

What are the SP+?

The Student Project Weeks represent a dynamic collaboration among European universities, offering students the unique opportunity to engage in hands-on academic activities taking action to address global change.



Who can participate?

This course is open to students enrolled in university programs at the undergraduate (final year) and postgraduate level.



Where and when?

In 2024 three SP+ with up to 20 participants will be held in the Costa Vicentina National Park near Aljezur, Portugal in January, June/July and September/October.



Supervisor and sending university

Supervisors are welcome to join us in Aljezur to lead field projects and combine the data collection with their own research interest. We actively encourage the establishment of long-term projects, collaborative publications, and the submission of funding proposals.

Course integration

Most of our partners integrated the SP+ in their program delivery as either a part of a module or work experience. Practical experience gained during the SP+ is recognised for professional accreditation.

STUDENT PROJECT WEEKS (SP+)

make a difference: address some of the most pressing environmental challenges

What will be done?

The participants will form research groups of 3-5 students from different academic disciplines to investigate environmental topics of their interest. The overarching conservation themes for student projects have been identified in consultation with local stakeholders:

- 1) Forest: In this group, students will delve into rewilding efforts, biodiversity conservation, invasive species control, and fire prevention measures.
- 2) River: Participants will explore aspects of river management. Additionally, they will investigate sedimentological and geo-morphological changes along the river channel.
- 3) Coast: The coastal group can choose between assessing the impact of invasive plants, mapping geo hazards, studying the effects of (surf) tourism or investigating pollution related to fisheries.

All SP+ topics contribute valuable insights to address environmental challenges based on rigorous, relevant, and impactful science. The projects foster interdisciplinary and international collaboration.



Location

The participants will share a villa in Arrifana, Portugal where they live, cook and work together. Groups will take turns managing shopping and meal preparation. The diverse food from all across Europe has been delicious, healthy, vegetarian and enormous fun.

The villa is located just 10 minutes walk away from one of the most beautiful beaches, offering participants the chance to enjoy a quick swim after their fieldwork.

Programme structure

The first day will comprise site visits with the whole group and a guided introduction to the local environment and its challenges. The second day will be dedicated to comprehensive guidance, concentrating on honing individual fieldwork techniques.

Following this, each group will formulate their research questions, organize their field days, and outline their investigative plans. The groups will operate independently, engaging in fieldwork, including interviews and questionnaires with local stakeholders and residents.

In the middle of the program, a designated day-off will provide participants with the opportunity to go surfing, mountain biking or join a cetacean watching tour.

Concluding the program on the 13th day, each group will present their findings to the local community.



Added benefits

Participants in the program will acquire transferable skills as they learn to strategically plan their fieldwork within a diverse, international, and multidisciplinary research team. Guided by expert mentors, students will explore field techniques in an exciting environment. Interactions with local stakeholders and NGOs will enable them to establish a network of professional contacts, while contributing significantly to environmental research. In addition to these skills, participants will gain proficiency in effectively communicating their findings to both academic and non-academic audiences. This communication will be showcased through an outreach event on the program's final day and in subsequent publications.

Costs

The two-week program is priced at €1106, covering accommodation in Aljezur, project support and supervision, field equipment, as well as food and on-site transport. Travel to Aljezur is not included.



Successful applicants have the opportunity to access Erasmus+ mobility funding to offset the full program cost.

Partner universities



How to join

The application process is online, non-bureaucratic and quick: <https://ec.kobotoolbox.org/x/IWN4RLvx>. Selected students connect with the international office of their university to access the Erasmus funding. Email course coordinator Dr Axel Bamberger: ceresinternationalproject@gmail.com

