



Position Specification

CIFOR-ICRAF
Chief Executive Officer

Our Client

CIFOR-ICRAF is the world's leading authority on tropical forest and agroforestry landscapes. World Agroforestry (ICRAF) and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) merged in 2019 - but retain their headquarters in Kenya and Indonesia, respectively. The merger facilitates the provision of the evidence and innovative solutions needed to scale up investment in sustainable land use and agroforestry practices, and address the global challenges of our time.

The merged organisation has partnerships in 64 countries, 159 funding partners, 192 active projects with over 2200 of them completed in 92 nations. Furthermore, CIFOR-ICRAF currently have 700+ staff worldwide, of which c.40% are female in 25 office locations, mostly in the Global South. They carry a combined annual budget of \$100m p/a with a major growth ambition on this front, alongside a combined legacy investment of \$1.8bn in research policy and development. CIFOR-ICRAF research is cited nearly 137 times a day and appears in global media more than 3,000 times per year.

CIFOR and ICRAF are members of CGIAR – a global research partnership for a food-secure future – and share its focus on poverty reduction, increased food and nutritional security, and sustainable natural-resource systems. Their work is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, as well as the three Rio Conventions.

With a combined nearly 75 years of experience, CIFOR-ICRAF's publication record in agricultural research, taken with its experience in training experts, sector-leading partnerships and gender-sensitive implementation of development projects on the ground, is testament to capacity to make meaningful change.

CIFOR-ICRAF focuses on the Global South with Latin America, Africa, South and Southeast Asia as key operational areas, and they have been responsive to the needs of their target beneficiaries and to changing donor requirements. Knowledge products are a cornerstone of their platform, which integrates the interests of donors, and stakeholders.

Mission

The shared aim of both organisations until 2030 is to tackle the following five major global challenges:

- Deforestation and biodiversity loss
- A climate in crisis
- Transforming food systems
- Unsustainable supply and value chains
- Extreme inequality

CIFOR-ICRAF's research-for-development approach focuses on:

- Transformative partnerships with civil societies and governments
- A systems perspective designed to address problems at multiple spatial and temporal scales
- Relevant and actionable solutions
- Knowledge-led digital engagement

CIFOR-ICRAF envisages that by 2023, two-thirds of the global population will have internet access and 70% will enjoy mobile connectivity. It has decided to tap into this by incorporating digital-driven elements more extensively across its programmes, partnerships, and product suite.

The CIFOR-ICRAF Network

The organisation operates in the field primarily through a series of host country agreements from the national to sub-regional level. Additionally, its network is comprised of several groups:

- **Resilient Landscapes** aims to radically transform land use and agricultural supply chains by serving as the nexus between science and businesses, finance, government and civil society across forest and agroforestry landscapes. It leverages the power of the private and public sectors and spurs private finance investment in nature-based solutions. Through this, 'innovation' remains a core value for the organisation.
- **The Global Landscapes Forum** is the world's largest knowledge forum on integrated and sustainable land use; since its creation, it has reached more than 1.5 billion people from 185 countries – including many youth, Indigenous, rural and women's groups. It continues to break new ground with digital events, such as the GLF Youth in Landscapes (YIL) network, the Landscape Academy and GLFx, a global network of local chapters connecting online.
- **The Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA) Partnership** launched in May 2022 to continue the work of the CGIAR Research Program of the same name, which ran from 2011 to 2021. FTA is the world's largest research for development programme to enhance the role of forests, trees and agroforestry in sustainable development and food security and to address climate change.

Operating Model Strategy

CIFOR-ICRAF delivers timely, transformative change through projects and innovative mechanisms, including:

- **Transformative Partnership Platforms (TPPs)** are alliances each focused on one critically important issue that will deliver a specific transformational result.
- **Engagement Landscapes (ELs)** are geographic locations where they carry out concentrated, long-term work to support transformational change and enhance resilience. In ELs, they engage with local stakeholders and work with them and others to develop solutions that work.
- **Flagship Products (FPs)** are initiatives that provide action-oriented insights into key global issues. The Global Landscapes Forum is a key flagship product.

CIFOR-ICRAF's operations in more than 60 countries are supported by a dynamic governance and management structure including a single board of trustees, an integrated leadership team, and a research division responding to regional contexts and representation. Combined communications, partnerships and resource mobilization functions directly support this research division. All is underpinned by a streamlined Directorate of Corporate Services.

For more information, please visit the website: [Home – CIFOR-ICRAF](#)

The Role

In heading the CIFOR-ICRAF senior leadership team, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will have direct oversight over both organisations, and thereby steer the merged institution. The functional merger of CIFOR and ICRAF is now complete, with a Common Board of Trustees and a single Leadership team. The 2020–2030 strategy is being implemented across CIFOR-ICRAF; policies and procedures have been harmonized across the two legal entities; and joint teams have been established both in thematic and geographic areas.

The individual would have to be a visionary, inspiring and thoughtful leader who will passionately champion CIFOR-ICRAF's legacy with purpose while leveraging their knowledge and reach to grow and accelerate CIFOR-ICRAF's impact on the world. (S)he will lead the world's premier research institution on tropical forest and tree landscapes to deliver more urgent and effective solutions to some of the world's greatest environmental and development challenges. The CEO will be at the forefront of the connection between research and action through blending the institutional strengths of the merged organisation and their own expertise on forestry and agroforestry, among other areas.

CIFOR-ICRAF seeks a mould-setting individual who can lead and set the tone for excellence, teamwork, diversity, and innovation. (S)he will be expected to lead conversations on the transformation of landscape approaches and management based on contributions and evidence from CIFOR-ICRAF. The individual would be expected to navigate complex environments of high and senior-level stakeholders comfortably. In doing so, the aim is to mobilize and leverage the power of existing as well as new relationships and networks spanning both public and private sectors to elevate the organisation's brand and impact.

The CEO should be able to adeptly hold conversations with the organisation's researchers and scientific bodies through an understanding and appreciation for their work in implementing the organisation's objectives on the ground. This person should strategically seek out new sources of funding, which are linked with the organizational strategy and scientific agenda. (S)he should help diversify the donor base and respond to changing requirements.

In doing so, the CEO will develop the strategy and positioning of CIFOR-ICRAF. (S)he will have excellent communication, planning and organizational skills alongside the ability to influence and engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including the private sector. This in order to realise their critical fundraising and development targets for which the incoming CEO would be able to utilise her/his extensive network.

Furthermore, (s)he will be a competent manager of people, finance, and systems as the CEO will have strategic and overall operational responsibility for all of these areas. Simultaneously, this individual will be charged with enhancing and maintaining a healthy, open, and collaborative work environment which in turn helps champion the organisation's personnel and create more opportunities for them to realise their potential.

Working under the overall guidance of the CIFOR-ICRAF Common Board of Trustees as an ex-officio member and supported by a diverse and experienced team, the CEO will build on strong foundations of innovation and partnerships to further strengthen the organisation's reputation and credibility in all spheres of engagement.

Key Responsibilities

Connection of Research to Purpose

- Combining the institutional strengths on forestry and agroforestry provides a powerful platform, and opportunities to further develop full landscape understandings. The CEO should enable CIFOR-ICRAF as a unique contributor to the most consequential topic of the coming years.
- The CEO should leverage the combined staff, resources, knowledge, assets, and operations of CIFOR-ICRAF in service of this mission.

Advocacy, Engagement, and Resource Mobilization

- The CEO should be an authentic, compelling communicator, capable of positioning CIFOR-ICRAF at the center of global research, policy and practice on forestry, agroforestry, natural resource management, full landscape approaches, and the broader conversation on Net Zero, climate change, and sustainable livelihoods. They should be visible in global fora on these agendas.
- The CEO should strategically identify new sources of funding, connected with the organizational strategy and scientific agenda. With traditional sources of development or climate finance constrained, the CEO should diversify the donor base. A focus on unrestricted funding sources would be helpful for the institution's operational security.

Development of the Institution

- Complete the integration: develop shared culture and goals, deliver upon the potential of the combined institutional strengths.
- Develop the strategy and positioning: leverage existing assets and research, while ensuring alignment of the strategy with donors and partners.
- Develop talent: promote and encourage the professional development and progression of researchers; create leadership succession plans.
- Ensure operational effectiveness: leading through the operational leadership team, ensure the effective management of corporate and strategic risk, and effective management of finances, resources, and processes.

Candidate Profile

Knowledge, Skills & Experience

Essential

- Demonstrable expertise and experience in natural resource management and forestry.
- An established track record for leading research-focused organisations; deep experience of leading researchers; guiding scientific research and strategy.
- Substantial senior executive experience, including a track record for developing strategy, significant fiduciary responsibility, and enhancing the international engagement of an organisation with external stakeholders.
- An excellent resource mobilisation track record, including experience of diversifying an organisation's donor base. Experience attracting unrestricted resources would be an advantage.
- A demonstrable track record of leading large, complex, highly distributed organisations in LMICs.
- A track record for successfully delivering complex organisational transformation.
- Experience of enhancing organisational efficiency and effectiveness, culture, strategic coherence, and talent development.
- Substantial engagement in relevant international fora.
- Considerable experience living and working in LMICs.

Preferred

- A doctoral degree in a relevant field.
- Personal experience as a research scientist in a relevant field may prove advantageous.

Competencies

Technical Skills & Credibility

- The ability to formulate and present strategy and policy at a high level, and provide collaborative leadership in the development of global strategies, directions, new approaches and methodologies, in a complex and changing environment;
- The ability to formulate appropriate, evidence-driven, ambitious strategies for impact, in service of CIFOR-ICRAF's mission;
- A conceptual and strategic analytical capacity, with the ability to provide high quality strategic advice, and identify alternatives or options in planning and decision-making.

Strategic Capability

- The ability and vision to define and articulate impactful organisational strategy; connecting CIFOR-ICRAF to purpose and to resources;
- The ability to capture and synthesize emerging trends and ideas, and incorporate them into propositions for action in a changing environment and world;
- The capacity to work collaboratively with a large and complex organisation, articulate its vision, and translate that vision into tangible results and longer-term impact;
- A clear focus on organisational goals amid multiple competing risks and demands, and a capacity to prioritise effectively in order to deliver results;
- Proactively identifies new opportunities for the institution and develop existing assets or relationships for novel purposes.

Representation & Resource Mobilisation

- A compelling, charismatic leader, capable of representing CIFOR-ICRAF with authority, credibility, and legitimacy; charisma, courage, and eloquence to deliver key, nuanced messages;
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to engage and inspire colleagues, partners, and prospective donors;
- An articulate, inspiring communicator, able to share a cohesive, ambitious vision for CIFOR-ICRAF;
- The ability to develop credibility with various stakeholders through depth of understanding of CIFOR-ICRAF's work and the issues it seeks to address, the geographies it serves, and the policy areas with which it interacts.

Management

- Demonstrable leadership skills in the stewardship of people, resources, and systems, with a proven capacity to motivate and lead a large, complex, widely distributed organisation;
- Team-building ability and the capacity to instil a culture that values knowledge, curiosity, optimism, determination, diversity, and engagement;
- The ability to successfully drive and anchor change in a complex, evolving organisation by demonstrating agility and stimulating creativity and innovation;
- Highly driven and focused on organisational and individual performance alongside managing for results; demonstrates strong operational skills and superior judgment in evaluating opportunities and risks;
- Proven ability to identify, motivate, develop, and retain a highly professional multicultural staff by fostering a culture of feedback and development;
- A highly participatory leadership style, with both the humility and technical credibility to engage with the organisation at large in shaping the organisation's purpose and direction, whilst still making timely decisions with purpose and clarity;
- Acts in a transparent and consistent manner, while serving the best interests of the organisation;
- Creates a sense of purpose/meaning for the team that generates followership beyond their own personality and engages others to the greater purpose for the organisation as a whole;
- Cultural sensitivity, a demonstrable commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and a track record for enhancing the organisations they have led through these principles.

Leadership Style

Attribute	Details
Participatory decision-maker	Listens and engages widely throughout the organisation. Seeks input, understanding and guidance to inform their decisions. Highly collaborative, while accountable and purposeful in making decisions.
Collegial	Fosters shared understanding, commitment, and mission alignment. Brokers and discerns the collective will of the organisation.
Curious	Willingness to serve as a sounding board for ideas.
Galvanising	Fosters collective endeavour, shared goals. Shapes coherent culture and mission. An enabler and synthesizer.

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Servant leader	Focus on building the institution, rather than personal profile. Represents the institution with diligence, legitimacy and authority.
Charisma	A partnership builder and representative, with exceptional interpersonal skills.
Humble	Someone who is not interested in controlling the initiative of the individual programmes, but rather seeks to understand and enhance scientific endeavour.
Networker	Readily develops relationships, connects the institution to broader purpose, influence, and resources.
Trustworthy	Credible and consistent with colleagues, partners and donors. Demonstrates unimpeachable integrity.

Location

Kenya or Indonesia.

The CEO should be willing to travel as necessary, including to remote environments.

Languages

- CIFOR-ICRAF is an English language working environment, consequently fluency in spoken and written English is essential.
- Working knowledge of Bahasa, French, Spanish and/or Swahili would be advantageous.

How to Apply

To apply, please send your CV, and supporting statement to responses@russellreynolds.com by **Friday 30th September**. Your supporting statement should succinctly highlight your motivation, experience, and skills against the requirements of the role. Please include the role title in the subject of your email.

If you have a question about the position, or your application, please contact the Russell Reynolds Team (Simon Kingston, Nick Ricketts & Thomson Ambooken) at either responses@russellreynolds.com or on PH: +44 20 7830 8089.