The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that promotes volunteerism to support peace and development worldwide. Volunteerism can transform the pace and nature of development and it benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for volunteerism globally, encouraging partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing volunteers. In most cultures, volunteerism is deeply embedded in long-established, ancient traditions of sharing and support within the communities. In this context, UN Volunteers take part in various forms of volunteerism and play a role in development and peace together with co-workers, host agencies, and local communities. In all assignments, UN Volunteers promote volunteerism through their action and conduct. Engaging in volunteer activity can effectively and positively enrich their understanding of local and social realities, as well as create a bridge between themselves and the people in their host community. This will make the time they spend as UN Volunteers even more rewarding and productive.

General Information

Country of Assignment
Uzbekistan

Host Institute
United Nations Development Programme

Volunteer Category
International Specialist

Number of Volunteer
1

Duration
12 months

Expected Starting Date
03-08-2020

Duty Station
Tashkent [UZB], Nukus [UZB]

Assignment Place
Family Duty Station

Assignment Place Remark
Supervision, induction and duty of care of UN Volunteers

UN Volunteers should be provided equal duty of care as extended to all host entity personnel. Host entity support to the UN Volunteer includes, but is not limited to:

- Introductory briefings about the organisation and office-related context including security, emergency procedures, good cultural practice and orientation to the local environment;
- Support with arrival administration including setting-up of bank accounts, residence permit applications and completion of other official processes as required by the host government or host entity;
- Structured guidance, mentoring and coaching by a supervisor including a clear workplan and performance appraisal;
- Access to office space, equipment, IT support and any other systems and tools required to complete the objectives of the assignment including a host entity email address;
- Access to shared host entity corporate knowledge, training and learning;
- Inclusion of the volunteer in emergency procedures such as evacuations;
- Leave management;
All changes in the Description of Assignment occurring between recruitment and arrival or during the assignment need to be formalized with the United Nations Volunteer Programme.

Living Conditions

**Tashkent**, the capital of Uzbekistan, betrays little of its 2,000-year history as a crossroads of ancient trade routes. This modern city of 2.5 million people, the fourth largest in the CIS after Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kiev, holds many attractions, from imposing squares, monumental architecture and fine museums, to the mud-brick maze of the old Uzbek town, autumn colors on dappled poplar lanes and the sweet spray of fountains on burning summer days.

Rebuilt after the 1966 earthquake, Tashkent comprises concrete apartment blocks decorated with Uzbek motifs and illuminated slogans, yawning parade grounds around solemn monuments, and a remarkably comprehensive public transport system.

**Nukus** (Uzbek: Nukus, Karakalpak: Nókis, Kazakh: Núkis) is the sixth-largest city in Uzbekistan and the capital of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. The population of Nukus as of January 1, 2018 was approximately 312,100. Nukus is located in the central part of Karakalpakstan on the right bank of the Amu Darya, 800 km north-west of Tashkent (1255 km by road). The southern and eastern parts of the city are surrounded by the Kyzylykum desert. The northern part of the city borders on the Amu Darya delta. The main canal Kizketken (Doslyk) and the Anasay canal (Kattagar) pass through the city. The city is best known for its world-class Nukus Museum of Art. The name Nukus comes from the old tribal name of the Karakalpaks, Nukus.

Climate: The climate is sharply continental, dry, with long, cloudy, hot summers and cold, but not very snowy winters. The average July temperature is + 29.5 °C, January - -4.8° C. The highest temperature over the past 13 years was + 46°C in the shade, the lowest - -30.5° C (January 2008). The average annual temperature is + 13.3°C.

Transport: International Nukus Airport has a three-kilometer runway and is capable of accepting all types of aircraft. There are regular flights from Nukus to Moscow and Tashkent. Trains of national (Kungrad - Tashkent, Nukus - Beineu) and international (Volgograd (Russia) - Tashkent, Saratov (Russia) - Tashkent, St. Petersburg (Russia) - Tashkent, Almaty (Kazakhstan) - Nukus trains) run through the railway station. Bus stations are also operate on a regular base.

The International UN Volunteer on Digital Transformation of rural economy in Aral Sea region is responsible for organizing her/his own accommodation. UNDP in Uzbekistan cannot be held responsible for providing benefits or allowances other than applicable ones stipulated in the International UN Volunteer Conditions of Service of the United Nations Volunteer programme. The monthly leaving allowances will be paid by the Government of Japan funded - UNDP and UNFPA Joint Programme “Building the Resilience of Local Communities Against Health, Environmental and Economic Insecurities in the Aral Sea Region”.

The currency in Uzbekistan is the som (S), sometimes spelled s’om or soum. Official exchange booths at airports, hotels and the banks will change most currencies into Uzbek som, though US dollars and euros are the easiest currencies. ATMs can be found in most of Tashkent and Nukus top-end hotels and banks.

Uzbek is the lingua franca in Tashkent, while Russian, Tajik and other languages are also spoken including English, mostly among the youth.

Assignment Details

**Assignment Title**

The International UN Volunteer on Digital Transformation of Rural Economy in Aral Sea Region

**Organizational Context & Project Description**

The Aral Sea region remains the most vulnerable and deprived region of Uzbekistan. Once the fourth largest inland lake in the world and now down to 10% of its original size, the drying of Aral Sea set off large-scale human, environmental, socio-economic and demographic problems in the affected areas.

Once thriving in the vicinity of the Aral Sea with their rich culture and unique bio-resources the current landscape where communities of Karakalpakstan live, was vividly described by the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres as “probably the biggest ecological
Karakalpakstan occupies 37% of the total territory of Uzbekistan, has 5.5% of its total population, but only 3.5% of total GDP of the country. The climate is naturally arid, therefore the local population has long depended on the water from the Amu Darya delta for irrigating its agriculture, and – in the past - on the Aral Sea for fishing activities. Following the drying up of the Aral Sea and the reduced flow of water in the lower reaches of the river, local livelihoods have become increasingly threatened and multiple interconnected human security challenges emerged.

The loss of fishery industry, further exacerbated by ever degrading land resources devastated economic livelihoods of people in Karakalpakstan. People who could move out of those areas, especially skilled professionals did so at the onset of the crisis, thus resulting in further depletion of local capacities. The current working age men, including growing number of youth are engaged in seasonal labor migration, leaving the burden of looking after elderly and children on women, who in addition to their family work will often have to find income opportunities.

As a result, around 26.3% of the population in Karakalpakstan is poor as compared to 11.9%[1] in the rest of the country. The survey conducted by ISR in the Aral Sea region in 2017 shows that local population depends on agriculture and remittances sent by labor migrants from among family members who work mostly in Kazakhstan and Russia. These sources of income are highly insecure, susceptible to fluctuations and insecure in terms of benefits and long term sustainability.

Given the low income the survey also showed that more than 60% of households cannot afford to buy minimum set of goods and services included in the consumer basket, to have balanced diet lacking enough proteins and vitamins due to relatively low consumption of meat, milk and dairy products, eggs, potatoes and fruits. These are replaced by the consumption of vegetable oil and sugar which far surpass the healthy dietary norms recommended by the Ministry of Health.

To address the unfolding crisis in the Aral Sea region, the Government of Uzbekistan is supporting the Karakalpasktan by supplementing its finances from the central budget, approved the State Program on Development of the Aral Sea Region for 2017-2021 with a total budget of around US$ 0.9 billion. But the scale of the crisis requires ever growing resources and efforts as it is unfolding to affect more people in multiple ways.

Taking into account multiple deprivations the people in Karakalpakstan face and deteriorating situation, the UN System consistently supported the Government of Uzbekistan to address complex challenges the region faces. Since 2012, two consecutive UN Joint Programmes funded by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security have been implemented to support the people affected by the Aral Sea disaster. Despite its declining core resources, the UN System maintains office in Karakalpakstan, and works closely with national partners to mobilize resources and direct them to the hardest hit areas.

The UN System and the Government joined efforts to establish Multi Partner Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region that is expected to attract and coordinate efforts of national and international stakeholders under the well-coordinated Comprehensive Strategy.

With the support of the Government of Japan, UNDP and UNFPA Joint Programme “Building the Resilience of Local Communities Against Health, Environmental and Economic Insecurities in the Aral Sea Region” is planned for implementation starting from 1st January 2020. The programme is for 2 years and it aims to address the most urgent and immediate health and economic insecurities in the most vulnerable areas of the Aral Sea region through bringing innovative solutions to healthcare and poverty reduction initiatives.

The project will have two components. The first component of the project will focus on improving the quality of health care services, particularly in remote rural areas through strengthening the technical and institutional capacity of local healthcare system for maternal, child and reproductive health service provision with the focus on prevention of ill health (breast and cervical cancer, sexually transmitted infections, malnutrition, etc.) and promotion of healthy lifestyle and positive health seeking behavior involving also the Community Health Volunteers. The component will also focus on strengthening the institutional capacity of relevant stakeholders in Karakalpakstan in preventing and responding to domestic violence.

The second component will focus on enhancing income generation opportunities of the affected population through inclusive business initiatives, promotion of investments for job creation, as well as through improving access to basic services. The project will select most vulnerable rural communities and help them with participatory decentralized planning and rehabilitation of essential public services such as water supply.

It will support the start-up of agricultural cooperatives and small rural businesses through trainings, funding innovative schemes, establishing pilot ‘farm field schools’. These will help people, especially women led households to use available resources, mainly land and water in the most efficient way and generate incomes to sustain their livelihoods.

The SMEs are the main driver of economic growth in the Aral Sea region comprising 65% of RDP, mostly operating in agriculture, trade and smallholder production. According to the survey conducted by the ISR, 34.8% of rural population acknowledges the agriculture consumption of meat, milk and dairy products, eggs, potatoes and fruits. These are replaced by the consumption of vegetable oil and sugar which far surpass the healthy dietary norms recommended by the Ministry of Health.
sector as a potential source of income, while their income (more than 50%) formulates from production and agriculture. However, agriculture sector has been negatively affected by water shortages, salt and dust storms, land degradation and salinization. Therefore, enhancing the rural economic productivity in the region needs to be addressed through innovative solutions and application of new environmentally friendly technologies.

Through combination of skills development and the procurement of new innovative technologies, utilizing bottom-up approach, the project intends to establish small and medium enterprises (SME) in food processing, production, manufacturing and service delivery run by rural communities to enhance their overall economic wellbeing and combat poverty which is as high as 32% and increase their income sources.

Thus, promoting entrepreneurship and small business initiatives among rural population will be one of the key important tasks of the project. Supporting and empowering women led entrepreneurship will be an integral part of this task, since only 48.1% of economically active women and girls in the region are involved in employment. In order to engage rural women to small businesses, project plans to conduct a broad range of capacity building activities and support the establishment of women-led businesses that employ new technologies, and are considered as the main life changing tool for them.

**Impact of COVID-19 to population of Karakalpakstan with focus to youth**

The Government of Uzbekistan (GoU) has taken decisive measures to slow the spread of Covid-19 through the implementation of travel restrictions, border closure, physical distancing, risk communications, and public movement restrictions with school closures, cancellation of public events and religious gatherings, and work from home arrangements among organizations. As of May 6, 2020, 2,233 cases were recorded in the country, while in Karakalpakstan, the number of infected cases reached 109 persons, while 87 are recovered from the disease.

According to estimates of the World Bank, implications of COVID-19 to the economy of Uzbekistan would be extremely negative, and GDP growth forecasted to be as low as 1.6% compared to previous 5.6% in 2020[2]. In addition, due to depreciation of currencies of neighboring countries (Kazakhstan and Russia) remittances sent to Uzbekistan might fall to between 27.5-30%. Considering the fact that around 20% of households in the region depend solely on remittances from migrants[3] and almost half of the migrants (42.4%) are youth (between 16-30 ages)[4] existing socio-economic scenes would worsen further with elevated unemployment and social distress among the young population.

This tendency will have an enormous negative impact to the youth of Karakalpakstan. As survey results (ISR, 2017) [5] show the local population depends heavily on agriculture and remittances sent by labor migrants from among family members who work mostly in Kazakhstan (9.7%) and Russia (80.8%). These sources of income were always highly insecure, susceptible to fluctuations and unstable in terms of benefits and long-term sustainability, while the Covid-19 consequences have further exacerbated the situation.

In Karakalpakstan, about 35% of the total number of employees is occupied in the informal sector (UNDP, 2017). In the structure of employment, the share of employment in the agricultural sector decreased to 28.0%. The largest increase in employment falls on the service sector. Therefore, given the restrictions put by the Government due to COVID-19, livelihoods of youth, who share the big chunk of engagement in the informal sector as well as in service sector was drastically impacted in form of loss of jobs and incomes.

This situation signals that the development indicators of Karakalpakstan will be further worsened due to Covid-19 outbreak, requiring support and attention to reduce negative impact on the most vulnerable groups and communities, who are already suffering from the Aral Sea crisis.

As outlined above, youth in the region remains one of the vulnerable layers of the society that faces socio-economic challenges associated with the Aral Sea crisis. COVID-19 outbreak has further worsened the situation of the youth including the unemployment issues, especially in rural areas, due to lack of proper skill building entities, youth lead platforms, food processing plants, lack of access to broadband internet, poor sport and recreational facilities and poor development of social infrastructure facilities and degradation of environmental resources.

In the current context, it is extremely important to develop a well-tailored programmatic approach to respond to pressing socio-economic challenges and put youth on the forefront of the agenda, focusing on employment, turning disadvantaged youth of the region into prosperous leaders equipped with proper skills and capacities.

Worth to mention that, the COVID-19 pandemic forced further development of some sectors, for instance, more digitized and IT-based manufacturers, service providers has appeared on the stage by offering safe and fast services without compromising quality features of the products/services. It is the momentum to use digital transformation and increase access to Internet as one of the driving forces for socio-economic development of local communities. Especially, this is critical in the pandemic situation where distant working, learning and existence in being isolated has become a reality. In this circumstances, promoting new initiatives based on the digitalization as well as working on building the new skills of the youth on future jobs will be instrumental for promoting future sustainable growth.
Sustainable Development Goals 8. Decent work and Economy Growth

Task description

Under the overall guidance and supervision of the Project Manager, in close cooperation with the Team Leader on Income Generation and other relevant project team, the International UN Volunteer on Digital Transformation of rural economy in Aral Sea region will contribute in the delivery of the new innovative projects (with focus to youth and rural women) in the project target districts to be implemented within the frame of the Government of Japan funded - UNDP and UNFPA Joint Programme “Building the Resilience of Local Communities Against Health, Environmental and Economic Insecurities in the Aral Sea Region”, specifically this will include:

1. Strategic advice on the digitalization and its impact on regional economy of the Aral Sea Region focusing on the following results:
   - Analyses global, regional trends and dynamics, and practical solutions and successful initiatives in the digitalization of economy and advises programme on how these could be potentially utilized in the context of the Aral Sea Region;
   - Capitalizing on advantages of digitalization develops strategic value proposition for digital development (smart communities, e-commerce, fin-tech, agritech, etc.) and puts forward a concrete action plan for its implementation in the Aral Sea Region;
   - Seeks opportunities for engagement in the digital economy and advises programme on how to leverage its programme in the Aral Sea Region to promote digital development for the SDG;
   - Builds partnership with line ministries and other stakeholders to enable digitalization processes in the Aral Sea Region;

2) Technical support to Aral Sea Region programme on digital development in rural areas focusing on the following results:
   - Taking into account regional specifications together with programme team designs rural digitalization tools, approaches that best addresses community needs in employment, job creation with focus to future jobs, education, integration of SME in digitalization, social services and community centred initiatives;
   - Develops list of critical enablers to implement digitalization process in rural areas and transforms knowledge and skills in a way that, mechanism is clear and simple to implement, while ensuring sustainability of the process;
   - Deploys consistent, result oriented and practical interventions in the field, which generates rapid transformation of pilot communities;
   - Provide capacity building trainings in the areas of digital development.

3) Facilitate knowledge building and knowledge sharing on digitalization as required by the organization, focusing on the following results:
   - Identification and synthesis of the best practices and lessons learned on digitalization development directly linked project activities in the Aral Sea region;
   - Researches, maps and scans opportunities in the context of digitalization in the Aral Sea region and shares findings regularly with relevant project team;
   - Contributions to knowledge networks and communities of practice on digitalization;
   - Think creatively and pro-actively to identify and address emerging problems to ensure timely and efficient delivery of the project.

Furthermore, UN Volunteers are required to:- Strengthen their knowledge and understanding of the concept of volunteerism by reading relevant UNV and external publications and take active part in UNV activities (for instance in events that mark International Volunteer Day); - Be acquainted with and build on traditional and/or local forms of volunteerism in the host country; - Provide annual and end of assignment reports on UN Volunteer actions, results and opportunities using UNV’s Volunteer Reporting Application; - Contribute
Qualifications/Requirements

Required Degree Level
Bachelor degree or equivalent

Education - Additional Comments

Degree in ICT, Innovation Technologies, Development Studies, Business Administration International Relations, or related field or equivalent.

Required experience
24 months

Experience Remark

Relevant experience at international level in development work. Experience in innovation, ICT, Digitalization of business processes (public and private), Fintech, Advanced Technologies, Start-ups. Proven experience in digital transformation of public or private sector institutions. Experience in the usage of computers and office software packages (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), experience in handling of web-based management systems.

Language

- English (Mandatory), Level - Fluent

Area of Expertise

- Development programme management Mandatory

Area of Expertise Requirement

Private Sector and Entrepreneurship development

Need Driving Licence
No
Conditions of Service and other information

Condition of Service

Click here to view Conditions of Service

Conditions of Service for International Specialist:


The rapidly changing nature of novel coronavirus COVID-19 has placed significant and increasing restrictions on the freedom of movement of people across the globe, within countries and across borders. Such restrictions make it very difficult for international UN Volunteers to begin their assignments at their assigned duty station and UNV cannot guarantee assignments will proceed as normal.

Candidates for international UN Volunteer assignments during this period may be exceptionally granted alternative working arrangements to work from their place of recruitment until restrictions are lifted. This is at the discretion of the host entity. Candidates proceeding to interview are recommended to discuss the likelihood of travel and possible alternative arrangements with the host entity. If selected, candidates should carefully consider the circumstances before accepting UNV’s offer.
In cases where the UN Host Entity partner has requested the UN Volunteer to perform their assignment remotely, the Post Adjustment Multiplier (PAM) and related entitlements to be paid may be adjusted to the temporary duty station from where the UN Volunteer has been requested to work if requested by the UN Host Entity.

The contract lasts for the period indicated above with possibility of extensions subject to availability of funding, operational necessity and satisfactory performance. However, there is no expectation of renewal of the assignment.

A UN Volunteer receives a Volunteer Living Allowance (VLA) which is composed of the Monthly Living Allowance (MLA) and a Family Allowance (FA) for those with dependents (maximum three).

The Volunteer Living Allowance (VLA) is paid at the end of each month to cover housing, utilities, transportation, communications and other basic needs. The VLA can be computed by applying the Post-Adjustment Multiplier (PAM) to the VLA base rate of US$ 1,651. The VLA base rate is a global rate across the world, while the PAM is duty station/country-specific and fluctuates on a monthly basis according to the cost of living. This method ensures that international UN Volunteers have comparable purchasing power at all duty stations irrespective of varying costs of living. The PAM is established by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and is published at the beginning of every month on the ICSC website http://icsc.un.org.

For UN Volunteer entitlements, kindly refer to the link https://vmam.unv.org/calculator/entitlements

In non-family duty stations that belong to hardship categories D or E, as classified by the ICSC, international UN Volunteers receive a Well-Being Differential (WBD) on a monthly basis.

Furthermore, UN Volunteers are provided a settling-in-grant (SIG) at the start of the assignment (if the volunteer did not reside in the duty station for at least 6 months prior to taking up the assignment) and in the event of a permanent reassignment to another duty station.

UNV provides life, health, permanent disability insurances as well as assignment travel, annual leave, full integration in the UN security framework (including residential security reimbursements).

UN Volunteers are paid Daily Subsistence Allowance at the UN rate for official travels, flight tickets for periodic home visit and for the final repatriation travel (if applicable). Resettlement allowance is paid for satisfactory service at the end of the assignment.

UNV will provide, together with the offer of assignment, a copy of the Conditions of Service, including Code of conduct, to the successful candidate.

Supervision, induction and duty of care of UN Volunteers

UN Volunteers should be provided equal duty of care as extended to all host entity personnel. Host entity support to the UN Volunteer includes, but is not limited to:

- Introductory briefings about the organisation and office-related context including security, emergency procedures, good cultural practice and orientation to the local environment;

- Support with arrival administration including setting-up of bank accounts, residence permit applications and completion of other official processes as required by the host government or host entity;

- Structured guidance, mentoring and coaching by a supervisor including a clear workplan and performance appraisal;

- Access to office space, equipment, IT support and any other systems and tools required to complete the objectives of the assignment including a host entity email address;

- Access to shared host entity corporate knowledge, training and learning;
- Inclusion of the volunteer in emergency procedures such as evacuations;

- Leave management;

- DSA for official travel, when applicable;

- All changes in the Description of Assignment occurring between recruitment and arrival or during the assignment need to be formalized with the United Nations Volunteer Programme.

Application Code: UZBR000207-7342

Application procedure

* Not yet registered in the UNV Talent Pool?

First register your profile at https://vmam.unv.org/candidate/signup.

Important: After creating your account, complete all sections of your profile and submit it. Then go to ‘My Page’ at https://vmam.unv.org/candidate/mypage and click on the ‘Special Calls’ hyperlink. Lastly, select the special call to which you would like to apply.

* Already registered in the UNV Talent Pool?

First update your profile at https://vmam.unv.org/candidate/profile.

Then go to ‘My Page’ at https://vmam.unv.org/candidate/mypage and click on the ‘Special Calls’ hyperlink to select the special call to which you would like to apply.

Application deadline: 13 July 2020

**doa.apply_url**

https://vmam.unv.org/candidate/show-doa/VVpCUjAwMDIwNw==

**Disclaimer**

United Nations Volunteers is an equal opportunity programme which welcomes applications from qualified professionals. We are committed to achieving diversity in terms of gender, nationality and culture.