



Position brief for the position of Chief Operating Officer World Cocoa Foundation

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Letter from Chris Vincent, World Cocoa Foundation President

The World Cocoa Foundation was created over twenty years ago to assure a sustainable future for cocoa and the farmers whose livelihoods depend on it. Today, WCF's member companies represent more than 80% of the cocoa supply chain which gives WCF a pivotal position among cocoa and chocolate companies, producing and consuming country governments, civil society and the cocoa farmer themselves, all of whom are seeking solutions to the sustainability issues facing the sector. These issues, farmer income, child labour and deforestation, are complex but WCF seeks to be the catalyst to find solutions to these problems by convening all stakeholders to create a thriving, healthy and equitable cocoa sector.

WCF is at an exciting time in its evolution. Following my appointment in October 2022, the board has approved a redefined strategy for WCF which focuses on convening and collaborative programming:

- With the advent of deforestation and child labour regulation in both the EU and US, WCF's unique position, with a presence in the producing countries and a global membership in all the consuming countries, places us at the heart of the debates that will frame and implement that legislation, leading the way on issues such as traceability.
- On behalf of its members, WCF already manages a ground-breaking PPP between 35 companies and the governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire that is seeking to reverse deforestation in both countries. As that PPP is five years old, we will be seeking to relaunch that programme and launch new collaborative programmes to address child labour and farmer income in the near future.

To deliver this strategy, I am looking for two senior leaders to form WCF's new senior leadership team with me. One will be Vice President of Programmes with responsibility for relaunching our deforestation PPP and designing, launching, and funding new programmes to address child labour and farmer income. The other will be Chief Operating Officer, also a Vice President-level position, with the proven skills to lead all aspects of our operations, including finance, and the relationship building ability and credibility to convene our membership and other stakeholders. Both will be heavily results- and impact-focused with the ability to apply commercial rigour to development issues; skilled in motivating diverse teams and with high standards of execution. The successful candidates will be smart, strategic, pragmatic and experienced in working in developing markets but will also need to have a reputation for being straightforward, an honest broker, and a good team player. A healthy sense of humour is a must.

I look forward to meeting you.



Chris Vincent
President



Organization & Opportunity Overview

Chief Operating Officer

The World Cocoa Foundation was incorporated in 2000 when the U.S. Chocolate Manufacturers Association (CMA) acknowledged that a new model of collaboration was needed to assure a sustainable future for cocoa and the farmers whose livelihoods depend on the crop. The organisation's initial purpose was to support research and education programmes related to cocoa agronomy.



The WCF spent the next decade building an independent organisation that played a prominent leadership role on behalf of the chocolate and cocoa industry on sustainability issues, especially the issue of child labour. From 2009, WCF became more actively engaged in implementing large projects through a public-private partnership model that leveraged member company funds to access donor funding to achieve greater reach and impact. These included activities funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development. Programme activities, carried out primarily in West Africa, as well as the Americas and Southeast Asia, focused on increasing farm-level cocoa productivity and farmer incomes and addressing the challenges of child labour and deforestation.

Experience gained from industry collaboration through these programmes helped lay the groundwork for a stronger focus on collective action to tackle key sustainability challenges. CocoaAction, launched in 2014 by nine leading chocolate and cocoa companies, was underpinned by a set of principles and actions designed to improve productivity and strengthen cocoa-growing communities in West Africa. The Cocoa and Forests Initiative, launched in 2017 by more than 25 companies, is an ongoing ground breaking partnership with the governments of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire to end and reverse deforestation in their cocoa sectors.

Today, WCF is an industry organization whose members represents more than 80% of the cocoa sector. WCF's vision is to be a catalyst for a thriving, healthy and equitable cocoa sector where farmer income is improved, child labour is significantly reduced and deforestation is reversed. WCF's unique position at the centre of the cocoa and chocolate industry, governments, civil society and cocoa farming communities, enables WCF to realise its vision through the creation of strategic relationships and collaborative programmes that deliver real impact and systemic reform.

The Chief Operating Officer plays a major role in the organisation as the day-to-day manager and coordinator of all operations, ensuring efficient and effective use of resources, interaction with members, partners, and external relationships of all kinds, and responsibility for critical organisational decisions.



Key members of WCF's [Board of Directors](#) include:

- **Peter Boone**, WCF Chairman – Chief Executive Officer, Barry Callebaut
- **Christine McGrath**, WCF Vice Chair – Vice President and Chief of Global Impact, Sustainability, and Well-being, Mondelez International
- **Tricia Brannigan**, WCF Treasurer – Chief Procurement Officer, Vice President Global Procurement, The Hershey Company
- **Peter Blommer**, WCF Secretary – Vice Chairman, Blommer



WCF [members](#) operate from six continents, representing 80 percent of the global cocoa and chocolate market, and provide a uniquely informed perspective on the interconnected nature and needs of the cocoa industry.



The Position

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for leading organizational strategy development, decisions about resource allocation, and financial planning and management, as well as overseeing all aspects of WCF's operations and systems to ensure their effectiveness and alignment with the Foundation's mission. The Chief Operating Officer will serve as a strategic thought partner to the President and advisor to other WCF leaders, working to ensure that strategic objectives are thoughtfully conceived, well-defined, and can be effectively translated into actionable strategies and plans that advance the Foundation's mission and support high-quality execution by teams across the organization.

Essentially, the Chief Operating Officer will take on 4 roles: COO, CFO, Chief of Staff, and Deputy CEO running the day-to-day operations of the Foundation. They will play a vital leadership role by modelling and reinforcing a culture of thoughtful problem solving, analytically informed decision-making, organizational learning, and the highest standards of professionalism and operational delivery. They will also be responsible for the teams located in the two country offices in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Duties & Responsibilities

- **Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation (Chief of Staff Function):** Lead WCF's strategic planning processes and activities across the organization and work with teams to ensure that Foundation efforts align organizational priorities with resources.
- **Operational Effectiveness (COO Function):** Lead the Foundation's commitment to operational excellence, overseeing key operational teams (finance, strategic planning, and incubation) directly, and identifying opportunities across all teams and systems to improve operational effectiveness and increase efficiency in WCF's worldwide operations.
- **Financial Planning and Management (CFO Function):** Lead the overall financial strategy of the organization and oversee the finance department, which manages fiscal and fiduciary responsibilities for the World Cocoa Foundation. This includes both strategic and operational oversight of the organization's accounting, financial planning, budgeting, compliance, and business services functions to maximize impact.
- **Partner in Fundraising (Deputy CEO Function):** Working closely with the President and leaders across the organization, to ensure systems are in place to underpin effective fundraising and revenue strategies for the Foundation, steward WCF's creation and maintenance of fiduciaries and potentially other fundraising support for WCF partners and ensure that WCF's capacity for scaled fundraising campaigns remain agile and best-in-class.
- **Organizational Decision-Making (Deputy CEO Function):** Responsible for working across the organization to ensure WCF makes informed, timely decisions on issues of organizational importance, serving as a thought-partner to the President and other foundation leaders.
- **Convening the Leading Companies (COO Function):** Responsible for managing the relationships with, and coordination of, the largest companies in WCF's membership who are most active in WCF's programmes.



The Candidate

This role requires an exceptional individual with both hands-on experience ensuring the effectiveness of an organization, commercial sensibilities, and an understanding of a multi-stakeholder operating environment.

Competencies & Areas of Expertise

- At least fifteen years of progressively responsible experience with at least 5 years of **executive management-level experience in strategy and/or operations**
- Experience working in an **international and cross-cultural environment** required.
- Experience working in **commercial organisations** required.
- Experience working with **non-profit organisations** preferred.
- Demonstrated commitment to **World Cocoa Foundation core values, mission, and initiatives.**
- Experience with **change management and proven experience thriving in fast-moving and fluid environments** a plus.
- Reputation for being **action-oriented, multidisciplinary, and creative** in finding new strategies and solutions.
- **Outstanding oral and written communication skills.**

Essential Qualifications & Traits

- The capacity to handle **multiple tasks or job responsibilities simultaneously**, often leading to increased efficiency and productivity.
- Superior **analytic and problem-solving** skills and track record of success in evidence-based decision making.
- Exceptional **project management, consultative, and facilitation skills** to drive and support teams in a fast moving, entrepreneurial environment.
- Outstanding **interpersonal skills**, ability to work effectively at all levels of the organization, and demonstrated talent for **collaboration, team building, and relationship management.**
- Flexibility, resilience, and reputation for being a **motivated self-starter and multi-tasker** with a high energy level and ability to thrive under pressure.
- A healthy **sense of humour and balance of confidence and humility.**
- **Advanced degree or equivalent in related field** (e.g., MBA, MPA, MPP, JD) required.

Location

The location for this role is expected to be in the UK, EU, or another geography near the CET time zone, and will also require travel to the US, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, and eventually other geographies.



How to Express Interest

We appreciate all expressions of interest, referrals, or nominations for this role. A comprehensive CV along with a cover letter which sets out your motivation to take on such a role and encapsulates the aspects of your experience relevant to the required criteria would be appreciated.

To do so, or to arrange for a conversation in confidence, please contact:

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