Bonn, Germany

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Research Associate – Flood Risks and Adaptation Pathways
(Personnel Service Agreement – PSA)

Organizational Unit : United Nations University - Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS)

Reference Number : 2021/UNU/EHS/PSA/RA/18

Application : hrbonn@vie.unu.edu

Closing Date : 04 April 2021

United Nations University Objectives
The United Nations University (UNU) is an international community of scholars, engaged in research, postgraduate teaching and capacity development and dissemination of knowledge in furthering the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The mission of UNU is to contribute, through research and capacity building, to efforts to resolve the pressing global problems that are the concern of the United Nations and its Member States. For more information, please visit http://unu.edu.

United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) established in December 2003, is part of the UNU system, a worldwide network of research and training institutes. Its mission is to advance human security through knowledge-based approaches to reducing vulnerability and environmental risks. For more information, please visit http://ehs.unu.edu/.

Vulnerability Assessment, Risk Management & Adaptive Planning (VARMAP) Section

The VARMAP section conducts policy-oriented research on vulnerabilities and risks to inform risk reduction and adaptation choices in the context of global change. Its vision is to provide actionable knowledge on systemic risks and pathways to sustainability. VARMAP develops and applies conceptual frameworks and scientific methods to assess socio-economic vulnerability and risk in the context of natural hazards, environmental change and societal transformation. The section explores opportunities to reduce risks and to evaluate competing adaptation options. In doing so, VARMAP examines ways to strengthen adaptive governance. VARMAP has a strong focus on urban areas and rural-urban linkages. Drawing on scenario techniques and dynamic assessment tools, it examines the trends in vulnerability and adaptive capacity as societies undergo wider cultural, economic, demographic and political transformation. VARMAP convenes an interdisciplinary team of researchers and has a wide network of scientific and practical partners. It draws on a mixed methods approach, integrating qualitative and
quantitative tools for the analysis. The section combines a global focus with clusters of specific regional expertise, notably in Southeast Asia, South Asia, East Asia, West Africa and Europe.

For detailed information please visit: https://ehs.unu.edu/about/departments/varmap#overview

**FloodAdaptVN Project**

Central Viet Nam is characterized by rapid urbanization, particularly in small and medium-sized coastal cities. At the same time, the region is facing an increase in precipitation and heavy rainfall events, which, combined with land use changes, result in more frequent and intense flooding. In this context, the overall aim of the FloodAdaptVN project is to analyze and ultimately reduce present-day and future flood risk in highly flood prone urban regions of Central Vietnam using the city of Hué and its hinterland as a case study. More specifically, the project aims at (i) better understanding and root causes, spatial patterns and dynamics of present-day and future flood risk, (ii) investigating both, entry points for and barriers to the implementation of risk reduction, risk transfer, and adaptation solutions (with a focus on ecosystem-based solutions), and (iii) developing a decision support tool for prioritizing among different risk reduction and adaptation measures based on their impact reduction, social acceptance, long-term sustainability and cost-efficiency. FloodAdaptVN is a four year project funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) as part of the funding initiative “Sustainable development of urban regions”. UNU-EHS contributes to the project with three of its sections (i.e. VARMAP, EVES and MCII) and leads the assessment of flood risks and the work package on risk reduction, risk transfer and adaptation solutions. Additionally, UNU-EHS contributes to the development of future risk scenarios, planned capacity building, knowledge transfer, and dissemination activities in the project, as well as to the mainstreaming of project outcomes into planning and policy processes in the region.

**Responsibilities**

Under the guidance of the Head of the VARMAP section and the project manager, the successful candidate will be entrusted with the following tasks:

- Undertake desk study and expert consultation to identify relevant drivers of flood risks for people, assets and sectors in the Huong river basin in Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam
- Support the participatory co-development of impact (cause-effect) chains showing how different environmental, socio-economic, physical and political factors contribute to flood risk(s) in the river basin
- Conduct data mining with national and local providers of secondary (e.g. census) socio-economic and environmental data (incl. time-series); contribute to the collection of primary data in the study region (household surveys, interviews, focus group discussions)
- Conduct empirical research on flood risk awareness, behavior and existing coping strategies of various actors (e.g. local population, small businesses, decision makers, urban planners)
- Assess flood risks (incl. exposure and vulnerabilities) for people, assets and selected sectors in the river basin
- Support the identification and evaluation of existing risk management and governance structures and approaches as well as the (co-)development of protection/adaptation goals and targets
- Develop adaptation pathways in the case study area and support the evaluation of different adaptation choices against protection targets, societal acceptance, stakeholder preferences, equity considerations, possible mal-adaptive consequences, etc.
- Analyze the effects of different adaptation pathways on flood exposure, vulnerabilities and risks (e.g. using Bayesian Network Analysis or similar approaches)
• Assist in organization and preparation of workshops, regional networking fora and events
• Prepare research reports, policy briefs, factsheets, and presentations
• (Co-)author scientific articles and disseminate findings at relevant conferences and events
• Support the supervision of student assistants and interns working within the project
• Contribute to planned capacity building activities in the project and at UNU-EHS
• Perform other related duties as required in the VARMAP section

Required Qualifications and Experience:

We are looking for an early career candidate with a strong motivation to pursue a PhD in the context of the FloodAdaptVN project. The candidate should fulfill the following attributes:

• Completed Master's degree with high academic standing in Geography, Governance, Spatial Planning, Geoinformatics, Environmental Management, or other relevant discipline; preferably with previous experiences in flood contexts
• Familiarity with concepts and methods related to vulnerability and risk assessment, disaster risk reduction and adaptation
• Work experience in developing economies is highly desired. Previous work experience in Vietnam is an asset
• Strong methodological skillset for quantitative and qualitative empirical research, including proven knowledge of Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
• Experience with more advanced modelling tools (e.g. Bayesian Networks, System Dynamics) is a strong asset
• Excellent communication and writing skills with fluency in spoken and written English; ability to communicate in Vietnamese is an asset
• Demonstrated ability to synthesize complex information, regulations and policies and to translate into impactful communications and publications/reports/presentations
• Initiative seeker; strong ability to carry out work independently; curious personality preferred
• Reflected team player with strong interpersonal skills demonstrated by the ability to work in a multi-cultural environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity

UNU is committed to diversity and inclusion within its workforce, and encourages all candidates, irrespective of gender, nationality, religious and ethnic backgrounds, including persons living with disabilities to apply and become part of the organization.

UNU has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UNU, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination

Remuneration:
Remuneration will be commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Duration of Contract:
The successful candidate shall work under a Personal Service Agreement (PSA) for a fixed period of twelve (12) months. Further continuation of contract is desired, with the combined duration of appointments not exceeding six (6) years.
This is a locally recruited post and no relocation allowances apply. The successful candidate will be employed under a local contract and will not hold international civil servant status nor is he/she a “staff member” as defined in the United Nations Staff Rules and Regulations.

**Starting Date:**
As soon as possible

**Application Procedure:**
Interested applicants should submit their applications by e-mail (to hrbonn@vie.unu.edu), and must include the following:

- A cover letter setting out how the qualifications and experience match the requirements of the position;
- A curriculum vitae and a completed and signed [UNU Personal History (P.11) form](https://unu.org) downloadable from [UNU website](https://unu.org). Please avoid using similar forms provided by other United Nations organizations
- A sample of academic writing, e.g. published article, blog post, or chapter of Master’s thesis;
- An indication of the reference number of the vacancy announcement (2021/UNU/EHS/PSA/RA/18).