



UNIVERSITY  
OF CENTRAL ASIA

**Senior Research Scientist, Long-term Socio-Ecological Systems Research and Environmental Monitoring**

**Duty Station:** Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

**Mountain Societies Research Institute**

**Deadline:** 31 July 2016

**Background**

The University of Central Asia (UCA) is a private (not for profit), secular University whose charter has been signed by the Presidents of Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, and His Highness the Aga Khan, ratified by the parliaments of the founding states and registered with the United Nations. UCA is the first internationally chartered university in the world. UCA's mission is to foster the socio-economic development of Central Asia, particularly its mountain societies, while helping the peoples of the region preserve and draw upon their rich cultural heritages as assets for the future.

UCA's **Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI)** is a University-wide research institute that seeks to generate, disseminate and promote the application of knowledge for the development of mountainous regions and their societies. MSRI aims to fulfill five complementary objectives:

1. **Generate and disseminate relevant knowledge** based on scientific research
2. **Strengthen regional capacities** to conduct research relevant for mountain societies
3. **Inform development policy and practice** through sound research and critical syntheses
4. **Become a knowledge hub in Central Asia** for scholars, practitioners and policy makers
5. **Inform UCA's academic programs** with a primary focus on mountain societies

MSRI focuses on both the social and the natural science dimensions of mountain societies and their economies and environments in the Central Asia region.

Founded in 2011, MSRI is now entering a second phase of development and growth, and seeks to recruit an energetic, mid-career Senior Research Scientist with proven experience of team-based research and/or development projects, generally interdisciplinary in nature, focused on Climate Change Adaptation; along with specific training and expertise/experience in related fields such as Environmental Management, Natural or Earth Sciences, Development Studies, Regional Planning, etc. The position should commence within 2016 (preferably September 2016).

**Central Administration Office**

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### **Summary of the Position:**

Qualified and experienced applicants are sought to fill a Senior Research position at the Mountain Societies Research Institute, University of Central Asia. It is expected that several complementary areas of research experience (or development practice) in natural sciences will come ‘packaged’ with the above focal areas of expertise, to ensure that appropriate linkages can be made across projects at MSRI. In addition, the candidate should be able to contribute toward the translation of knowledge for different audiences – as dissemination of knowledge constitutes one of the core objectives of the University’s development-oriented ethos.

The position will involve (i) the development and implementation of applied **research projects**, (ii) **mentoring** of research colleagues in a variety of research fields, (iii) **administrative support** for projects and programs (e.g. for fund-raising, working with UCA Grants & Partnerships), and (iv) participation in strategic **vision development** at the Institute level.

Overall, the candidate will be expected to develop a program of research focused on long-term **environmental and ecological monitoring**. In the context of high risk of **natural hazard** disasters in mountain regions of Central Asia, these also should be considered (especially in light of their impacts on mountain societies; not primarily as a study of earth sciences). Mitigation of impacts of environmental change and natural hazards through ecosystem-based adaptation is of special interest at MSRI. In addition, this new program of research should be embedded in a broader framework of **integrated watershed management**. At the same time, a variety of biological and chemical elements in the natural environment may have negative impacts on human health and well-being, hence some expertise in **biogeochemistry** (in relation to both water and land) also is sought. This will allow MSRI to explore opportunities for applied research around the occurrence of critical elements in the landscape including heavy metals and soil nutrients, which may be present naturally or due to anthropogenic causes such as mining or melting permafrost.

**Specific areas of research** are likely to include the following (contingent on project grants):

- Long term socio-ecological systems research and environmental monitoring
- Landscape & biodiversity conservation and habitat restoration
- Integrated watershed management
- Environment and health
- Modeling and GIS tools

### **Main Duties and Responsibilities**

- Lead in the design and implementation of transdisciplinary, applied research within the thematic areas outlined above. Responsibilities will include assuming the leadership of several projects (or project components) already underway, as well as co-developing new research within MSRI’s broad development-oriented programmatic parameters

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- Advance and spearhead UCA's 'Learning Landscapes' research realm, both in conceptual/theoretical as well as practical (implementation) terms
- Define roles and responsibilities and recruit/develop dynamic research teams including Central Asian research fellows and associate researchers from local partner institutions, and guide and support implementation collaborators. Also promote strong partnerships with international institutions and researchers recognized within their respective fields
- Work closely with UCA Grants & Partnerships to jointly develop relevant, cutting-edge research proposals and also to manage successful external grants
- Develop MSRI as a knowledge and resource hub for researchers, practitioners and policy makers interested in mountain societies. Also actively develop or maintain relationships with noteworthy academic institutions and researchers, both locally and internationally
- Support UCA Academic Affairs in the development of curriculum and course materials, as required; especially for the Earth & Environmental Sciences undergraduate program and the Mountain Economies graduate program (which will be located in Khorog, Tajikistan)
- Support the Director (and other senior research scientists) with strategic administrative duties for the strengthening or advancement of the Institute and University

### **Required Qualifications and Experience**

- Demonstrate collegiality and a willingness to participate in all aspects of the activities of the Institute
- PhD in a relevant discipline, and at least five years of relevant research experience. Additional experience as development (or conservation) practitioner an asset
- Excellent conceptual skills in identifying information and knowledge gaps and research opportunities
- Demonstrated abilities in the development of research projects, their implementation, and building and maintaining dynamic research team
- Highly motivated to mentor and strengthen researchers from the Central Asian region, including other early or mid-career research fellows (colleagues) working at MSRI
- Strong track record of peer-reviewed publications (commensurate with experience)
- Experience writing successful grant proposals and managing externally funded research
- Ability to work in developing/emerging countries and to communicate effectively with partners and stakeholders from different backgrounds, including scientific, managerial and other non-scientific backgrounds. Flexibility and ability to work in the start-up environment of a young academic institution
- Excellent English-language writing skills

### **Desired Qualifications**

- Knowledge of issues relevant to mountain societies and mountain area development
- Knowledge of the greater Central Asia region (following UNESCO's geographic scope)
- Working knowledge of Russian language, and/or one or more Central Asian languages

**How to apply:**

Please send a cover letter explaining your interest to work at MSRI/UCA and your experience in relation to the advertised position, CV, and contact information for three references to [hr.recruitment@ucentralasia.org](mailto:hr.recruitment@ucentralasia.org) by 31 July 2016. As your application e-mail subject, please write: “Sr. Research Scientist, SES”.

*Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.*

Review other job vacancies at: <http://www.ucentralasia.org/About/CurrentVacancies>

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The University of Central Asia (UCA) was founded in 2000. The Presidents of Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan and His Highness the Aga Khan signed the International Treaty and Charter establishing this secular and private University.

UCA consists of its Undergraduate School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Professional and Continuing Education, the Institute of Public Policy and Administration, the Mountain Societies Research Institute, the Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit, the Central Asian Faculty Development Programme and the Aga Khan Humanities Project. The University brings with it the commitment and partnership of the Aga Khan Development Network.

The University is advancing construction of three residential campuses in Khorog, Tajikistan; Naryn, Kyrgyz Republic; and Tekeli, Kazakhstan that will serve 3,600 students when fully operational. UCA will launch its undergraduate degree programmes at its campuses in Naryn in September 2016, in Khorog in 2017, and in Tekeli in 2019.

For more information on UCA, please visit [www.ucentralasia.org](http://www.ucentralasia.org).

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