

POSITION DESCRIPTION

FOR THE POSITION OF CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



JULY 2022

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POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION	Chief Operating Officer
ORGANIZATION	Conservation International
REPORTS TO	Chief Executive Officer, M. Sanjayan, Ph.D.
LOCATION	Arlington, VA
WEBSITE	https://www.conservation.org/

CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL OVERVIEW

Conservation International protects nature for the benefit of humanity. Through science, policy, fieldwork, and finance, we spotlight and secure the most important places in nature for the climate, biodiversity, and for people. With offices in 30 countries and projects in more than 100 countries, Conservation International (CI) partners with governments, companies, civil society, Indigenous peoples, and local communities to help people and nature thrive together.

ROLE SUMMARY

Conservation International seeks an experienced, dynamic leader as its next Chief Operating Officer (COO) to bring vision, direction, and leadership for its global operations. CI is one of the world's leading environmental organizations implementing critical climate change, biodiversity protection, sustainable agriculture and natural climate solutions initiatives in 30 countries. Founded 35 years ago, CI now implements \$200m worth of conservation programming globally, has 1400 employees and is poised to hire 200 more staff by mid-2024. This is an exciting and pivotal role for a seasoned operations executive to manage such growth effectively and develop a more sophisticated US and global operations engine for CI. Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer, the COO will be empowered with the authority and responsibility to manage CI's operations across the entire global organization, including Information Technology, Human Resources, Finance and Accounting and Global Administration.

Since its inception 35 years ago, CI has been committed to a truly global approach to conservation management. Working with governments, local partners and indigenous communities is at the heart of how CI implements conservation programming. CI believes in empowering its distributed leadership

across its countries of operation. Therefore, CI seeks to introduce greater standardization, efficiency, and data management across its global operations for seamless information exchange, compliance, reporting and risk management through integrated systems.

The incoming COO needs to be a visionary leader who a proven track-record of can develop and implement a strategic plan to build operations infrastructure to match CI's size and growth. While direct knowledge of conservation is not required, it is especially important that the COO have international experience and a passion for CI's mission. In addition, the COO will need to understand CI's donor base and funding sources to be able to assess the needs across the entire organization.

This individual must bring a passion and appreciation for diverse perspectives, talents, cultures and identities and work collaboratively and respectfully at all levels of CI.

Understanding the complexity of Conservation International, while appreciating the unique characteristics that distinguish Conservation International's diverse operations will require a collaborative, astute, visionary, and entrepreneurial COO who demonstrates the following attributes:

- ▲ **Leadership, Vision and Organization** – Exceptional capacity for managing and leading teams towards a common vision and serving as an agent for change as needed; identifying operational weaknesses or deficiencies that inhibit on-the-ground decision making and flexibility; ability to connect with staff on an individual level and within large groups; capacity to promote organizational best practices without applying rigid or inflexible mandates; has the vision to help CI operate as a globally distributed organization with consistent values and procedures.
- ▲ **Building Partnerships** – An operations leader who is highly collaborative and effective at building strong relationships with Conservation International staff, board members and partners. Respects others; actively seeks and shares ideas; takes the initiative to understand the unique needs of the different program areas in which Conservation International operates.
- ▲ **Experience with Complex Financial Models and Business Structures** – Ability to understand the financial, management, reporting, and HR risks associated with multimillion-dollar projects and restricted funding sources; understands appropriate accountability measures required to track and report expenditures aligned with strategic priorities.
- ▲ **Excellent Communications and Interpersonal Skills** – Conveys complex information effectively and in an appropriate manner for the intended audience. Strong written, verbal, and listening skills. Demonstrates willingness to share knowledge, encourage the exchange of ideas, and welcomes input and feedback where appropriate. Strong awareness of different communications styles and displays cultural sensitivity and respect for a globally dispersed workforce and partner organizations.
- ▲ **Passion for Mission** - Willing to develop an understanding of and appreciation for the conservation movement and demonstrate a passion for working with a purpose-driven organization. Effectively aligns strategies and operations that support the mission of Conservation International. Keeps abreast of trends and developments in the industry that impact strategy, organizational processes and procedures.

- ▲ **Respect for Historical Legacy** – Understands the importance of Conservation International’s evolution and growth from a founder-led organization and appreciates the importance of institutional knowledge and historical norms that might cause some employees to be skeptical about embracing change and adopting new operational processes. Displays strong problem-solving skills; keen to help an organization maintain agility and be positioned for future growth.
- ▲ **Adaptable** – Displays willingness to be flexible when the situation requires. Effectively conveys the benefits of adopting consistent, standard processes and structures. Has the ability to bring others along; can sell the advantages of adopting new approaches and gain support from the team.
- ▲ **Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** – Cultivates an organizational culture that reflects CI’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; supports a collaborative, learning culture that values knowledge sharing, feedback, and continuous growth.

Primary Responsibilities

- Establish a close partnership with the CEO and executive team and lead a clearly articulated operational strategy in support of CI’s strategic goals.
- Work closely with the Executive Committee and senior leadership to ensure a culture of open and direct communication in a positive, fair, and accountable workplace.
- Provide programmatic leadership and input for all strategic plan implementation processes with the CEO and executive leadership team. Coach program directors as they implement the strategic plan and transition program operations.
- Develop and implement a system for tracking and reporting on the progress of the strategic plan implementation.
- Achieve harmony and flow across our global programs and divisions to ensure that our local, country, regional, and global teams can work together in harmony. Update and modernize roles, rights and responsibilities for positions, focusing on decision-making and increasing the speed at which things are executed. Ensure consistent application of policies and practices, with the authority to ensure appropriate accountability across the organization.
- Have accountability for leading and monitoring overall and organization-wide risk levels. Identify and monitor areas of business risk and implement strategies to mitigate as appropriate. Monitor compliance and take actions to address any issues or gaps identified.
- ▲ Direct the development and implementation of short-term and long-term fiscal planning including annual budgeting and multi-year forecasting, ensuring the highest levels of fiscal responsibility.

- ▲ Develop and utilize predictive models and analyses to provide insight into the organization's operations and business plans. Support effective decision-making and planning through financial and management analyses, performance indicators, reports, and recommendations.
- ▲ Direct the current and long-term effectiveness of CI's financial functions including accounting, budgetary controls, financial planning and analysis, grant and contract management, financing, banking, investments, taxes, and reporting.
- ▲ Provide governance for IT and implement best practices for a high quality, consistent and reliable infrastructure across CI's global workforce, ensuring systems integration and the promotion of the most efficient use of technology resources.
- ▲ Ensure adherence to generally accepted accounting practices, donor rules and regulations, and applicable tax laws.
- ▲ Represent CI in forums and build partnerships needed to advance CI's agenda, including multilateral agencies, government bodies, NGOs, private sector partners, and other key public and private donors to achieve CI's mission.

Required Qualifications and Experience

- ▲ Masters/Advanced degree in business administration and 15 years or more experience in a leadership position working cross-functionally across finance, operations, human resources, and IT in a large, complex organization.
- ▲ At least five or more years of experience in a senior leadership role serving a global organization with experience managing teams of professional employees.
- ▲ Proven ability to navigate complex nonprofit compliance, operations, legal, and risk management issues in a global setting, while adjusting approaches to country-specific contexts.
- ▲ Ability to listen to and learn from the Board of Directors, donors, and staff, while bringing experience and perspective to further advance the organization, culture, and mission.
- ▲ Demonstrated ability to provide an inspiring, accessible, visible, and flexible leadership style that inspires trust, respect, and confidence and drives results.
- ▲ Multicultural competence to lead and manage others through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion and ensure all aspects of diversity are leveraged in our teams and work.
- ▲ Proven experience building and motivating high-performing teams, acting as a coach and mentor.
- ▲ Demonstrated expertise in managing organizational financial activity and systems, including budgeting, multi-year forecasting, modeling, accounting, and reporting in a diverse stakeholder and funding environment.

- ▲ Proven ability to formulate and execute results utilizing strong analytical, critical decision-making, and strategic planning skills.
- ▲ Confidence and capability to adapt and lead in a fast-paced, entrepreneurial work environment, conceptualizing and implementing innovative strategies and programs.
- ▲ Ability to analyze and recommend short-term and long-term improvements to processes, procedures, and systems.
- ▲ Willing to undertake extensive international travel and to work during non-traditional and extended hours to support a global workforce in multiple time zones.
- ▲ Fluency in Spanish, Portuguese, and/or French preferred.

Conservation International is an equal opportunity employer that values diversity in all forms and is committed to an inclusive, respectful environment for all. It is our policy to ensure that all individuals are treated equally without regard to race, color, national origin or ancestry, religion or creed, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions), disability (physical or mental), citizenship status, marital status, genetic information, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, medical condition, military service and/or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Diversified Search Group has been retained by Conservation International to assist in this recruitment process. Applications, nominations, and further inquiries should be submitted electronically and in confidence to: ConservationCOO@divsearch.com

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