

Call for applications

CENSE Summer School

People and Nature *lack of* $\sqrt{\text{Connectedness}}$

July 26–31, 2026

Venue: Convento da Arrábida, Azeitão, Portugal



The school will be held within the Arrábida Natural Park, 40 km south of Lisbon, Portugal, within a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve



The 2026 CENSE Advanced Training Summer School theme is **“People and Nature (lack of) Connectedness”**. We welcome contributions exploring critical concepts, innovative tools or models, and group case studies on one or more of the following:

- People–nature connectedness; ecosystem services; nature restoration; urban ecology; environmental governance and resilience
- Advances in valuing nature (e.g., relational & instrumental frameworks, including IPBES)
- Immersive, speculative, and creative approaches to reduce disconnection from nature
- Living in/with Protected Areas and multi-scale environmental governance
- Nature connectedness and risk
- Urban ecology, resilience, and adaptive capacity within/across communities
- Historical perspectives and diverse geographies (Global South/North; urban/rural; marine/other)
- Policy design and analysis to reconnect with nature across scales.

The Summer School seeks innovative ways to reverse declining human–nature relationships, especially in urban contexts. We aim to shape new connections between people and nature in research and everyday life and identify pathways to scale these initiatives.

Speakers include: **Alice Nunes** (CE3C Univ. of Lisbon & CHANGE) | **Christopher Ives** (University of Nottingham; online) | **Elena Korosteleva** (IGSD, University of Warwick) | **Francisco Ferreira** (CENSE NOVA FCT & CHANGE) | **Harini Nagendra** (Azim Premji University) | **Harriet Richmond** (Research Development, University of Warwick) | **Jane Webb** (SCFS, University of Warwick) | **Lory Barile** (Economics, University of Warwick) | **Paula Antunes** (CENSE NOVA FCT & CHANGE) | **Rita Lopes** (CENSE NOVA FCT & CHANGE) | **Teresa Pinto Correia** (MED Univ. of Évora & CHANGE)

Scan QR code to apply



Important Dates

Application submission deadline: April 10
Notification of acceptance: April 30
Summer School: July 26–31

Application process

We invite interdisciplinary **Early Career Researchers** (PhD students from year 2+ & postdoctoral researchers) and **Environmental Practitioners** (professionals with a clear activity focus related to nature and the environment) to join us for a five-day intense event focusing on exchange, co-production of knowledge, creative skills training, and network-building, such that we build capacity to address pressing global and local challenges.

The event will offer opportunities for an in-depth discussion around the submitted projects, to be complemented by methodologies and skills training sessions, study visits, keynote talks, groupwork and other social activities, both in the venue site and within the protected area.

Prospective participants should submit their **CV**, and an **extended abstract** of their research with a brief **cover letter** and **endorsement from their Supervisors** by **April 10, 2026**. Successful candidates will be notified by the end of April 2026. If selected, participants will be asked to participate in online sessions prior to the event and prepare a 10-minute presentation for the Advanced Training Summer School.

Travel costs will be covered by sending institutions or the candidates, in addition to a **€ 400 fee** to contribute towards accommodation and subsistence during the 5-day event. Remaining costs regarding the Summer School will be covered for all participants by the organizers (accommodation will be in double rooms within the Convent and full-board meals included, as well as provisions for transportation towards study visits).

Places are limited, with a **maximum of 24 participants**, and the **selection criteria** will be based on (but not limited to) the following considerations in the selection of top candidates:

- Suitability of the submitted extended abstract to the call's theme
- Interdisciplinary background of the participant
- Strong cover letter to explain how participation within the summer school would support/relate to the applicants' study and research or practice
- Career stage of participants (preference will be given to those at mid to advanced stages of their research/practice)
- Gender diversity and participants from underrepresented geographies/areas of conflict will be prioritized



As part of their participation in the Advanced Training Summer School, Early Career Researchers and Practitioners will be asked to work in groups addressing a topic related to the overall theme. To this end, participants will have a chance to collaborate with researchers from different countries and geographic areas, build their networks, combine their interdisciplinary knowledge, skills, and expertise to critically reflect on pressing global challenges of our time.

Projects may focus on mapping different kinds of interrelationships (nature with individuals, organizations, local communities, countries) and cover **topics** such as:

- Detrimental and beneficial effects to good quality of human life
- Intergenerational erosion of human-nature relationships as an underlying cause of environmental degradation/crises,
- Distinct challenges for urban/rural (including Protected Areas) dwellers
- Human-nature connectedness as powerful strategy for transformative change.

The international format should facilitate collaboration between students from different countries, also potentiating transboundary or comparative studies. The ultimate goal of the group project work is to **catalyse inter and transdisciplinary research** as a pillar for enabling new forms for connecting people with nature across the globe.

To this end, participants will be asked to develop a **group project**, focusing on a major contemporary sustainability challenge (in any sector of their choice, or focusing on theoretical perspectives) and emphasizing the central role of the relationship with nature.

After breaking into groups, participants will have a chance to discuss their project ideas with tutors, who will assist in the selection and development of the topic. Although some time has been allocated for the development of the group projects, groups are asked to work on their own schedule throughout the duration of the Summer School.

Depending on the chosen topic, tutors will discuss available resources for the Early Career Researchers to explore. In general, a focus on **participatory methods**, which will be emphasized throughout the event, will be encouraged. Presentations can take a variety of forms, including but not limited to:

- PowerPoint presentations
- Poster or video presentations
- Panel group discussions
- Interactive discussions with the audience
- Podcasts
- Storytelling, poetry, art or other forms of innovative expression

For further information contact us (cense.ss2026@fct.unl.pt)



Expected outcomes

- Raise awareness about multiple aspects of Human-Nature relationships
- Foster a global network of Early Career Researcher to continue knowledge production and exchange
- Critically engage with interdisciplinary concepts and methods to promote 'more-than-human' thinking and action
- Generate learning resources for future schools
- Develop Legacy and Sustainability strategy for the summer school (with the participants)

CENSE 2026 Advanced Training Summer School edition will be held in collaboration with the **University of Warwick's Institute for Global Sustainable Development** and the **EUTOPIA Connected Community HoPE Nexus: A Habitat of Planetary Ecologies for Sustainable Futures**



About CENSE

CENSE is a research centre of the Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering at the NOVA School of Science and Technology, NOVA University of Lisbon, focusing on environmental and sustainability research. The long-term aim of CENSE is for its Advanced Training Summer School Series on Sustainable Futures to become an internationally-relevant biennial event that attracts high quality researchers and practitioners related to sustainability and the environment. Advanced training in CENSE aims to enhance the transformational and interdisciplinary research culture to build a global platform for cutting-edge collaboration, impact and place-based learning. In addition, it wants to foster creative skills training, collaborative research and practice-led environments – thus, ultimately, investing into a new generation of enthusiastic environment-conscious researchers and practitioners to tackle existing and emerging challenges of sustainable development, both locally and globally.

Organizing Committee

CENSE NOVA FCT

Yorgos Stratoudakis
Francisco Ferreira
Nuno Videira
Jessica Loureiro
Sofia Teixeira

University of Warwick

Elena Korosteleva
Jane Watt
Harriet Richmond