



## **Position Specification**

The Rainforest Alliance

Chief Executive Officer

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# Position Specification

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The Rainforest Alliance  
www.rainforest-alliance.org

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## Our Client

The Rainforest Alliance (RA) is an international nonprofit organization working at the intersection of business, agriculture, and forests to make responsible business the new normal. RA is an alliance of farmers, forest communities, companies, and consumers committed to creating a world where people and nature thrive in harmony. The organization uses social and market forces to protect forests, improve the livelihoods of farmers and forest communities, promote their human rights, and help them mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis.

The Rainforest Alliance combines the leadership, expertise, and longstanding partnerships of two leading international organizations, UTZ and The Rainforest Alliance, which merged in January 2018 in order to more effectively respond to the urgent challenges of today. During the organizations' combined 45 years of work on the front lines of the global sustainability movement, their dedicated global experts have innovated and honed scalable methods to protect vulnerable landscapes and support farmers to improve livelihoods.

Today, The Rainforest Alliance operates in over 70 countries and has over 100 projects bringing direct benefits to farmers, forests, communities, and nature. RA works with over 5,000 companies to source certified ingredients and improve their business practices; over 2 million farmers follow its standards. Over 170 countries have products certified with the Rainforest Alliance Certified Seal or the UTZ Label.

RA has revenues of approximately \$70 million and a staff of 500 located in the United States, Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

## Driving Impact in an Interdependent World

The Rainforest Alliance's new strategy guides its partners—from smallholder farmers and forest communities to corporate and civil society allies across Latin America, Africa, and Asia—in accelerating their sustainability impact. They harness the power of the market to drive positive social, environmental, and economic change along entire supply chains across landscapes that are critically important to global climate stability.

The farming and forest communities RA works with are on the front lines of some of the world's most urgent challenges – climate change, deforestation, and rural poverty – and the organization has learned that the best way to support frontline communities in responding to these challenges is through a comprehensive, 360-degree approach that centers on sustainable livelihoods.

In May 2020, RA adopted a new standard and assurance system that is reimagining certification as a journey of *continuous improvement*, fortified by advanced monitoring techniques and complementary interventions. Rather than a pass-fail model focused solely on compliance, the Rainforest Alliance's new [2020 certification program](#) will measure and incentivize progress along the entire sustainability journey. Development of this new program included significant consultation with stakeholders across the system. The global roll-out is currently underway.

Collaboration is at the heart of RA's new certification model and the organization works with local partners to design and implement creative strategies to protect vulnerable landscapes and restore degraded ones. These systems engage farmers themselves, farm groups and cooperatives, forest communities, and field

experts from the region. They emphasize constructive monitoring through RA's new standard and assurance protocols. And they provide improved data analytics to assess the specific needs of farmers and make RA's interventions more effective over the long term. This performance-driven approach feeds back into RA's own journey of continuous improvement.

In a number of critically important landscapes, the Rainforest Alliance supports long-term conservation initiatives focused on sustainable rural enterprise development. These multifaceted initiatives are co-designed by RA's partner communities and include training, technical assistance, sustainable financing, public-private partnerships, and/or facilitation of market linkages, in addition to certification.

Finally, the Rainforest Alliance uses two supporting interventions to fortify its reimaged certification model and landscape initiatives: 1) RA's advocacy team works to advance policy and implementation to support its key sustainability priorities—as well as increased commitments and financial investment from both governments and companies, and 2) RA works with a number of company partners to develop tailored supply chain services that guide them on their own sustainability journeys.

*For more information on The Rainforest Alliance please refer to: [www.rainforest-alliance.org](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org)*

*For The Rainforest Alliances 2019 Audited Financial Statements: <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/audited-financial-documents>*

## **The Role**

The Rainforest Alliance is focused on achieving systemic change on a global scale. As such, its CEO will be a strategic leader of vision and operational excellence able to steer the organization thoughtfully and confidently, positioning it as an innovative and impactful voice and partner in protecting vulnerable landscapes and making responsible businesses adopt sustainable and inclusive practices. This role calls for an internationally minded leader with a passion for conservation and international development, a sophisticated understanding of corporate sustainability practices and priorities, and the ability to align interests and achieve tangible results for farmers, local communities, businesses, and the environment.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for the strategic, programmatic, financial, and operational leadership of the Rainforest Alliance. S/he will establish a culture of transparency, collaboration, clear priorities and accountability, and will promote the use of technology and data to further RA's mission and to support sound decision-making. S/he will continually push the organization to innovate and find ways to better engage and serve partners from grassroots to the C-suite.

At every step, the CEO will reinforce program strategy and service delivery, promote a culture of excellence and results orientation, and strengthen human capital across the organization. S/he will be an inclusive, fair, and present manager and must be able to foster a culture that attracts, values, motivates, respects, and retains high-calibre professionals.

The CEO will be an articulate and persuasive communicator and will be responsible for generating enthusiasm and support for the Rainforest Alliance's mission and for bringing greater visibility to the impact of the organization's programs and brand. S/he will be a strong relationship builder able to effectively engage new alliance partners and donors, with a strategic approach to revenue generation

from all sources: individual philanthropy and institutional donors (foundations, government agencies, and inter-governmental agencies).

This role can be based in New York, Amsterdam or another major Rainforest Alliance office and requires the ability to engage and work with a global team across time zones.

## **Candidate Profile**

The Rainforest Alliance is seeking a leader with demonstrated commitment to conservation, the environment, and sustainable livelihoods; proven operational excellence; strong communication skills and convening power; and, ideally, previous experience in both the nonprofit and the corporate sector.

The successful candidate will be skilled in managing a large, decentralized organization or division, and of engaging and working closely with a high-performing global Board. S/he will have outstanding communication skills, both written and verbal, and the ability to represent RA effectively with a diversity of international audiences across the business, nonprofit, and government sectors.

In terms of the required experience and personal competencies, we would highlight the following:

### **Knowledge and Experience**

- Demonstrated commitment to and passion for the mission and goals of the Rainforest Alliance with a working understanding of conservation and sustainable development.
- Considerable stature and credibility in the sustainability world.
- Strong understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing corporate sustainability efforts and the ability to engage C-suite leaders in substantive dialogue on the subject.
- Understanding of the commercial dynamics of corporates, producers, and other RA stakeholders.
- Appreciation for the “business of running a nonprofit”.
- A personal track record of persuasive engagement of external stakeholders; experience developing and managing productive, long-standing relationships.

### **Strategic Capability**

- The ability to create and articulate an inspiring vision for the organization, and to translate it into clear, achievable objectives to the team, the Board, external partners, and funders.
- Not afraid to constructively challenge the conventional wisdom or accepted way of doing things.
- The ability to effectively balance the desire/need for broad change with an understanding of how much change the organization is capable of handling.
- Can maintain a clear focus on goals amid multiple demands; has the capacity to prioritize and delegate effectively in order to deliver results.
- Strong analytical and conceptual skills. Can identify and understand the impact and implications of new information and events. Quickly grasps the essentials in complex situations and can conceptualize problems and solutions.

### **Leadership and Management**

- An inspiring, inclusive, and generous manager able to recruit, support, and retain top talent; fosters a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, and teamwork.
- Highly skilled in developing, managing, and driving engagement from staff through frequent communication and transparency and setting and maintaining clear priorities.

- Encourages multiple perspectives while being decisive and maintaining focus on key objectives and accountability.
- Willing to share the spotlight and visibly celebrate and support the success of the team.
- Experienced in Board development and able to engage and motivate Board members.
- Self-reflective and aware of his/her own limitations; leads by example; hires to complement his/her own skills and competencies; open to feedback and self-improvement.

**Building Relationships and Using Influence**

- Naturally connects and builds strong relationships with others; demonstrates strong emotional intelligence and an ability to communicate clearly and persuasively.
- An ability to inspire trust and followership in others through compelling influence, powerful charisma, passion in his/her beliefs, and active drive.
- Excellent public speaker with strong written skills. Highly articulate; makes arguments in a clear and compelling manner. At ease in a front-facing role representing the organization with peers, partners, funders, and the media.
- Has the credibility and gravitas to convene and engage diverse and opposing stakeholders in a common dialogue and move forward an agenda.

**Executing for results**

- Determined and resilient in the face of obstacles or setbacks.
- Has excellent judgment; makes confident decisions that fairly balance a variety of factors; navigates confidently in ambiguous situations.
- Has integrity and lives by the highest ethical standards.
- Has a strong, healthy ego and the humility to admit failures and identify learnings gained from them.
- Energetic and motivated with a high capacity for work; maintains energy and strategic focus in the face of multiple priorities.
- Charismatic, personable, interested and interesting. Has a naturally appealing manner that draws people in.

**Fundraising**

- Ideally, experience building and diversifying an organization's funding base. Ability to engage with a diverse group of funders for both operational and programmatic support.
- If not from the nonprofit world, will have a previous track-record of building productive and enduring relationships with partners that led to recurring donations or revenues for an organization or company.

To submit an application, please contact Russell Reynolds Associates at the email address below.

All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

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