Search for
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our client, CGIAR, is inviting applications and nominations for the position of Executive Director.

Background & General Description

CGIAR is a global partnership first established as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research in 1971. It is the world’s leading partnership for research and development for sustainable agri-food systems in developing countries.

CGIAR was built on a foundation of non-profit research centers, of which there are currently 15. Other partners in the CGIAR System include contributors and investors, national agricultural research and extension systems, advanced research institutes, policy bodies, non-government organizations and private-sector companies. The non-profit centers and other partners together have unparalleled capacity to mobilize people, science, resources, and infrastructure in over 60 countries to integrate breakthrough research with delivery to millions of farmers.

CGIAR’s research informs the global debate on sustainable agri-food systems, from gender issues to food policy, food safety and climate smart agriculture. Its accomplishments in such areas as plant breeding and genetics, crop, livestock and fish production, and natural resource management research are on par with the leading universities and research institutes. More recently, the system has embarked on new research areas that cut across sectoral boundaries, for example on agriculture and climate change, nutrition and health, and data management.

CGIAR aims to make available key research-based information and knowledge to inform the debate through high level policy and advocacy work in global fora, from the United Nations General Assembly and specialized multilateral channels, to key countries and multi-stakeholder platforms. The CGIAR is committed to a strategy of “open access,” providing knowledge platforms and infrastructure to share the multi-disciplinary, long-term data and associated information generated by centers and other partners.
Moving to a new CGIAR System Organization

To reach the goals of achieving and maintaining global food security, improving nutrition, and reducing rural poverty, the CGIAR contributors agreed in 2015 to bring the CGIAR System under a unified structure. The System Office of the new organization is to be located in Montpellier, France. The new structure should provide a framework, incentives, and conditions including more predictable and sustainable funding, through which the CGIAR System, including its Centers and CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs), can deliver results.

Based on the Fund Council decisions, the CGIAR System will be comprised of:

- An organizational structure that includes a CGIAR System Council and CGIAR System Office, the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC) and the Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA)
- A central partnership with the 15 CGIAR research centers located in a range of countries around the world, each a legal entity with its own board and constitution;
- Other partnerships established to contribute to the achievement of CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework (SRF)
- A CGIAR Fund that provides funding and bilateral contributions that contribute to the achievement of the SRF
- The CGIAR research programs

In September 2015, the Fund Council approved a transition plan for the establishment of the CGIAR System by July 2016. This recruitment process will continue until then, at which point the first meeting of the System Council will take place and the Executive Director of the CGIAR System Organization will be decided upon.

Role of Executive Director

The Executive Director of the CGIAR System Organization will need to possess a combination of skills: S/he will need to be a collaborative, thoughtful leader who displays good judgment, diplomacy, and can develop consensus through trust and relationship-building. S/he will need to be a strong manager capable of building a team to provide effective and efficient support for the System Organization while facilitating a culture of collaboration and partnership with the centers so that the System’s goals and incentives are well aligned.

The Executive Director is expected to work in partnership with the Centers, the System Council and its Chair to assure that the CGIAR System is able to meet its goals and to support the System Council’s responsibility for governance and oversight.

S/he is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the implementation of a strategy and work plan that is ambitious, effective and practical in driving the CGIAR System toward its three objectives: reduced poverty, improved food and nutrition security for health, and improved natural resource systems and ecosystem services. S/he will do this in cooperation with the Centers. This includes mobilizing partners for action and the necessary financial resources for success.
The Executive Director will be appointed by, and report to, the CGIAR System Council and its Chair and will manage the staff of the CGIAR System Office. S/he will have a mandate to review and restructure the staff of the System Office if necessary to fulfill the agreed responsibilities of the new organization.

The Executive Director’s role is broad-ranging and will require distinct types of leadership skills, including:

- Collaborative leadership with the Council and its Chair and with the CGIAR Centers and the Chair of the Centers Standing Committee in promoting mutual accountability for the CGIAR System’s goals and success;

- Key contributor relationship management;

- Capability to build trust, mutual respect and credibility;

- Representation and advocacy with external stakeholders; and

- Executive leadership of the CGIAR System Office

**Summary of Major Responsibilities**

More specifically, the Executive Director will work in close collaboration with the CGIAR System Council and its Chair, the Centers and the Chair of the Centers Standing Committee in carrying out the following duties and responsibilities:

- Serve as one of the major public faces of the CGIAR System, reaching out to stakeholders from all regions to drive progress towards the objectives of the Strategy and Results Framework (SRF);

- Engage leaders from government, Centers, international institutions, advanced research institutes, private sector and civil society as partners to advocate for and promote the goals of the CGIAR System, provide financial support for the system research activities, and jointly implement the SRF for achieving the objectives of the CGIAR System

- Work with governments, Centers, international institutions, advanced research institutes, private sector, civil society and other partners to ensure that the CGIAR System activities and results support the SRF and the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda; and

- Manage the process of establishing and overseeing an effective and fully functioning CGIAR System Office to carry out its tasks, including:

  - Facilitate a collaborative research agenda towards performance based results and accountability;
  - Facilitate a strong collaboration with and between the Centers;
  - Facilitate development and approval of strategies and priorities;
  - Lead the evolution to a performance based system;
o Increase public awareness about the CGIAR System through appropriate events and communication activities;

o Coordinate the development of effective systems of oversight, common services, knowledge management and results measurement across the CGIAR System;

o Manage the system’s relationships with other entities;

o Support the Centers in their responsibilities to comply with best practices in such areas as: accounting, finance, risk management, performance evaluation and human resource management; and

o Prepare reports concerning the CGIAR System activities, expenses, budgets and other issues of relevance to the CGIAR System Organization

Selection Criteria

The successful candidate will be an established actor at the international level with name recognition and proven ability to convene and engage with government and Center leaders and other key stakeholders on agricultural research and sustainable development at a global scale. S/he will also have a reputation for a thoughtful, solutions-oriented approach and competence in coordinating an effective and responsive partnership of independently governed entities, building strong collaboration, mobilizing resources, and delivering results.

Specific experience sought includes:

- A minimum of 15 years of experience in agriculture or sustainable development related organizations businesses with global scale, at least 5 of which has been as a successful senior manager;
- Experience living and working in developing countries;
- A degree in agricultural science, economics, public administration, business management or international relations is desirable, and an additional degree in a technical area related to agriculture is desirable; it is important to note that one or more graduate degrees are required;
- Demonstrated track record of superior skills to lead through influence and persuasion with a focus on facilitating collaboration among independent components;
- Proven ability to manage a large and diverse organization or partnership in the public or private sector, implement a strategic vision, and effectively prioritize work activities; and
- Demonstrated ability to mobilize resources and establish strong relations with contributors and investors

Capabilities that will be probed on and evaluated include:

- Superior strategic, analytical and coordination skills;
- Ability to grasp scientific information;
- Ability to function effectively at the highest level in a multi-cultural environment and to facilitate creation of sustainable partnerships;
- Comfort in multiple geographic regions, including both developing and developed countries, and capable of leading in culturally diverse settings;
- Familiarity with the international system, including the United Nations system and the multilateral financial organizations; and
- Excellent communication skills in English, including the ability to communicate at multiple levels and across diverse disciplines and cultures; the ability to speak multiple languages is desirable but not required

Characteristics of the ideal candidate include:

- Strategy skills, including strong intellectual, management and analytical skills, a broad-based and long-term view of strategic and organizational goals and an ability to evaluate courses of action facing a complex system;
- Results orientation;
- Advocacy, influencing; communication, listening, and mediation skills;
- Intercultural skills, including a strongly international perspective, an understanding of the issues and perspectives of a wide range of Centers and other partners, and the ability to operate effectively in both developed and developing country settings;
- Collaborative and transparent style, teamwork focus, and ability to effect change through a facilitating approach; and
- Independence and integrity

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Applications and nominations are to be sent to Mr. Derek Wilkinson, Managing Partner, Boyden Global Executive Search at dwilkinson@boyden.com or to his colleague Kimmo Kartano at kimmo.kartano@boyden.com.

Boyden global executive search
Founded in 1946, Boyden is the oldest and one of the largest privately owned search firms in the world, with more than 65 offices in over 40 countries. In the world of executive search, Boyden is distinguished by the expertise of our consultants, the resources of our global firm, our commitment to our clients, and our culture of professionalism and integrity. For further information about Boyden, visit www.boyden.com.