

Astronomer: IAU Office of Astronomy for Development (Contract)

The International Astronomical Union (IAU), in partnership with the South African National Research Foundation (NRF), has established the global Office of Astronomy for Development (OAD) at the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) in Cape Town, South Africa. The OAD now seeks an inspired astronomer who will help continue the realization of the vision “Astronomy for a better world”.

The OAD began its work in 2011 and ambitiously set out to use astronomy as a tool for global development, in fulfillment of the IAU’s decadal strategic plan. This office is the centre of the IAU’s education and development activities worldwide in the areas of (i) astronomy for universities and research; (ii) astronomy for children and schools; and (iii) astronomy for the public. So far the OAD has set up 9 regional offices (in Armenia, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Jordan, Nigeria, Portugal, Thailand and Zambia) and formed partnerships with 9 other international organizations. In the 4 years of its annual call for proposals process, the OAD has funded 86 projects around the world, out of a potential 676 applications. There have also been over 600 volunteers registered and willing to contribute their diverse skills to the work of the OAD. Following a very positive external review in 2015 and a resolution by the last IAU General Assembly (GA) to continue this work, the agreement for the hosting of the OAD at its current location was extended to 2021. In 2016 the work of the OAD was recognized through the prestigious Edinburgh Medal awarded jointly to Kevin Govender (Director of the OAD) and the IAU. More information on the OAD can be found at www.astro4dev.org.

This position should be filled by a committed and hard-working individual who reflects the guiding principles of the OAD, and who possesses strong computing and excellent communication skills. The Astronomer will be based at the OAD in Cape Town and, as with other OAD staff, will be employed under the terms and conditions of the SAAO (a facility of the NRF). The Astronomer will be responsible for the implementation and coordination of specific tasks listed below.

Tasks:

- Interact with IAU Divisions, IAU Members, Volunteers, Regional Offices, Task Forces and other relevant stakeholders
- Coordinate the development and implementation of the OAD annual call for proposals
- Oversee the worldwide implementation of projects funded by the OAD
- Consolidate data from OAD funded projects
- Coordinate the implementation of information management systems for the OAD (such as resources, project monitoring and volunteer management)

Minimum Requirements:

- PhD in Astronomy related field
- 3 years of postdoctoral or related research work, with relevant international experience
- Fluent in English (both written and spoken)

Desirable additional education/experience/personal qualities:

- Project and financial management experience/qualifications/courses
- Demonstrated skills in communication and presentation (both written and verbal)
- Software/Web development/coding skills
- Monitoring and Evaluation skills
- Outstanding interpersonal skills and ability to interact with people of different cultures
- Multilingual

Contract period and salary:

- The contract will run from the date of appointment for a period of 3 years and may be renewed until the end of the current IAU-NRF agreement to host the OAD (viz. IAU GA in 2021), depending on satisfactory performance.
- Salary will be based on the candidate's qualifications and experience, and benchmarked against salaries of astronomers in South Africa.

All applications should be submitted electronically. Interested persons who meet the requirements should email their detailed Curriculum Vitae with a letter of motivation, and the names and contact details of at least 3 referees, to the Human Resources Manager, Ms Linda Tobin (linda@sao.ac.za). The selection process will begin after 15th March 2016. For any queries about this position, please contact Kevin Govender (kg@astro4dev.org).

Correspondence will be conducted with short-listed candidates only.

The filling of this position will be in line with the NRF's Employment Equity Policy and Plan