

INTERNSHIP POLICY

Agreed by the SMT on 10 December 2024

Entry into force: 1 January 2025

CONTEXT

Purpose and objective of internships

The EEB offers internships as a **growth and learning opportunity**, typically for young people just starting their careers after graduating, to provide them with **skills and professional experience** that will help them to make career choices, such as pursuing a job in the (environmental) non-profit sector, and to advance their careers. An internship with the EEB should provide them with the opportunity of **'learning by doing'** by applying more abstract knowledge and skills acquired throughout their education to practical tasks in an environmental non-profit to find out where they want to go next in their professional development, and how to eventually use their interest and passion, their skills and knowledge in the non-profit sector.

An internship at the EEB can have one or several objectives, such as:

- Understand how an international environmental NGO operates;
- Gain knowledge of the issues and advocacy activities related to a policy area;
- Get insights into the legislative process at EU level;
- Understand the EEB's communications work and develop skills in political communication and campaigning;
- Develop skills and experience related to events management;
- Learn about membership and governance issues in non-profit associations;
- Develop skills and experience related to HR, administration and/or financial management in a non-profit.

Commitment to quality internships

The EEB is cognisant of the fact that **internships often come with unfair conditions**, and that bad internships can have negative impacts on interns such as financial hardship, stress and mental health issues, or delayed career progression. The pressure to accomplish internships as part of entering the job market can exclude those who cannot afford to do unpaid or poorly paid internships or voluntary roles. The way internships are set up can contribute to perpetuating inequalities.

The EEB is **committed to fairness and to quality internships** which allow interns to learn and grow through the experience while ensuring good conditions for interns.

The commitment to quality internship includes (but is not limited to):

- All internships are based on **written contracts**.
- Each intern has a clear description of their **learning programme**.
- The EEB does **not offer unpaid internships or volunteer positions**.
- The **remuneration for interns follows the legal framework** for CIP contracts in Belgium and **covers the living costs** in Brussels and offers additional safeguards to prevent precarious situations.
- An intern **cannot fill a structural role** at the EEB or be **used to fill a gap** (e.g. during parental leave or long-term sick leave).
- Each internship has a **fixed number of months** with a **limit of 6 months**.
- There is a **limited number of one intern per team** and **per year** at the EEB, or two interns per year per team in case the two interns have clearly different tasks and roles.
- Each intern has a **line manager** who offers support, supervision and knowledge sharing, and a team supporting their stay;
- The **HR team** oversees the quality of internships and ensures that sufficient supervision is provided by teams.
- While internship contracts in Belgium are not considered to establish an employment relationship and interns can therefore not access the same social protection as employees, the EEB guarantees an **insurance against accidents at work** and provides information on how CIPS can access **health insurance** in Belgium.
- Interns are offered **paid leave and paid sick leave**.

GENERAL RULES

Types of internships

The EEB does **not offer unpaid internships or volunteer positions**.

The EEB offers paid internships under a **Convention d'Immersion Professionnelle (CIP)**, which is a scheme for organisations based in the Brussels Region under the supervision of Bruxelles Formation. A CIP internship is therefore a paid internship with a trilateral contract between the intern, the EEB and Bruxelles Formation and is regulated under Belgian law. A CIP contract **does not constitute an employment relationship**, and an intern is therefore not an employee of the organisation.

The **job title used for internship** is 'Assistant' (for instance, Assistant for Environmental Justice).

CIP internships are **only available to graduates**, that is, individuals who are not students anymore. CIP contracts cannot be offered to enrolled students.

As a rule, the EEB will **offer internships to recent graduates** instead of candidates who have already done internships after their graduation or have substantive experience relevant to their role to avoid a situation where the EEB contributes to keeping graduates in the 'internship trap'. Through the recruitment process (including the job ads for internships), we will look for candidates with either no or up to a maximum of one year of relevant work experience after their graduation (internships or employment). HR will ensure a preselection of eligible candidates.

While CIP internships are typically offered to recent graduates, the opportunity may, under certain circumstances, be **offered to people other than recent graduates who are interested in doing an internship at the EEB**, for instance, where a career changer or somebody who has not been in employment for a longer time, would like to find out if working in the environmental nonprofit sector could be a future prospect. (Please note: the EEB does not require career changers to do an internship as many skills are usually transferable; however, career changers sometimes prefer to 'test' an unfamiliar environment first before choosing to change careers).

The EEB may in the future develop other **internship schemes, including for students**, in collaboration with educational institutions and/or organisations supporting internships for students (that is, people enrolled in an educational programme at the time of their internship). Any such scheme must ensure that the costs of living are covered for the interns. The EEB may develop such schemes, for instance, where they allow to attract more diverse interns to the EEB, such as students from Central, Eastern and Southeastern European countries and countries outside the EU, students from less privileged backgrounds or where the schemes help to increase diversity in the EEB. Any such collaboration on student internships needs to be based on an MoU with clear conditionalities.

The EEB can engage in **relationships with researchers**, such as students working on a thesis, PhD students or more senior researchers, who come and stay at the EEB, for instance, to interview EEB staff and other stakeholders and to do research. Researchers coming to the EEB are not considered interns or EEB staff. They are not remunerated. Visits from researchers are usually short, typically a few to several weeks. They are based on a written mutual agreement, based on prior approval from the HR team, on the research topic and the collaboration on their research, including how the EEB will be able to use their work. The EEB will only engage in such relationships where their research projects are directly relevant to the EEB's work, where researchers can benefit from the EEB's expertise and the EEB can in return benefit from the researchers' work. The researchers can only engage in research-related work.

Duration of internship

As a rule, internships at the EEB are **maximum 6 months long**. This length should be sufficient to meet the learning objectives while limiting the time during which interns live on the internship remuneration to a brief period. A maximum of 6 months in combination with the limitation of the number of interns per team is also meant to **prevent that structural jobs are filled by interns**.

Interns who are neither Belgian citizens nor graduates from Belgian universities are, according to the legal framework, eligible for CIP contracts for up to 12 months (as opposed to 6 months for Belgians and Belgian graduates). However, the EEB would **only offer more than 6 months of a CIP contract under exceptional circumstances**, for instance, where an employment contract can be offered to an intern a few months later due to funding coming in with a few months' delay. Any such case needs to be justified and must be approved by Senior Management, and information will be shared with the CPPT. These exceptional cases will be reviewed annually to ensure the general rule is applied.ⁱ

Number of interns and prevention of interns filling structural roles

As a rule, there can only be **one CIP per team** at any given time, and only one intern per team per year, or, in exceptional cases, two interns per team per year in case the two interns have clearly distinct roles and responsibilities. Therefore, **the same type of internship cannot be offered in each team repeatedly** as this would mean a structurally needed role is permanently filled by interns.

Job opportunities after an internship

An **internship with the EEB does not come with a job guarantee**. However, the EEB **seeks to offer job opportunities** to interns wherever possible and where the intern is a good match for the EEB and is interested in staying with the EEB.

The line manager of the intern will ensure **clear communication with the intern about potential job prospects** after their internship in line with the EEB recruitment roadmap. Around **three months before the end of a CIP contract**, the line manager must have a **conversation about prospects** for a new job and make it clear whether there may be an opportunity or whether there will not be any job opportunity after the internship. **At least 2 months before the end of the contract, the intern will receive clear communication about the EEB being able or not to offer a new contract in writing from HR**. The line managers and teams will refrain from creating false expectations and

will also support interns in finding jobs in other organisations, for instance, by providing, where needed, reference letters or serving as reference persons.

If an intern is offered a job following the completion of an internship at the EEB, their experience will be assessed in line with the EEB's salary policy, and they will be informed how their experience has been evaluated.

RECRUITMENT, LINE MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

Recruitment and diversity recruitment

In principle, **internships are announced on the EEB's website** and advertised in the channels typically used by the internship to ensure **competitive recruitment processes** and to prevent advantages for candidates with a network in Brussels. **Internships can, where justifiable, be directly offered to one candidate only**, for instance, where potential interns have been identified through the EEB's network of members and partners, and where a direct recruitment of an intern helps to fulfil a certain objective, such as making internships more accessible to candidates from underrepresented countries or backgrounds.

The job ad for the internship position will lay out the **internship conditions in a clear and transparent** manner.

The line manager in charge of the recruitment needs to consider for the starting date that the approval **process with Bruxelles Formation takes 3-4 weeks**, that is, after the selection process, the internship can start around two months later. The intern is not allowed to start before the approval from Bruxelles Formation.

The EEB **encourages applications from low-income and under-represented backgrounds** in environmental NGOs and seeks to identify opportunities to reach out to potential candidates from diverse backgrounds, for instance, by working together with partner organisations to make internships at the EEB attractive for a diverse range of candidates, and by making sure that the remuneration offered covers all costs of living without the need for interns to bring in additional finances.

Line management responsibilities

Line management with close supervision and support must be guaranteed by the team. Line managers should have adequate capacity to supervise the intern. This will be **verified by HR** before the recruitment process. A **buddy will also be assigned** to the intern to make sure they can quickly integrate into the EEB, and the intern has an

additional person to talk to about practicalities of 'Brussels' life.' The HR Team will also regularly contact the intern to ensure any concerns are communicated and addressed. Interns are also encouraged to reach out to **Persons of Trust** to discuss any concerns they may have about their supervisor, their team, compliance with the internship policy or any other concern of psychosocial (wellbeing) risks. Persons of trust can provide a listening ear and help identify ways forward to resolve the issue.

The line manager will draft the **job ad and internship learning and work plan** subject to HR's approval. The draft learning and work plans will be shared and discussed with the intern and their feedback integrated as much as is feasible. They will maintain regular contact, provide necessary support, and feedback and ensure the intern's learning and development as per the internship programme.

As an internship is often the intern's first working experience, the line manager and the team should ensure that the **intern is supported throughout their internship**. The line manager and team need to make sure the intern has **regular team contacts** even where people telework. This will include organising weekly 1:1 between the line manager and intern as well as a team meeting, conducting a review 3 months into the internship and ensuring that, should line managers work remotely, they will coordinate an in-person office day with the intern.

The line manager is responsible for ensuring that **interns do not work overtime** (as defined in the EEB policy on overtime) and that there is a clear expectation for interns to leave at 6 pm (or when the agreed working time ends).

Line managers are further responsible to ensure that interns' **tasks are appropriate for an internship**, as set out below.

If the line manager is absent for a prolonged period, as soon as the team is notified, a new line manager within the team will be designated that should be able to provide supervision on the topics the intern is working on. Should the prolonged period of absence be unexpected, a new line manager will be appointed within two weeks.

If supervisory meetings do not occur with sufficient frequency for the intern to be adequately supported, the intern should raise the issue with the HR team or one of the Trusted Person to address the issue and find a solution. Interns are also encouraged to freely reach out to the intern representative in the CPPT to raise any concerns or issues they may have during their internship.

At the end of the internship, the intern will have an **exit interview** in line with the EEB's guidance on exit interviews.

The first week

To welcome and onboard the intern during the first week of the internship, the **line manager will be present on at least the first two days** and other team members should also be present and meet the intern **during their first week**.

During the first week, the line manager and the intern will have a meeting to present the work of the team and the EEB and to **establish a workplan** together with the intern based on the learning plan approved by Bruxelles Formation. This will include:

- an assessment of the intern's profile, including skills, experience, knowledge, and expectations;
- an overview of the content of the work, delivery dates where appropriate, and responsibilities;
- the intern's learning objectives and learning style;
- learning opportunities, such as trainings, attendance of meetings and events;
- an agreement on the date and time of the regular weekly meetings.

The line manager will ensure the trainee is provided with necessary tools to deliver their work.

The intern will have a meeting with the HR Team during their first week to discuss the internship policy and assign their buddy and explain the roles of the Prevention Advisor and Trusted Persons.

Regular feedback and knowledge sharing

Line managers will have a weekly 1:1 meeting with the intern to:

- check in on the intern's wellbeing and any issues;
- support and encourage the intern's work;
- review the work plan;
- follow up on action points;
- follow up on and identify learning and training opportunities;
- share opportunities for attending events;
- ensure they learn about and understand the EEB and how their role contributes;
- ensure a fair, realistic and manageable workload;
- Ensure moments of knowledge sharing with the intern.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERN

Responsibilities of and expectations towards the intern

The intern must adhere to the **internship learning and work plan**, and **instructions** given and must demonstrate a **willingness to apply and develop their knowledge and skills**. Interns are also encouraged to be proactive and will be given the possibility to attend events and conferences during their working hours for their exposure and learning. They are encouraged to propose tasks they would like to take up and to take on the opportunities offered by the EEB.

Legal obligations of the intern

The intern must **comply with Belgian legal requirements** and **register with the municipality ('commune')** within 3 months of arriving in Belgium, in any case as soon as possible, and communicate their national registration number to the HR team.

The intern can choose to either **continue using their country-of-origin health insurance** where this is more advantageous or **register to the Belgian *mutuelle*** (health insurance). Registering in the commune will give them the option of registering with the *mutuelle* as a resident. The HR team will help to make sure the intern is covered by a Belgian health insurance where this is needed.

If the intern **receives social benefits**, they must inform the relevant authorities in their Member State of the existence of their CIP contract to make sure such a contract is compliant.

Interns are expected to **follow the EEB's internal work regulations and policies**.

WORKING CONDITIONS, ALLOWANCE AND BENEFITS

Working hours

The intern works **38 hours per week in a hybrid set-up** with working from the EEB office and working from home as per the EEB's internal regulation and teleworking policy.

The intern will fill in **monthly timecards** in the EEB's internal tools for time reporting.

Allowance and benefits

The objective of allowances and benefits paid to interns is to make sure interns can **cover the basic costs of living during their internship** (such as rent and utilities, food and subsistence, health, and mobility cost). Interns should not be obliged to use up savings or depend on financial help from their families during their internship.

According to Belgian legislation a CIP contract is not considered as an employment contract, and it is not subject to social security contributions.

With the package of allowances and benefits, the **EEB strives to offer a fair level of remuneration** which avoids interns being in precarious situations or internships only be affordable where additional financial support is available.

The intern receives a **monthly allowance of 1.300,00 EUR** plus **monetary and non-monetary benefits** as outlined below.

The amount is subject to regular adjustments considering increases in the cost of living and inflation and will be subject to indexation once a year for 1 January (even though indexation is not foreseen by the legal framework).

The EEB offers the following monetary and non-monetary benefits:

- A contribution to travel on public transport through the monthly cost of a STIB card or the use of a rented bicycle or scooter (up to the price of the monthly STIB card).
- Lunch vouchers for every working day with the same value offered to all staff members.
- Teleworking allowance with the same value offered to all staff members.
- The EEB's conditions regarding holidays and sick leave apply to interns (that is, paid leave, paid sick leave, paid leave for compelling reasons).

Trainings

Interns will be able to attend **trainings organised by the EEB in-house including formal and informal training** and peer learning sessions. Interns can also attend **external training where relevant and where free of cost**. Where needed, and where not covered through in-house group trainings or free trainings, interns can also, together with their line managers, and following the EEB Training Policy, **make a request for paid external training** (which will be approved if it is essential for the intern to grow their skills in line with their learning programme and if it cannot be offered otherwise).

Intern representation

The EEB has a « **Committee pour la Prévention et la Protection au Travail (CPPT)** » including elected staff representatives. Whilst interns cannot have a formal member of the CPPT, they have **observer status** to ensure representation. The observer is appointed by the trade union members. Participation in the CPPT meetings and any preparatory work is part of the intern's working time.

ROLES AND TASKS OF INTERNS

Interns will do **substantive work** and contribute to the **EEB's work programme and project deliverables**, considering their abilities and interests, and ensuring that the tasks they realise ensure that they are **building their skills**. Defining the role and task of each intern will make sure the tasks are **appropriate** for interns and not overburden them, while being **meaningful and beneficial to both the intern and the EEB**.

All tasks fulfilled by an intern need to come with **guidance and support from their line manager**. The EEB expects a **certain level of autonomy** from interns in implementing their tasks, and a willingness to learn and challenges themselves with new tasks beyond their comfort zone. At the same time, interns can **never be left alone with tasks**, should **feel comfortable** with their tasks and have the **right to decline tasks** if they are too challenging. Their line manager cannot delegate tasks to them which overwhelm them or are not appropriate for interns (see examples below).

The **role of an intern is different from that of a regular staff member**. It is, however, **not possible to have an absolute separation** between tasks that are appropriate for interns and tasks that are fulfilled by regular staff members, in particular Associate Officer or Officers.

The context in which tasks are provided to the interns matters significantly:

- Tasks should, as much as possible, be defined in the learning programme and work plan. Where new tasks come up, which is possible in a fast-changing environment, the line manager needs to make sure the intern has sufficient time to take on new tasks.
- All tasks need to come with an explanation. The team or line manager cannot expect any previous knowledge or experience. No question is a stupid question, and line managers need to be understanding and patient with any hesitation or question from the side of the intern.
- Tasks can never be presented with a short deadline. The intern cannot be asked to work under time pressure and sufficient deadlines must be clearly communicated before.

- The intern can never be asked to complete a task outside their working hours. Interns can, voluntarily, join event that take place outside their working hours. The time spent at the event should be compensated in line with the EEB's Overtime policy.
- The intern can never be blamed if the quality of the task performed was not sufficient, and if a staff member needs to step in to complete the task or to ensure its quality.
- The intern cannot be presented with a task where they feel that their delivery of the tasks will have a significant impact, for instance, on the timely finalisation of a project delivery or a major event. The line manager maintains the responsibility for the delivery of any deliverables or tasks that are significant for the team, the organisation or in the context of a project.
- The intern can always decline additional tasks or tasks which do not seem to be appropriate for an intern or which are too challenging, where they have not been agreed in the learning programme and work plan. There will be no negative consequences if interns decline tasks that were not agreed before, or that are not appropriate for them.

ANNEX 1

Typical tasks and not appropriate tasks for interns

The following table provides guidance about typical tasks for interns, and tasks that can be considered as not appropriate for interns. This list is not exhaustive. It is meant to provide guidance to both line managers and interns.

Typical tasks	Not appropriate tasks
Events and meetings	
Support the organisation of working group meetings or EEB events or conferences including meeting and event preparation, communication with venues and service providers, logistical support, setting up pre- and post-meetings, sending out invitations, etc.	Be responsible for the organisation of a WG meeting or event or conference.
Provide draft minutes for meetings and event, following guidance from the line manager about the format for minutes, finalise minutes with the opportunity to ask for feedback.	Be automatically assigned the minute taker in all or most of the meetings they attend.
Intervene in EEB events where appropriate, for instance, make a small presentation during an EEB Working Group meeting on a subject prepared together with the line manager and where the intern is ready for smaller public speaking roles.	Speaking at larger, external EEB events. Speak on complex or controversial matters in Working Groups or other EEB intern events. Any kind of exposure the intern is not ready for.
Facilitate parts of meetings with EEB members or partners if the intern feels comfortable doing so and receives support in preparing their facilitation.	Facilitation or moderation of larger internal, external, and high-level events.
Help with the preparation and follow-up of meetings the EEB is organising with other coalitions or campaigns.	Organise external meetings alone.
Represent the EEB in friendly meetings of coalitions and campaigns the EEB is part of where the responsible staff member is	Represent the EEB in coalition or campaign meetings where difficult discussions or decisions are expected.

unavailable and where the interns is sufficiently briefed and feels comfortable.	Represent the EEB in any high-level fora such as EC Expert Groups or stakeholder fora.
Liaise through email or phone calls with the assistants of MEPs / MEPs to ask for meetings.	Liaise with assistants of MEPs / MEPs on overly complex matters, in particular if controversial.
Research, policy and advocacy	
Coordinate EEB members in the development of policy positions, for instance, by asking for input to a joint document, communicating deadlines and reviewing comments, under supervision of the responsible Working Group Chair.	Be responsible for the development of an EEB policy position with EEB members and/or a Working Group. Coordinate members' input to controversial positions.
Liaise through email with the assistants of MEPs to share position papers other advocacy tools or organise meetings.	
Join meetings with MEPs and other high-level stakeholders, eventually intervene in such meetings as appropriate.	Meet with MEPs or other high-level stakeholders alone to present EEB positions.
Attend meetings and events and report relevant findings to colleagues.	Travel alone for the EEB to events and conferences abroad. Attend any meetings and events alone where there might be a hostile or difficult atmosphere.
Conduct specific research tasks such as research the positions of other stakeholders or review scientific literature on a current topic.	
Contribute to policy documents and position papers or draft a policy document with guidance from their line manager.	Draft policy documents without guidance and/or under time pressure. Lead on the development of policy documents and be responsible their timely delivery.
Draft chapter or parts of EEB report with the opportunity to request assistance or get feedback from the line manager or team. Where chapters to reports and articles have been drafted or written by interns, this should be acknowledged where the publication mentions authors.	Be responsible for an EEB report.

Monitor developments in European legislation on a certain file, following guidance from their line manager.	Be asked to provide guidance or expertise on certain policy files to other EEB colleagues or EEB members without further support.
Administration, financial and project management	
Set up Excel sheets with administrative information such as participants' list, monitoring sheets for small budgets etc. with the needed support from an experienced colleague.	Oversee project budgets.
Review reimbursement claims and check for completeness.	Accounting of expenses, payment of invoices and reimbursements.
Contribute to a narrative report for an EEB project following guidance from their line manager. ..	Oversee the narrative report of an EEB project.
Keep track of project related tasks.	Be responsible for timelines and the delivery of project deliverables.
Communication	
Contribute to the preparation and writing of communications content (articles, press releases, social media messages, etc.).	Be responsible and publish communications content. Prepare communications material on short notice and/or under time pressure.
Develop and design communication materials such as visuals and newsletters with support from their line manager.	
Support the EEB communications team in monitoring media coverage and communicating relevant findings.	
Research media contacts.	Represent the EEB towards journalists or the media. Give interviews or provide journalists with background information over the phone or in a call.
Fundraising	
Participate in brainstorming on concept notes or project proposals and make small contributions to the writing of concept notes, e.g. researching and drafting one	Draft or write concept notes or project proposals.

chapter or paragraph, with clear guidance.eeb	
Do background research on funders, for instance, their priorities or recently funded projects.	Be responsible for identifying new funders for an area of work.
	Draft project budgets.
	Liaise with potential donors such as cold calls or pitching ideas through email.

ⁱ In the first year of application of this policy, that is, the year 2025, the SMT may decide on exceptions to this rule and allow for 12 months internships where a team had already planned for such an internship or where recruitments were already underway at the time of adoption of this policy. This is in no way meant to undermine the objectives of this policy and will only be allowed for in exceptions. The SMT will inform the CPPT on any such exception.