



Lead Researcher – Urban Transformations

Reports to: Managing Director - India

Location: Chennai, India

Deadline to Apply: April 1, 2017 – applications to be reviewed on an ongoing basis

Okapi is an India-based social impact strategy group focused on institutional design for complex goals in changing times. We work with clients in government, industry, and development finance to map and evaluate ecosystem opportunities for social and environmental change; create blueprints for catalysing change; and design pilot projects with an eye to scale. Our current work is clustered around four themes: Renewable Energy Systems; Pollution Mitigation; Resilient and Inclusive Economies; and Urban Transformations. We are always open for new challenges and continue to expand into new areas where our work on building the foundations for robust public-private-community collaboration to tackle key risks and opportunities can be useful.

The company is incubated by the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM) and has offices in Chennai, Bengaluru, and, Delhi.

Job Description

Okapi is seeking a Lead Researcher for its Urbanisation group in Chennai, India. The portfolio's work centres on working with clients to strengthen governance arrangements for managing the energy and resource implications of India's urban trajectories. We work with business groups, public officials at all levels of government, community organisations, and specialised expert partners as necessary to build the foundations for a sustainable transition.

The Lead Researcher would be responsible for leading the portfolio of existing projects as well as building a new pipeline of projects consistent with Okapi's core focus on institutional design for social and environmental sustainability. He or she would be expected to manage and mentor the current team of research associates, while ensuring high quality advisory and strategy services to clients. The Lead Researcher would also serve as part of the Okapi Management Committee, a group that sets strategy and builds processes for shaping the company's work environment.

We value past experience in a research environment and require a demonstrated record of curiosity and intellectual rigor, but we are also seeking a person with an entrepreneurial, pragmatic mindset. Our work is by nature interdisciplinary, and thus successful candidates will be comfortable working across social science, finance, engineering, and environmental sciences, among other disciplines. They should also be able to synthesize and adapt academic methods from various disciplines for applied work. Ability to think at a system level, to rapidly and accurately synthesize information from a wide range of sources, and to manage teams in a fluid environment is critical.

The initial contract will be for one year, renewable upon mutual consent.

Responsibilities:

The Lead Researcher is responsible for the following:

- Anchoring research design for projects within the portfolio, alone and/or in collaboration with expert associates and partners.
- Mentoring Senior/Research Associates to build skills, confidence, sector knowledge.
- Developing a forward-looking strategy for a coherent cluster of projects that build on Okapi's expertise and address a recognized social and environmental challenge. While there are existing client commitments, the Lead Researcher has substantial room to shape the portfolio direction.
- Building his/her subject matter expertise & external reputation among key practitioners and applied researchers.
- Managing the team to deliver high-quality work within budget for projects that he/she is leading.
- Contributing to Okapi's overall direction and positioning via active participation in the Management Committee.

Experience and Qualifications

- An advanced degree in Economics, Public Policy, Urban Planning, Environmental Management or related fields. PhD is not necessary, but evidence of research training and adherence to academic standards is required.
- Minimum 10 years of relevant work experience, including exposure to topics relevant to urban challenges in India
- Excellent management and organisational skills, with both internal team members as well as partner organisations.
- Flexible, self-motivating, able to manage multiple tasks efficiently
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English required. Fluency in Indian languages is a strong advantage.
- Demonstrable reputation and network among urban practitioners and researchers in India and at a global level.
- A design background or professional exposure to design thinking is a significant plus.

Salary: Competitive by industry standards, including potential for stock options.

For more information about Okapi: www.okapia.co

Interested candidates, please email your CV, a cover letter outlining how you fit this role, and a writing sample for which the applicant is the sole author to info@okapia.co.