data retention contracts (whichever is the longest).
  - ii. Area of Utilization: Domestic and foreign locations of the "Recipients of Personal Data Utilization" listed below.
  - iii. Recipients of Personal Data Utilization: The Units, companies and organizations cooperating with the Units to promote the Program, affiliates/related enterprises of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (including but not limited to subsidiaries), institutions utilizing the data pursuant to legal regulations, and recipients consented to by you.
  - iv. Method of Utilization: Automated machine or other non-automated methods in compliance with the Personal Data Protection Act and relevant laws.
- IV. You are free to choose whether to provide the relevant personal data and categories. However, if the refusal to provide the requested personal data and categories affects your eligibility or rights to participate in the Program, the Units shall not be held responsible.
- V. In accordance with Article 3 of the Personal Data Protection Act, you may exercise the following rights regarding your personal data:
  - i. Except for the exceptions stipulated in Article 10 of the Personal Data Protection Act, you may inquire about, review, or request a copy of your personal data from the Units. The Units may charge necessary costs and fees pursuant to Article 14 of the Personal Data Protection Act.
  - ii. You may request the Units to supplement or correct your personal data. However, pursuant to Article 19 of the Enforcement Rules of the Personal Data Protection Act, you should provide an appropriate explanation of the reasons and facts.

- iii. If the Units violate the Personal Data Protection Act in collecting, processing, or utilizing your personal data, you may request the Units to cease the collection, pursuant to Article 11, Paragraph 4 of the Personal Data Protection Act.
- iv. If there is a dispute regarding the accuracy of the personal data, you may request the Units to cease the processing or utilization of your personal data, pursuant to Article 11, Paragraph 2 of the Personal Data Protection Act. However, pursuant to the proviso of the said paragraph, this does not apply if the Units must perform the processing/utilization for the execution of their duties or if the utilization is agreed to by, you in writing and the dispute is noted.
- v. When the specific purpose for the collection of personal data ceases to exist or the period expires, you may request the Units to delete, cease processing, or cease utilizing your personal data, pursuant to Article 11, Paragraph 3 of the Personal Data Protection Act. However, pursuant to the proviso of the said paragraph, this does not apply if the Units must perform the action for the execution of their duties or if the action is agreed to by you in writing.

VI. If you wish to exercise the rights stipulated in Article 3 of the Personal Data Protection Act, you may refer to the website for information on how to exercise these rights. (Program Contact Window: [tsps2006@gmail.com](mailto:tsps2006@gmail.com))

VII. If you provide personal data of others (including but not limited to the personal data of responsible persons, directors, supervisors, managers, or relevant employees of a company or institution), you shall provide the said individual with the contents of the notification obligation required by Article 8, Paragraph 1 of the Personal Data Protection Act, to ensure they are informed and fully aware.

VIII. Confidentiality Obligation Any non-public internal information of the Units that you become aware of or obtain due to this Program shall be kept permanently confidential. You shall use, safeguard, return, and destroy such information in accordance with the Units' instructions. Unauthorized disclosure or commercial use shall result in relevant legal liabilities.

IX. Acceptance of Terms and Notification The Units' project proposal forms and supplementary materials will be provided as electronic files or uploaded as audio/video to the Units' official website. The Units may adjust or change the above contents in accordance with relevant laws. Once announced on the official website or notified to you by other means, you shall be bound by them. Unless otherwise stipulated by law, the Units are not required to notify you in any other manner. By completing the registration to participate in this Program, you indicate that you have read, understood, and agreed to all contents of the Program rules.