



Vacancy Description: Free the Bears

Research Programme Manager

Start Date:	1 st June 2023, or as soon after as possible
Contract:	Full-time two-year contract with potential to extend
Salary:	Competitive salary, based on qualifications and experience
Location:	Southeast Asia, preferably based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, or Luang Prabang, Laos. Regular travel to work at Free the Bears' sanctuaries and field sites in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

Closing date for applications: 15th April 2023

Applications are sought from suitable individuals to fill the role of **Research Programme Manager** with Free the Bears in Southeast Asia. The work of Free the Bears is currently centered on three focal countries where we have created the Cambodia Bear Sanctuary (in Cambodia), Tat Kuang Si Bear Rescue Centre and Luang Prabang Wildlife Sanctuary, in Laos, and Cat Tien Bear Sanctuary in Vietnam. Currently, across these sanctuaries we provide life-long care to over 270 bears (*Ursus thibetanus* and *Helarctos malayanus*), in addition to a variety of other rescued wildlife species in Laos.

Free the Bears' Research Programme was created to improve our understanding of wild bear populations and the threats they face, as well as assess and improve the welfare of the bears in our care. We partner with governments, universities, and other institutions around the world in order to end the exploitation of bears.

Over the past fifteen years, Free the Bears' Research Programme has adopted a holistic approach: surveying wild bear populations in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam; pioneering cutting-edge social science research to assess the use and trade of bears and their parts in order to design effective behaviour change interventions; developing the first range-wide conservation action plan for any terrestrial bear species to direct in-situ and ex-situ conservation efforts over the next ten years; and facilitated 70+ in-situ and ex-situ student-led research projects for international and local students. <https://freethebears.org/pages/publications-press-resources>

Free the Bears is currently entering into an exciting phase of development, with the view to begin trialing monitored releases of select bears within coming years. Pre-release observations and post-release monitoring will offer valuable opportunities for research of these under-studied species, while selection of release sites will require assessments of local habitats, threats, and bear populations.

The primary role of the Research Programme Manager will be to oversee all research aspects of the release initiative, ensuring effective monitoring, evaluation and refinement of release methodologies. This will be achieved through advancing the skill set of local teams while developing methodologies in consultation with a global network of experts. The role includes providing management and oversight of teams in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, with regular travel to ensure consistency across the three country programmes.

Key roles:

- Lead in the recruitment, training and supervision of local researchers and field teams;
- Oversee the implementation of behavioural observations of bears in pre-release facilities, following existing research protocols;
- Facilitate and oversee local and international student research projects focused on addressing priority in-situ and ex-situ research topics;
- Lead on trialing tracking equipment and designing post-release monitoring protocols;
- With input from collaborators, conduct assessment of potential release sites, including villager interviews, participatory stakeholder meetings, bear population assessments, and rapid threat assessments;
- Design and implement threat mitigation strategies e.g. community-based snare removal;



- In collaboration with Free the Bears Regional Team and wider network, review past bear release projects conducted within the region and develop written release protocols;
- In collaboration with co-authors, contribute to completion of manuscripts currently in the pipeline and take a lead role on future manuscripts;
- Under the direction of Free the Bears senior management, secure funding for Research Programme activities and other programmes as required;
- Under the direction of Free the Bears senior management, assist in the monitoring and evaluation of Free the Bears' organisational strategy;
- Under the direction of Free the Bears senior management, use existing husbandry records and research data to address priority questions.

Desired Characteristics:

- Educated to at least a Master's degree level in wildlife conservation or related field
- Knowledge of both natural and social science research techniques
- Fieldwork experience, ideally in tropical forest environments
- Experienced in conducting behavioral observations, in-situ and/or ex-situ
- Experienced in designing and/or implementing wildlife release projects
- Experienced in community outreach/participatory planning
- Experienced in working with patrol teams
- Proven track record for designing and implementing successful research projects
- Experienced in grant writing, project implementation and reporting
- Proven track record in co-authoring peer-reviewed papers
- Experienced in working in Southeast Asia, ideally Cambodia, Laos and/or Vietnam
- Experienced working remotely on collaborative projects
- Highly motivated, hardworking, and passionate with excellent attention to detail
- Strong organization, management and leadership skills
- Awareness and respect for cultural values in a diverse team setting
- Excellent command of written and spoken English language
- Effective contribution to building and leading a positive team environment
- Demonstrated ability to take initiative and work autonomously, assess tasks and set priorities
- Flexibility and the ability to cope with changes in work priorities at short notice
- Ability to work weekends and public holidays as required

Benefits and Terms

- Full-time two-year contract with potential to extend, with some weekend work expected
- Competitive salary, based on qualifications and experience
- Relocation support with an annual return flight to country of origin after one year
- Medical insurance including emergency evacuation
- Paid holidays (18 Annual leave plus National Holidays (ca. 15-20 days) as prescribed in the national labour law)
- Opportunities for international travel
- Be part of an international organization driving change in the fields of wildlife conservation and animal welfare

Applications

Interested applicants should send a cover letter and resume by email to vacancy@freethebears.org with the subject title **Research Programme Manager**.

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As a global organization that works with partners and communities across a wide range of countries, Free the Bears values diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity. We welcome applicants of traditionally underrepresented communities to apply regardless of ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, socioeconomic status or disability to help us build an inclusive environment across all areas of our work.