Nature Foundation
SINT MAARTEN

INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

Marine Policy and Outreach

Type	On-site, full-time (40 hours/week)
Benefits	• Until mid-March, housing on the premises provided along with USD 300/month stipend • After mid-March, USD 800/month stipend provided but independent housing must be sought
Timeline	Early January – early May 2026 (~12 weeks) *(Minimum 3-month internship periods are strongly preferred and may be eligible for some financial reimbursements, but alternative timelines will be considered for the ideal candidate)*
Nationality	Local, Dutch or French, or American applicants preferred due to visa requirements.
Application deadline	6 November 2026 (projected decision 2 weeks from deadline)

1. Background

1.1 Host

The Nature Foundation (NFSXM) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization committed to protecting and restoring the island's diverse natural ecosystems. Established in 1997, we lead interdisciplinary efforts in research, education, environmental management, and policy development. Officially recognized as the marine and terrestrial ecosystem authority of Sint Maarten, we manage protected areas such as the Man of War Shoal Marine Park and advise the government on ecological matters. Our small, dedicated team works closely with local and international partners to advance conservation, promote sustainability, and foster environmental awareness for the benefit of both nature and the community.

1.2 Project

The Marine Elasmobranch Nursery Area Advocacy (MENAA) project works to protect Sint Maarten's coastal waters as a critical nursery habitat for sharks and rays, including two IUCN Red List endangered species: the Caribbean reef shark and the spotted eagle ray. Operating at the intersection of marine conservation, community engagement, and environmental policy, the project pursues a three-prolonged approach. On the research side, MENAA seeks to understand the current fishery landscape of the island through a qualitative assessment of fishing activities, and shed light on threats to vulnerable marine species. On the community side, MENAA promotes sustainable fishing practices through incentive-based programs that link financial benefits to educational co-developed workshops and fishery monitoring, fostering voluntary cooperation among local fishers. On the policy side, the project supports government implementation of conservation measures, including a legal review of fisheries legislation and an update to the Man of War Shoal Marine Park management plan.

MENAA is funded by BESTLIFE2030 (Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas), a grant scheme coordinated by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) focused on preserving and restoring biodiversity in the EU's Outermost Regions (Ors) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs), which host rich biodiversity but face significant climate change threats.

2. Description

2.1 Overview

The **Marine Policy and Outreach internship** offers an immersive opportunity to influence national marine conservation and fisheries legislation while working closely with fishers, conservationists, and other stakeholders in support of sharks and rays in Sint Maarten. Working directly under the Project Manager, the intern will assist in preparing an updated landscape report and inventory of the Sint Maarten fishery, and support legal experts and environmental consultants in their work reviewing applicable legislation and updating the marine park management plan. The internship will involve background research, desk work, fish market visits, light fishery data input activities, policymaker engagement, formal advices,

educational content, and awareness strategies. The ideal intern is enthusiastic about community involvement and well as highly interested in marine/fishery policies in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), particularly in the Caribbean. Interns should have a high level of self-direction and intellectual curiosity, and be flexible, determined, and positive.

2.2 Responsibilities

- **Research and documentation (25%)**
  - Conduct background research and literature reviews on elasmobranch ecology, fishery management, and conservation frameworks relevant to SIDS
  - Support the qualitative assessment of Sint Maarten's fishing landscape through interviews, observation notes, and data synthesis
  - Assist consultants in compiling and organizing technical inputs for the Man of War Shoal Marine Park management plan update and legislative review
- **Community outreach and engagement (20%)**
  - Support implementation of the cooperative community incentive program by coordinating with fishers and tracking participation
  - Help build and maintain relationships with fisherfolk, market vendors, and other ocean users to foster voluntary cooperation
- **Field activities (20%)**
  - Conduct fish market visits and assist with fishery monitoring activities, including data collection on catch composition and fishing effort
  - Support elasmobranch-related field observations and assist consultants during site visits relevant to project activities
- **Policy and legal support (15%)**
  - Support drafting of formal policy advices, briefings, and recommendations for policymaker engagement
  - Help coordinate stakeholder engagement sessions and regional collaboration efforts in support of elasmobranch protections
- **Miscellaneous (15%)**
  - Support additional Nature Foundation activities such as beach clean-ups, shark tagging, site maintenance, and other research programs
  - Assist with routine maintenance and inventory of organizational equipment

- Manage small group of high school interns and other temporary visitors

3. Qualifications

3.1 Age and education

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must be a current student or recent graduate working toward a bachelor's or master's degree, or a recent bachelor's graduate within two (2) years
    - Applicants from a variety of educational backgrounds will be considered. Those majoring in communications, biology, ecology, oceanography, environmental studies, maritime studies, history, political science, or anthropology or sociology are encouraged to apply.

3.2 Experience and knowledge

- Experience in conducting stakeholder engagement and community initiatives
- Interest in government, fisheries, politics, and other marine conservation issues
- Understanding of issues pertaining to Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
- Ability to conduct in-depth research at length, as well as some monotonous tasks
- Experience reporting, transcribing, and organizing of content and logistics
- Excellent research, writing, and communication skills for a variety of audiences
- Confidence with public presentations, town hall-style meetings, and focus groups
- Some experience with light fieldwork under mostly comfortable conditions
- Capable of both independent work and work under one direct supervisor
- Experience using Canva, Microsoft 365, and social media platforms
- Attitude marked by patience, flexibility, determination, and positivity
- Familiarity of the Caribbean region is preferred but not required

3.3 Language, nationality, and location

- Oral and written fluency in English
- Ability to legally reside on St. Maarten for the internship duration
- Local, Dutch, or American applicants are preferred due to visa requirements
- Proficiency in French, Dutch, or Spanish is a plus

3.4 Other

- Valid medical insurance for duration of role is mandatory
- Valid driver's license is highly preferred
- Ability to safely lift and move heavy items (up to 20 kg or 44 lbs)

4. Application process

Eligible candidates should submit their application to Project Manager Sabrine Brismeur by **6 November 2026** via email at **menaa@naturefoundationsxm.org.** The application should include the following contents:

- Up-to-date curriculum vitae/résumé (PDF)
- Cover letter/letter of motivation with available start and end dates (PDF)
- *Optional: Maximum 3 samples of work – writing, video, graphic design, etc.*

Please ensure that the subject line reads "Application: Marine Policy and Outreach Internship." If you do not receive a response that your application has been received within five (5) business days, please send a WhatsApp message to (+1) 721-581-6365 and follow up on its status.