

**THE PRINCE BERNHARD CHAIR FOR
INTERNATIONAL NATURE CONSERVATION**

**UTRECHT UNIVERSITY
THE NETHERLANDS**



Chair and Candidate Profile

The “Stichting Leerstoel Prins Bernhard” and Utrecht University are seeking a highly qualified candidate to fill the position of chair holder of The Prince Bernhard Chair for International Nature Conservation for a five-year period, starting September 1st, 2021. The Chair aims to stimulate innovative research in the field of nature conservation and restoration, while contributing to inclusive and sustainable development. Nature conservation and restoration are global top-priorities given the combined challenges of climate change mitigation and adaption, biodiversity restoration and developing nature based-solutions for the future.

The Prince Bernhard Chair holder plays a key role in bridging the gap between conservation theory and practice, bringing together stakeholders that aim to reverse the loss of biodiversity and deterioration of landscapes and strengthen the provision of ecosystem services, worldwide. The chair also plays an important role in teaching (at BSc, MSc and PhD levels) and curriculum development at Utrecht University. Chair holders serve for a term of five years during which they visit Utrecht University for at least one month per year, potentially spread over multiple visits.

The Prince Bernhard Chair offers a high-profile platform for internationally renowned researchers to act at the interface of conservation science, policy and practice. While the Chair is embedded within the department of Biology, chair holders play an important role in initiating multidisciplinary research and teaching within Utrecht University and beyond.

Activities and roles of Prince Bernhard chair holders

- Initiating multidisciplinary research contributing to nature conservation and restoration
- Establishing new international links between Utrecht University and other universities, as well as with policy makers, businesses, practitioners and international nature conservation organizations;
- Providing opportunities for exchange of research staff and students with their host institutions;
- Playing an initiating role in developing proposals in collaboration with Utrecht University staff (mobilization of additional research funding);
- Participating in collaborative research and publication efforts;

- Bringing new viewpoints and expertise on conservation and restoration, thereby enriching academic debates, research and teaching on this field;
- Acting as a broker for conservation science towards conservation practice, policy makers and the media.

Candidate profile for the period 2021 - 2026

An UU commission has formulated a profile for the candidate chair holder during the next term, 2021-2026. The commission proposes the following criteria and qualities of the successful candidate:

- Is an innovative, experienced and internationally leading interdisciplinary researcher in the field of nature conservation;
- Holds a PhD degree and has an excellent scientific publication record in relevant academic fields;
- Has international experience in the conservation science and practice;
- Has a strong affinity for interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and inclusive approaches;
- Has a strong network with international nature organizations and substantial knowledge on current issues in this field;
- Has an affiliation to an education, research or conservation organization;
- Is a stimulating and motivating teacher and research supervisor;
- Is able to connect different stakeholders and people from different disciplines;
- Helps promote diversity in research, teaching and policy.

Female candidates are especially encouraged to apply.

What is the expected role of the Prince Bernhard Chair holder at Utrecht University?

Embedding in the organization

The Prince Bernhard Chair is unique in the Netherlands and is the only chair on international nature conservation at a Dutch University. The chair is embedded within the Ecology and Biodiversity research group (<https://www.uu.nl/en/research/ecology-and-biodiversity>) of the Institute of Environmental Biology within the Department of Biology of the Faculty of Science. The Chair has close cooperation with the special chair on Sustainable Forestry (prof. dr. R.G.A. Boot, director of Tropenbos International), which is also embedded within the Ecology and Biodiversity group, as well as strong links with the research groups Environmental Sciences and Energy and Resources (Faculty of Geosciences, Copernicus Institute for Sustainable Development), and International Development Studies (Faculty of Geosciences, Human Geography and Spatial Planning).

Utrecht University has a number of research programs and collaborative efforts related to the themes of the Prince Bernhard Chair, which are bundled into the UU 'Academy of Ecosystem Services (AES)' and the University strategic theme Pathways to Sustainability. In addition to the Prince Bernhard Chair itself, the following UU-affiliated research entities are involved in the AES: Ecology and Biodiversity (Faculty of Science), Animal Behavior and Cognition (Faculty of Science), the chair on

Sustainable Forestry, and the research groups Environmental Sciences and Energy and Resources (Faculty of Geosciences, Copernicus Institute for Sustainable Development), and International Development Studies (Faculty of Geosciences, Human Geography and Spatial Planning). Involved external partners include WWF, Tropenbos International, the Trésor Foundation and the Foundation Prince Bernhard Chair. In the development of new research activities, the Chair will seek to develop significant collaboration within the research hubs within the university theme of Pathways to Sustainability, especially those related to 'Water, Climate and Future Deltas' and 'Future Food Utrecht'.

Selection committee and procedure

At the request of the foundation "Stichting Leerstoel Prins Bernhard", Utrecht University has formed an advisory committee to define the aims, themes and embedding of the Prince Bernhard Chair and to formulate a profile for a suitable candidate on the Chair for the period 2021 – 2026. The members of this committee serve as the basis for the advisory body during the selection of the new chair holder. The selection process will consist of a written application (CV plus letter of motivation), followed by a series of interviews, consisting of an assessment of background, discussion of research and education priorities, and a presentation of vision for the Chair (see time schedule below).

The selection committee consists of:

- Prof. Dr. G.A. Kowalchuk (UU Biology - chair)
- Drs. A.P.J.M van Hooff (chairman Foundation Prince Bernhard Chair)
- Prof. Dr. H.A.B. Wösten (UU Biology/ Director of Education)
- Prof. Dr. Ir. C.M.J. Pieterse (UU Biology/ Director of Institute of Environmental Biology)
- Prof. Dr. E.B. Zoomers (UU Geosciences)
- Prof. Dr. R.G.A. Boot (UU Biology/Tropenbos International)
- Prof. Dr. P.A. Zuidema (Wageningen University, Forest Ecology and Forest Management)
- Ms. M. Grooten (Director science and learning WWF Netherlands)
- Dr. M. van Kuijk (UU Biology, coördinator Prins Bernhard Chair – secretary)

Background and History of the Prince Bernhard Chair

What is the Prince Bernhard Chair?

The Prince Bernhard Chair for International Nature Conservation at Utrecht University was established in 1987 on the occasion of the 75th birthday of His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard (1911-2004).

The Chair aims to:

- raise awareness among students of international conservation of ecosystems and their related services,
- train Dutch and international students in international aspects of nature conservation research,
- provide and improve the scientific basis for conservation practice,

- develop inclusive strategies for nature conservation and restoration, and
- strengthen the link between conservation and restoration science and practice.

The chair supports a research agenda targeted at issues related to understanding, sustainably utilizing, conserving and restoring the natural resources of the Earth's delicate ecosystems. Particular research areas of interest include: drivers of ecosystem functioning, determinants of biodiversity, climate-resilient ecosystems, combining human and natural equity, nature-inclusive solutions, ecosystem restoration, economic valuation of natural resources, ecosystem carbon balance and consequences of ecosystem degradation and fragmentation. The field of expertise of the candidate need not be restricted to certain biomes or geographical areas.

Why do we need the Prince Bernhard Chair?

Nature and natural resources are under strong pressure worldwide, and the vitality of the planet as well as its human population depends on our ability to responsibly utilize and conserve these resources. Two major steps are required to meet this grand challenge: (1) there must be a general awareness of pressing environmental issues amongst the public, as well as politicians and policy makers, to create the momentum for conservation, and (2) a greater understanding of ecosystem functioning and their capacity to provide ecosystem services is required to provide the mechanistic understanding and tools to inform conservation programs and policy choices. This understanding must also be within a holistic context in which the roles of multiple stakeholders are considered, taking into account the livelihood and equity of affected human populations. The Prince Bernhard Chair seeks to operate at the interface of these major areas to drive scientifically informed environmental advocacy and practice.

There is an increasing demand for knowledge regarding the sustainable and holistic management of ecosystems from nature conservation organizations, governments, companies and societal organizations, to support 'science-based' or 'evidence-based' conservation efforts. The Prince Bernhard Chair supports this science-based conservation agenda by developing multidisciplinary approaches that help link science with practice, thereby not only stimulating nature conservation efforts but also integrating them to the benefit of societal challenges. This can be seen as a Nature-Based approach in which actions are taken to protect, sustainably manage, and restore ecosystems to the mutual benefit of nature and society, especially in relation to the urgent need for climate resilient development. The strong links with WWF, the embedment within the UU Department of Biology and the cooperation with other UU research groups and affiliates provides an excellent opportunity to further develop these critical links.

Why is the chair named after Prince Bernhard?

Prince Bernhard, grandfather of Holland's current monarch, King Willem Willem-Alexander, dedicated over 40 years of his life to nature conservation, from the early 1960s until his death, playing a crucial role in bringing nature conservation to the forefront of international awareness. Prince Bernhard was the first president of the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature), and he was also the initiator of the Peace Park Foundation. In the Netherlands, the Prince was President of the Dutch WWF for over 30 years. Until his death in 2004, Prince Bernhard was closely involved with the activities of his Chair at Utrecht University, regularly participating in seminars, attending inaugural addresses, and maintaining personal contact with the with Chair

holders. Upholding the Prince's spirit of conservation, the foundation for the Prince Bernhard Chair continues to promote an agenda of science-based international nature conservation.

Achievements over the first 30 years of the Prince Bernhard Chair

Over the last 30 years, the Prince Bernhard Chair at Utrecht University has contributed to linking conservation science and practice.

- o Over 1000 students, including over 100 from developing countries, have been trained in conservation issues by Prince Bernhard Chair holders and affiliated lecturers
- o 13 junior scientists from developing countries have been trained in conservation science and now apply their skills at important positions (UN, Ministries, leading conservation organizations)
- o 17 research and training projects have been carried out on biodiversity, conservation and sustainable use in South America, Asia and Africa
- o 30 PhD theses and at least 180 scientific articles related to international nature conservation have been published
- o Over 1500 professionals in conservation have attended seminars and lectures by Chair holders
- o Strong links between Universities, conservation organizations and governments have been created

Funding of the Prince Bernhard Chair

The Chair is overseen by the Foundation "Stichting Leerstoel Prins Bernhard". The Foundation supports the appointment and activities of the chair. The financial support for the chair has traditionally been through an endowment of the "Prins Bernhard Natuurfonds", and more recently funds from the Dutch office of the WWF (WNF, Zeist). The WNF has generously provided its commitment to finance the research and education goals of the Chair through the year 2026. The Faculty of Science of Utrecht University finances all coordination and support activities for the Chair and ensures for the embedding of the chair within the research and education programs of the university (see above).

Former Prince Bernhard Chair holders

1987-1992 *Professor dr. Norman Myers*

Norman Myers has become world-famous for pointing out hidden conservation problems to a wider public. Myers was the inventor of "the hamburger connection", the link between cheap meat and Amazonian deforestation. He also introduced the term "biodiversity hotspots" for threatened regions with high diversity, which is now a leading principle for investment choices in conservation. Prof Myers won numerous awards for creating public awareness of conservation problems. He has been advisor to UN agencies, World Bank and conservation organizations. While in Utrecht, Myers has stimulated students to pursue environmental issues in their studies. Norman Myers is currently visiting professor at various universities worldwide. In 2007, TIME magazine listed Myers as one of the Heroes of the Planet.

1994 - 2003 *Professor dr. Jeffrey A. Sayer*

Having started his professional career as ecological scientist in Zambia, Jeffrey Sayer gradually moved from field work to research management. He is mainly active at the difficult interface of science, conservation, and development. Sayer worked for major

conservation (WWF, IUCN-the World Conservation Union) and development organizations (World Bank, United Nations). He was Director General of a world-leading forest science institute, CIFOR. During two terms at the Prince Bernhard Chair, Sayer focused on the scientific bases for conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests.

2004-2009 *Professor dr. Francis E. Putz*

Francis Putz is an internationally renowned expert on tropical forest ecology and management, with a long list of scientific publications. His practical experience stems from forest research in Asia, South America and Africa. Putz is an advocate of "conservation by use" and challenges some of the claims made by conservation organizations for "fortress protection" in protected areas. He also argues that conservation of tropical forests cannot be separated from their developmental, social and economic contexts. He made a strong plea for sustainable forest management in the tropics. Francis Putz is professor of Botany and Forestry at the University of Florida, United States, and is a frequent guest lecturer in tropical countries. During his professorship at Utrecht, Putz' work focused on sustainable management of tropical forests.

2009-2014 *Professor dr. William F. Laurance*

William Laurance is Distinguished Research Professor at James Cook University, Australia, where his research focuses on the impacts of intensive land-uses, such as habitat fragmentation, logging, and wildfires, on tropical forests and species, as well as climate change and conservation policy. His research spans the tropical world, and he has spent over a quarter century working in the Amazon, Africa, Southeast Asia, and tropical Australia. He has been a highly influential researcher and environmental advocate as demonstrated by over 300 hundred publications, including dozens in *Science* and *Nature*. Laurance has received numerous prestigious various awards, including an Australian Laureate Award and the 2012 Dr. A.H. Heineken Prize for Environmental Sciences. He is also deeply involved with the Environmental Leadership and Training Initiative, a joint program of Yale University and the Smithsonian Institution to train environmental decision-makers across Latin America and Southeast Asia.

2015-2020 *Professor dr. Jaboury Ghazoul*

Prof Jaboury Ghazoul is an internationally leading plant ecologist, working mainly on tropical forest ecology and land use change. He is Centre Director of the Centre for Sustainable Forest and Landscapes at The University of Edinburgh as well as Professor of Ecosystem Management at ETH Zürich. During his term as chair holder, he focused strongly on 'degraded' forest land, and its rehabilitation and restoration. His goal has been to develop partnerships that help not only to halt environmentally destructive activities, but also establish means by which conservationists, land managers and policy makers can work together to recover and restore healthy forests on the extensive areas of degraded land that now exists across the world. This approach is exemplified by his renowned efforts within the Oil Palm Adaptive Landscapes (OPAL) project. During his tenure, co-supervised research by a Prince Bernhard Chair postdoc, on narratives and perceptions of different stakeholders involved in forest restoration, related to barriers and strategies to scale up restoration efforts. He also advanced teaching approaches within the field, challenging a range of international students to examine how they can make a real impact through innovative approaches such as serious gaming.

Conditions and how to apply

Additional information or questions regarding positioning of the Chair within Utrecht University can be addressed to prof. George Kowalchuk: g.a.kowalchuk@uu.nl. Questions related to the application procedure or the Chair itself can be addressed to Dr. Marijke van Kuijk (M.vankuijk@uu.nl), or please visit the website of the Prince Bernhard Chair at: <https://www.princebernhardchair.org/> and [Prince Bernhard Chair | Universiteit Utrecht \(uu.nl\)](#).

To apply, please send your motivation letter, vision for education and research and a CV before June 25th, 2021 to the following address: M.vankuijk@uu.nl.