



ERC STARTING GRANT ENVIROSHIFT

Three Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (100%)

Shifting Perspectives on Environmental Change: A History of the Earth Sciences
in Central Asia and the Caucasus, 1880-2000

Department of History - Université Lumière Lyon 2
Laboratoire de Recherche Historique Rhône-Alpes (LARHRA, UMR 5190)

At a Glance

Principal Investigator: Prof. Katja Doose

Institution: Université Lumière Lyon 2 and LARHRA (UMR 5190)

Location: Lyon, France

Positions: Three full-time Postdoctoral Research Fellowships

Duration: Two appointments of 33 months and one appointment of 36 months

Starting date: Between January and June 2027

Salary: Gross annual salary between **€28,579 and €48,208**,

Application deadline: 21 September 2026

About ENVIROSHIFT

How did Earth scientists transform environments and how did these transformations reshape the modern world?

Funded by the European Research Council (ERC), ENVIROSHIFT investigates how Earth scientists transformed both environmental knowledge and environments in Central Asia and the Caucasus between the late Russian Empire and the end of the Soviet Union. Rather than treating geologists, glaciologists, hydrologists and seismologists as observers of environmental change, the project examines how scientific knowledge actively contributed to making mountain environments visible, measurable, governable and exploitable. Through geological surveys, scientific expeditions, glacier observations, seismic monitoring and resource exploration, Earth scientists participated in the profound environmental transformations associated with imperial expansion, Soviet modernization and industrial development. By placing Central Asia and the Caucasus at the centre of the analysis, the project contributes to broader debates on environmental change, the history of knowledge, colonialism and the Anthropocene.

The research team consists of the Principal Investigator and three Postdoctoral Fellows working together through regular seminars, collaborative publications, workshops, conferences and archival research.

Research Environment

The successful candidates will be based in the **Department of History at Université Lumière Lyon 2** and affiliated with the **Laboratoire de Recherche Historique Rhône-Alpes (LARHRA, UMR 5190)**, one of France's leading research centres in history, bringing together researchers from Université Lumière Lyon 2, ENS de Lyon, Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3, the CNRS and partner institutions.

Research Opportunities

The three fellowships correspond to the three collaborative case studies of the ERC project. Applicants should indicate clearly in their cover letter **which fellowship they are applying for**.

- **Mining Power. Uranium Extraction and Environmental Transformation in Soviet Kyrgyzstan**
This fellowship explores the relationship between geological expertise, uranium mining, environmental degradation and Soviet resource extraction.
- **Extracting Empire. Geology and Resource Exploration in the Tajik Pamirs**
This fellowship investigates how Soviet scientific expeditions reshaped geological knowledge and facilitated the exploration and exploitation of mountain resources in the Pamirs.
- **Seismic Frontiers. Seismology, Environmental Risk and State Planning in the Caucasus**
This fellowship examines the development of seismology, environmental risk management and scientific expertise in relation to Soviet planning, infrastructure and environmental governance.

Within the framework of the selected fellowship, applicants are encouraged to develop their own original research questions, source base and methodological approach.

Responsibilities

The successful candidates will:

- Plan and conduct innovative archival and historical research under the mentorship of the Principal Investigator.
- Develop an original research project within one of the ERC case studies.
- Prepare at least two articles for submission to leading international peer-reviewed journals.
- Co-edit and contribute to a collaborative edited volume.
- Contribute to the organisation of workshops, conferences and research seminars.
- Present research at national and international conferences.
- Participate actively in the collective intellectual life of the ERC research team.
- Contribute to dissemination and public engagement activities.

Selection Criteria

Applicants should demonstrate:

- A completed **PhD in History** before the starting date.
- Research experience on the nineteenth- and/or twentieth-century history of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union or their successor states.
- Excellent command of English.
- Excellent command of Russian, or demonstrated ability to conduct independent archival research using Russian-language sources.
- Experience conducting archival research.
- Ability to develop and manage an independent research project.
- Excellent academic writing skills.
- Ability to work collaboratively within an international research team.
- Creativity, intellectual curiosity and the capacity to formulate original research questions.
- Awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion principles in academic research.

Working Languages

The working language of the ERC project is **English**. It is also expected that candidates will have linguistic competency in the languages most relevant to their chosen case study. Knowledge of French is **not required** at the time of application. However, fellows will be expected to acquire a basic working knowledge of French.

What We Offer

- Gross annual salary between €28,579 and €48,208, depending on postdoctoral experience and the salary scales of Université Lumière Lyon 2.
- Generous funding for archival research and fieldwork in Central Asia and the Caucasus, with travel and subsistence expenses covered in accordance with university regulations
- Close collaboration with an international network of scholars in environmental history, history of science and Soviet studies.
- Mentoring in publications, grant writing and career development.
- Considerable intellectual freedom to develop an original research agenda.
- A collaborative and international research environment at Université Lumière Lyon 2 and LARHRA.

Application

Applications should be submitted as **one PDF file** and include:

- Cover letter indicating the fellowship for which you are applying.
- Curriculum vitae.
- List of publications.
- Copy of the PhD diploma (or proof that the PhD will be completed before the starting date).
- Contact details of two academic referees.
- **A 250–300-word project abstract** outlining a research project within the selected fellowship.
- **A statement (maximum 200 words)** explaining how the proposed project contributes to the broader objectives of ENVIROSHIFT.
- **A statement (maximum 200 words)** outlining the principal archival sources, languages and research methods.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to submit a **1,500-word research proposal** prior to the interview and to present their proposed project during the interview.

Applications should be sent to: katja.doose@univ-lyon2.fr

Deadline: 21 September 2026, 23:59 CET

Further Information

For informal enquiries about the project, please contact:

Prof. Katja Doose

Principal Investigator, ERC Starting Grant ENVIROSHIFT
Department of History, Université Lumière Lyon 2
Laboratoire de Recherche Historique Rhône-Alpes (LARHRA)