

Young Academics Award 2018

Sustainable water management in the Alps



Research and innovation are key elements for promoting sustainable development in the Alps and young academics play a crucial role in shaping the future of the Alps. Aim of the Young Academics Award is to recognize this key role by awarding outstanding Master's theses carried out on relevant alpine topics. This is an initiative of the Austrian Presidency of the Alpine Convention and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, with the support of the Alpine Convention Infopoints of Domodossola (Italy), Grand Paradis (Italy), Morbegno (Italy) and Tolmin (Slovenia). The initiative is in collaboration with ISCAR.

This edition of the award focuses on "Sustainable water management in the Alps"

Water is an important and delicate topic in the Alps as well as in their surrounding regions. Residents rely on water for a number of different uses, from drinking water to the provision of ecosystem services, from the generation of energy to the provision of touristic services. At the same time, water is an endangered resource, because of the seasonal variations in its quantity and to the threats to its quality due for example to pollution. Furthermore, the need to find a balance between the use and the protection of Alpine waters, as well as to look for innovative solutions in order to ensure a sustainable use of water are key topics in the framework of the many Alpine Convention activities related to green economy.

For all these reasons the topic of "Sustainable water management in the Alps" was chosen for the 2018 edition of the Young Academics Award. It is indeed also up to young scientists to find such solutions, to carry out research, to provide the innovative thinking that will contribute to make the Alps a better place to live.

Contributions are therefore welcome on the issue of sustainable water management in the Alps and particularly, but not limited to, on the related sub-topics:

- Analysis and solutions for conflicting uses of water among different sectors (tourism, agriculture, energy production etc..).
- Excess of water and scarcity of water.
- Sustainable water management and efficient water use.

Contributions from students from all disciplines are encouraged.

The submitted Master's theses have to be completed between 01.01.2016 and 31.10.2018.

The prizes

Three main prizes will be directly awarded by the Austrian Presidency and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention:

- 1st prize: 1,000 €
- 2nd prize: 750 €
- 3rd prize: 500 €

Four additional "Infopoint prizes" will be awarded to works thematically relevant and with a main and specific focus on the areas where these partners are situated and active:

- *Infopoint Domodossola*, awarded by the association ARS.UNI.VCO: 500 €;
- *Infopoint Grand Paradis*, awarded by the Fondation Grand Paradis: voucher for a 5-night stay with breakfast for two people¹ at the Hotel Saint Nicolas (Saint-Nicolas, Aosta)¹;
- *Infopoint Morbegno*: 500 €;
- *Infopoint Tolmin*, awarded by the Soča Valley Development Center: 500 €.

¹ The voucher will be valid for one year after its emission and cannot be used during the main festivities.

Requirements, selection process and criteria

The submitted works need to be Master's theses (or equivalent level) and must have been presented in the years 2016, 2017 or by 31 October 2018. Additionally, the participants must hold a Master's Degree (second-cycle academic education) achieved before 31 January 2019. Candidates who have not discussed their thesis but have already submitted it by 31 October 2018, can still apply with the condition that they discuss the thesis and achieve their title by 31 January 2019 (a certificate will have to be provided before the final workshop).

The received theses will be evaluated by an international scientific jury invited by the Alpine Convention, based on a two-step process.

In the first step, the participants will be assessed based on the evaluation of the submitted documents (see section *How to apply*), and according to the following criteria:

- Relevance of the Master's thesis with the topic and sub-topics stated in the call.
- Direct relevance for the Alpine territory.
- Relevance (and, if applicable, innovativeness) of the theoretical and empirical contribution.
- Interdisciplinary merit.
- If applicable, practical implications for the Alpine Convention area.

In the *second step*, eight final candidates for the main prizes will be invited to a one-day workshop in Austria in the framework of the next [Alpine Conference](#), where they will have the possibility to present their works and discuss them directly with the jury. The winners will be awarded at the presence of the relevant participating Ministers.

The four Infopoint prizes will solely be awarded to submitted works that focus mainly and specifically on the areas of Verbano-Cusio-Ossola (Italy, *Infopoint Domodossola*), Grand Paradis National Park (Italy, *Infopoint Grand Paradis*), Valtellina (Italy, *Infopoint Morbegno*) and Soča Valley (Slovenia, *Infopoint Tolmin*) respectively. Should these conditions not be met, the prizes offered by the partners of the Alpine Convention may not be awarded. The winners of the Infopoint prizes will also be invited to the award ceremony. Either an Infopoint prize or a main prize can be awarded to one thesis.

How to apply

First step

In order to participate *in the first step*, candidates are invited to complete the [online application form](#) in English language and in all its parts by **31.10.2018**, attaching to it:

1. an abstract of max. 5 pages A4 of the thesis in English;
2. a digital copy (in pdf format) of the complete work (in one of the Alpine languages (German, French, Italian, Slovenian) or in English);
3. a copy of the graduation certification with marks. If the final exam has not been held, the candidate should present a declaration with the foreseen date of the final exam.

Second step

The applicants for the main prizes admitted to the *second step* will have to provide a presentation for the workshop and a poster summarizing their research (in A0 format). The candidates to the Infopoint prizes will be required to prepare a poster on their thesis. Moreover, applicants should be available to travel on the dates of the workshop (dates will be communicated as soon as possible, check our website for updates). The award ceremony will take place on this occasion and the travel and overnight costs will be reimbursed by the Alpine Convention.

Deadlines

Call closes: **31.10.2018**.

Notification to successful applicants to the second step: within **15.02.2019**.

For finalists: deadline for sending the final documentation (presentation and poster): **17.03.2019**

Workshop and award ceremony: **02-04 April 2019**, in the framework of the **XV Alpine Conference, Innsbruck, Austria**.

Contacts

For any question you can contact yaa@alpconv.org.

Disclaimer

By participating in the award you grant the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention (PSAC) the right to publish your entire work and the abstract on the website www.alpconv.org as well as on the website of the above mentioned partners (Fondation Grand Paradis, ARS.UNI.VCO, Infopoint Morbegno, Soča Valley Development Center).

No rights nor obligations can be derived by the participants against the PSAC from the participation in the award.

Further information:

<http://www.alpconv.org/en/activities/younggeneration/yaa2018/>

Online application form:

<https://registration.alpconv.org/index.php/634157?lang=en>

Questions?

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