



Job Advertisement

## **Senior Research Associate**

**Scientific Lead** (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:** August 2026

**Location:** Astana

**Working time:** 30 hours per week

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

The Senior Research Associate will play a key role in establishing the scientific profile of UfU Central Asia during its initial phase and beyond. The position combines applied environmental research, policy-oriented analysis and structured project implementation while gradually developing a small interdisciplinary research team.

The Senior Research Associate works in close cooperation with the head of the regional office in Astana and with the UfU Berlin team. The position requires a strong scientific background, proven leadership experience and a commitment to institutional development that aligns with UfU's mission – namely, a clear commitment to scientific quality, policy-relevant research, transparency and public interest principles.

The position is intended to strengthen UfU Central Asia's scientific profile as an independent think tank and contributing to its long-term institutional and scientific development, including its future readiness for accreditation as a scientific institute in Kazakhstan.

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

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Lead and design 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 and supervise literature reviews, data analysis, and field-based assessments using appropriate digital and analytical tools

- Contribute to the development of pilot and demonstration activities (e.g. soil monitoring, carbon farming approaches)
- Represent UfU Central Asia in national and international forums, including stakeholder workshops, dialogue formats, and scientific conferences
- Supervise junior researchers or external experts where relevant, and contribute to the development of future scientific capabilities, with the long-term goal of achieving UfU Central Asia's accreditation as a scientific institute
- Contribute to the design and delivery of capacity-building formats for public institutions, academia and practitioners
- Contribute to the maintenance and gradual expansion of UfU Central Asia's professional networks
- Develop and implement annual work plans in coordination with the head of the regional office in Astana and in close cooperation with UfU Berlin
- Ensure structured internal documentation (e.g. meeting minutes, progress tracking)
- Coordinate reporting and financial documentation in coordination with the head of the regional office and the finance team in Berlin
- Support the development of conceptual approaches and ideas for new UfU projects, including fundraising and proposal writing

## REQUIREMENTS:

- PhD in environmental sciences (geography, agroecology, agricultural sciences, agricultural economics or a related discipline) strongly preferred. A Master's degree in one of these disciplines is required
- Proven scientific track record, including at least one peer-reviewed publication
- Several years of relevant professional experience in applied environmental research, project-oriented analysis, think tank work, academic research, or donor-funded contexts
- Proven experience in research methodology and analytical writing
- Experience in project management and structured project implementation processes
- Experience in research coordination, quality assurance, or supervision of junior researchers or external experts is an asset
- Experience in donor-funded project environments and reporting processes is an asset
- Strong ability to produce clear, structured and policy-relevant written outputs in English (e.g. policy briefs, reports, background papers, research publications)
- 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 in a small team structure and to contribute to the development of scientific working standards
- 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 leadership role in a newly established, independent think tank with high responsibility and direct impact on institutional development
- Close collaboration with UfU Berlin and international partners in a research-oriented, interdisciplinary environment
- Opportunities to shape policy-relevant environmental research and contribute to UfU's strategic goals in Central Asia
- 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 20 June 2026 to:

Sami Çeltikoğlu  
[sami.celtikoglu@ufu.de](mailto:sami.celtikoglu@ufu.de)

Interviews are expected to take place between 22 June and 03 July 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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