



Job Advertisement

Research Associate (30 h/week)

for UfU Central Asia in Astana

ABOUT UfU and UfU Central Asia

The Independent Institute for Environmental Issues (UfU) is a Berlin-based, non-profit and scientifically grounded environmental institute with more than 35 years of experience in environmental protection, climate policy and sustainable development.

UfU Central Asia is being established in Astana as an independent, public-interest think tank. Its mission is to strengthen evidence-based environmental and climate policy in Kazakhstan and, in the longer term, Central Asia. The focus areas include climate change, carbon farming, soil and water management, and sustainable agriculture.

UfU Central Asia operates under the scientific responsibility of UfU Berlin and in accordance with internationally recognised standards of scientific integrity, transparency and neutrality. It is conceived as a long-term institutional structure rather than a short-term project platform.

More information: <https://www.ufu.de/en/>

ABOUT THE POSITION

Planned start: July 2026

Location: Astana

Working time: 30 hours per week

Initial contract: fixed-term, subject to applicable employment law in Kazakhstan (extension intended)

The Research Associate will contribute to the research and analytical work of UfU Central Asia during its start-up phase. The position combines applied environmental research, policy-oriented analysis and structured project implementation within a small interdisciplinary team.

The Research Associate supports the implementation of annual work plans in coordination with the Coordinator in Astana and in close cooperation with UfU Berlin. The role requires analytical strength, structured working methods and a strong commitment to scientific quality and public-interest principles.

The employment relationship may include a probationary period in accordance with applicable labour law in Kazakhstan.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Design and implement research activities in the areas of:
 - climate change impacts and adaptation
 - soil health and carbon farming
 - water management
 - sustainable and regenerative agriculture
- Contribute to the preparation of policy briefs, analytical reports and background studies
- Conduct literature reviews, data analysis and field-based assessments using appropriate digital and analytical tools
- Support the development of pilot and demonstration activities (e.g. soil monitoring, carbon farming approaches)
- Participate in the organisation and implementation of stakeholder workshops and dialogue formats
- Support the design and delivery of capacity-building formats for public institutions, academia and practitioners

- Support the maintenance and gradual expansion of UfU Central Asia's professional networks
- Support project management processes, including coordination of activities, timelines and structured documentation in cooperation with the Coordinator
- Provide structured inputs for project implementation and internal documentation (e.g. meeting minutes, progress tracking)
- Support the preparation of reporting and financial documentation in coordination with the Coordinator and the finance team in Berlin
- Contribute to fundraising activities through concept development and proposal input

REQUIREMENTS:

- University degree (Master's level or higher) in environmental sciences, geography, agroecology, agricultural sciences or a related discipline
- Several years of relevant work experience in comparable project or research contexts
- Experience in research methodology and applied environmental project work
- Experience in project management and structured project implementation processes
- Experience in donor-funded project contexts and reporting requirements is an asset
- Strong analytical and writing skills
- Ability to produce clear, structured and policy-relevant written outputs in English (e.g. briefs, reports, background notes)
- Confident use of standard office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Fluency in Kazakh and Russian; very good command of English; basic German skills desirable
- Ability to work independently within a small team structure
- Commitment to scientific quality, transparency and public-interest principles
- Willingness to travel within Kazakhstan, Central Asia and to Germany for professional purposes

WHAT WE OFFER:

- A research-oriented position within a newly established independent think tank
- A start-up working context with high responsibility and close cooperation with UfU Berlin
- Opportunities to contribute to policy-relevant environmental research and institutional development
- Professional exchange with national and international partners
- Remuneration and benefits in line with UfU's internal pay structure, adapted to applicable employment, tax and social security regulations in Kazakhstan
- Possibility of partial remote work, depending on project needs

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Please submit your application (motivation letter and relevant documents combined in one PDF file, max. 5 MB) by 15 May 2026 to:

Sami Çeltikoğlu
sami.celtikoglu@ufu.de

Interviews are expected to take place in late May 2026.

Please note:

- employment conditions will be governed by applicable labour and tax regulations in the Republic of Kazakhstan,
- this recruitment process is subject to the required approvals by the competent authorities in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

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