



# Position Specification

**The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)**  
Director-General & Chief Executive

January 2023

## Organisational Context

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) is a world-leading authority on global security, political risk and military conflict. It is international in composition, perspective and reach, shaping the strategic agenda globally. The IISS is well-known for its authoritative annual assessment of national defence capabilities around the world – The Military Balance. It conducts bespoke research for government and corporate clients. It convenes governments and business leaders to consult on defence and security issues, notably at the Shangri-La Dialogue\* for the Indo-Pacific region and the Manama Dialogue for the Gulf and the wider Middle East, as well as in more discreet formats. It produces a substantial flow of research in the form of articles, special dossiers, regular publications and books, under three broad headings of “war, power and rules”; and it provides insight and analysis to clients in government and the private sector worldwide.

The Board of the IISS is launching a search for a new Director-General & Chief Executive, who will assume the role on 1 October 2023 when the present DG and CE moves to a fixed-term, part-time position as Executive Chairman.

Over the three decades of leadership under the current incumbent, the IISS has grown from being a small, London-centred research institution, albeit with a global reputation, into a truly international entity. The Institute has offices in Singapore, Berlin, Bahrain, and Washington D.C., in addition to its London headquarters. It has a staff of some 160 people and an annual turnover of more than £25 million.

As a result, the IISS’s funding comes from five main revenue streams: sales of publications and data; contracts with governments to support the two dialogues and to endow independent research programmes; corporate membership and sponsorships, including consulting contracts; individual membership; and philanthropic support for research projects.

Further information on the work of the organisation can be found at [The International Institute for Strategic Studies \(iiss.org\)](https://www.iiss.org).



## The Role

The role of the new Director-General & Chief Executive will be to provide leadership and set the strategic direction for the next successful evolution and growth of the IISS as a world-leading provider of facts, analysis and influence in global security, political risk and military conflict.

The successful candidate will build on the considerable success of recent years, sustain the collegial and quality-focussed culture of IISS, and identify new opportunities to apply its insights in a dynamic and challenging external environment. This is a rare opportunity to lead an organisation which informs international defence and strategic policy making at the highest level.

The new Director-General & Chief Executive will bring vision, intelligence, and social skill. Qualified candidates will have relevant knowledge of the policy arena and be effective communicators to a wide range of audiences. They will have a track record of international relationship building at the highest levels of government and business. They will be proven managers of high-performing teams, accustomed to setting direction and providing support. They will combine this with a keen commercial sense, strong fundraising skills, and a sound instinct for where the IISS can continue to make a distinctive contribution.

The Director-General & Chief Executive reports to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

## Principal Accountabilities

### External Leadership

- Stakeholder Management:
  - Managing and deepening IISS relationships with major stakeholders in government, the private sector, and the intellectual community.
  - Representing the IISS at the highest levels worldwide, displaying the gravitas, credibility and knowledge to do so effectively. Act as a global ambassador for IISS initiatives, plus build and strengthen the organisation's brand, strategic and co-operative partnerships.
- Fundraising:
  - Negotiating major revenue contracts with key stakeholders, while maintaining the IISS's editorial and intellectual independence.
  - Diversifying and strengthening the IISS's major revenue streams in order to finance growth while protecting it from significant risks to its financial stability and reputation.
  - Overseeing the implementation of all organisational contracts according to corporate procurement systems that deliver value for money and focus on the primary work of the IISS.
- Strategic Direction:
  - Leading the IISS in the formulation of its role to contribute to military and security policy research and analysis globally.
  - Further enhancing the reputation of IISS and ensuring it has a key role to play in discussions over global military and security policy research and analysis.

### Internal Leadership

- Operational Management, Organisation, and Culture:
  - Performing the role as Editor-in-Chief of the publications of the IISS.
  - Recruiting and leading the IISS's directing staff, worldwide, and fostering a culture of transparency and co-ordination across the leadership team.
  - Leading global communication across the IISS to maintain morale and engagement through the Director-General & Chief Executive succession process and ensure employee confidence in the organisation's future growth.
  - Supervising its overall human resources policies, including ensuring strong talent-management processes are in place to retain top talent.

- Maintaining a positive and collegiate work environment that facilitates collaboration and is conducive to attracting, retaining, and motivating diverse talent at IISS.
- Overseeing the development of new projects and products, and working with the Research Board to drive a market- and data-led approach to refining IISS' new product pipeline.
- Championing global knowledge and innovation, including technology, and ensuring the dissemination of effective approaches, drawing on evidence and good practice.
- Ensuring that the IISS's organisational structure, operational policies and other business processes are sound and able to effectively deliver on their strategic direction and objectives.
- Further strengthening performance management by tracking key performance indicators across the organisation.
- Setting the tone and direction for the IISS's research output, through a broad knowledge of international relations and security.
- Governance:
  - Working collaboratively and proactively with the Board of Trustees to set long-term strategies for the IISS.
  - Reporting to the Board on the operational, administrative, and financial aspects of the IISS at each Board meeting.
  - Ensuring that the Board is made aware, in a timely way, of key strategic and other material operational challenges the organisation is encountering in the course of its work.
  - Communicating Board decisions to the IISS's staff, and other relevant stakeholders.
  - Supervising the sound financial management of the Institute.
  - Overseeing the IISS's Global Advisory Council, in collaboration with the chair of the Council.

## Candidate Profile

Candidates will possess the following experience and qualifications.

### Academic

- A university degree – preferably alongside a postgraduate or PhD in a relevant subject field, i.e., history, political science, international relations, and social sciences.
- Authority as a leader of research, ideally with prior experience of working within policy or research-intensive environments given the additional responsibility to act as Editor-in-Chief for IISS's publications.

### Personal Attributes

- A stimulating and motivational communicator.
- Have an open and approachable leadership style.
- Be an excellent orator and bring charisma to build durable relationships both internally and externally.
- Strong inter-personal skills and robustness of intellect.
- The capacity to work within a complex environment.
- Sound judgment combined with humility, and an open mindedness for continued learning.
- Fluency in English is essential. It will be desirable but not mandatory to bring fluency in another language or languages.

The ideal candidate will display the following leadership competencies.

### Leadership

- A proven track record of working with others to set the strategic vision for an organisation and deliver it successfully.
- Demonstrable experience of acting as an empowering, inclusive, supportive and engaging leader, who has inspired and developed others.
- A passionate advocate for equality, diversity and inclusion, with evidence of delivering significant outcomes.
- Experience of successfully working with a multi-layered governance structure and building strong relationships with board/council members.
- Strong evidence of developing and consistently delivering against strategy, operation, budgets and plans.

### Advocacy and Impact

- Strong public-speaking skills and advocacy at a global level.
- Experience of influencing a broad range of global stakeholders, including government and policymakers, other institutions, academia and public bodies.
- A track record of creative innovation to solve problems and build new income streams. Bring exceptional fundraising skills and bring strong capability in this field.
- A first class networker, able to develop strong, collaborative relationships at the highest political level.
- Credentials in the creation and cultivation of successful partnerships with governments, civil society actors, and the private sector.
- Strong ambassadorial skills, capable of inspiring and connecting diverse audiences.
- Presence, gravitas, humility and empathy in dealings with partners from a variety of backgrounds.

### Operational Management

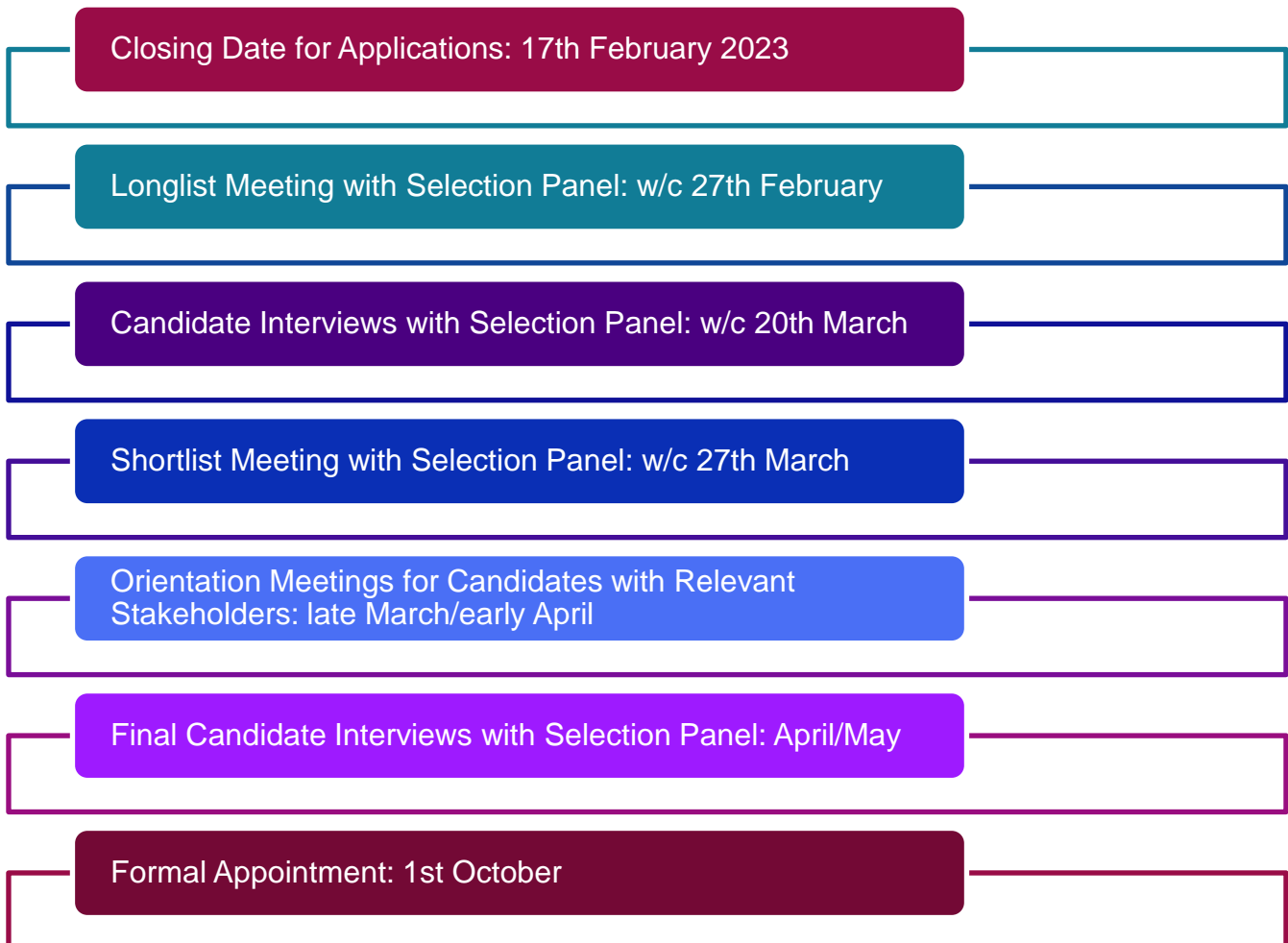
- Exceptional management skills of people, finances and systems, with a proven capacity to motivate and lead a multi-disciplinary management team to achieve organisational goals.
- Team-building ability, the capacity to instil a culture that values measurable achievement, mutual support, and compliance with organisational processes.
- An ability to make difficult decisions when required on organisational development, balanced by experience in constructive engagement with staff on change management processes and their value to the organisation as a whole.

## Location

The Director-General & Chief Executive will be based at the IISS HQ in London, and they will be expected to travel widely.

## Selection Process

### Indicative Timetable



### How to Apply

The recruitment process is being undertaken by Russell Reynolds Associates on behalf of IISS. Please submit your full application by email to [responses@russellreynolds.com](mailto:responses@russellreynolds.com). Please quote the role title and assignment code **2211-066L** in the subject heading of the email. All applications will be acknowledged and considered by the selection panel.

Your submission should include:

- Your current CV with educational and professional qualifications and full employment history, explaining any gaps in your employment history, giving details where applicable.
- A Supporting Statement of not more than two A4 sized pages succinctly highlighting your motivation, experience and skills against the requirements of the role.

**The closing date for applications is 23:59 on Friday 17th February 2023.**

If you would like to have an informal conversation with a member of the team before submitting an application, please contact [responses@russellreynolds.com](mailto:responses@russellreynolds.com)