

Leading Coffee Research organization seeks to identify a Director Research & Development

Kincannon and Reed has been retained to identify a Director Research & Development for World Coffee Research, a collaborative research and development program whose mission is to grow, protect, and enhance supplies of quality coffee grown globally while improving the livelihood of the families who produce it.

The Organization

World Coffee Research (WCR) is a non-profit agricultural research organization formed by the global coffee industry in 2012 to drive collaborative innovation to ensure the future of coffee. WCR focuses on research with the potential to dramatically improve coffee productivity, coffee quality, climate resilience, and farmer livelihoods to support origin diversity (the continued availability of high-quality coffee from many producing countries).

WCR acts as a bridge between industry market demand and national research programs to bring tools and approaches with proven track records in other crops, including user-led design, to accelerate progress in coffee agricultural research. In particular, WCR focuses on coffee varieties and knowledge. Across four program areas (breeding, trials, seed value chains, and global leadership), WCR works in deep partnership with national partners to modernize variety improvement systems so that better plants are available and accessible to farmers.

We prioritize working in 11 countries containing 50% of the world's 12.5 million family coffee farms, producing 30% of the world's supply of coffee. These 11 countries are critical for supporting origin diversity. In these focus countries, we build stronger, deeper partnerships with research institutes, extension organizations, exporters, and other private players like nurseries. We work closely with them to identify problems in their variety improvement systems and build roadmaps to modernization. We supply global public goods such as improved germplasm for breeding and selection, high-throughput genotyping platforms, and global multi-environment trial networks to test existing and new varieties for climate resilience. Our partners use these supports to create improved varieties that meet both farmers' and consumers' needs and to make them accessible to farmers.

WCR will be launching a Global Breeding Network in 2022, built on a "coopetition" framework. Through this framework, we generate novel germplasm and distribute it for global multi-environment testing and genomic selection, while enabling national breeding programs to access low-cost tools and to develop varieties uniquely suited to their own national production conditions.

Coffee has seen alarmingly low levels of investment when it comes to agricultural innovation to benefit farmers; WCR therefore enables the global coffee industry to invest in agricultural innovation to preserve origin diversity and empower producers. Our *clients* are the world's leading coffee companies, including Starbucks, Dunkin', the J.M. Smucker Company, Keurig Dr. Pepper, illy caffe, and JDE Peets, and over 200 others, who fund our work through membership. We work in collaboration with *partners* (researchers and technicians/extension agents for national coffee institutions, international advanced research institutions, and green coffee suppliers) to execute a shared research agenda. Our *beneficiaries* are coffee farmers in 11 focus countries, roasters and traders who purchase coffee from diverse origins, and coffee drinkers who have continued access to delicious, diverse supplies of sustainable, high-quality coffee.

Position Summary

The Director of Research & Development will serve as a member of a six-person senior leadership team and collaborate within a global-regional matrixed structure to achieve organizational goals. The Director of Research & Development will direct and implement WCR's global research and development portfolio to deliver on WCR's organizational strategy

to preserve diverse origins through supporting country competitiveness. In addition to research management, this role requires a commercial orientation with strong skills in business development, negotiation, and leading through influence as WCR's portfolio is implemented in collaboration with and through a network of national research partners on behalf of member companies.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Research program leadership and technical guidance – 75%

- Accountable for program and budget development, technical and operational execution, and reporting on WCR's Global Breeding Network
- Accountability towards program and budget development, technical implementation, and reporting on WCR trialing program including hybrid trials, international multi-location variety trials, and beverage quality evaluations.
- Provide technical and scientific guidance in the development and implementation of the WCR nursery program
- Oversee and lead technical and operational support in the modernization of the breeding program and capacity building of our national partners
- Consult and advise on the WCR trial program, including on-farm variety trials, core collection trials, MLAT
- Hold responsibility toward leading the technical and scientific peer review process to assure quality programming is in place for on-going and new projects
- Provide oversight for data management and related duties, as needed.

Represent WCR – 10%

- Serve as a Brand Ambassador for WCR by leading, developing, and maintaining strong relations with key partners, positioning WCR as a partner or collaborator of choice. Build trust and generate desire among partners. Of particular importance is fostering relationships with senior scientific leaders of the national coffee institutes / national agriculture research institutes in WCR focus countries and regional institutes (e.g. CATIE) for implementation of the Global Breeding Network; private and public sector research partners associated with technologies and approaches to support the nursery program; and senior leadership in R&D and green coffee supply teams within WCR member companies and prospective member companies in order to generate awareness and interest in supporting WCR strategy. Other key relationships include scientists in advanced research institutes and universities, and government and private sector research organizations that can collaborate or partner with WCR to advance a shared global coffee research agenda.

Supervise staff – 15%

- Foster a team culture among direct reports to deliver organizational results.
- Guide and support staff in their individual technical duties and responsibilities.
- Encourage and cultivate an environment that promotes the professional development of staff.
- Provide quarterly performance feedback and support to staff.
- Validate staff compliance with WCR policies and procedures.

Education, experience, knowledge, and skills:

- PhD (or MS with 10+ years of relevant experience) in plant breeding, genetics, agronomy, food chemistry, sensory / food science or a related field of relevance to the WCR research portfolio
- Experience leading complex research projects in breeding and agronomy in an international context
- Proven ability to collaborate with national research partners in under-resourced research environments
- Tenure in successfully working with industry research partners

- Ability to manage large, complex, multi-country projects, programs, and budgets
- Success in leading multicultural teams
- Mastery of applied modern breeding and genomics; use of genomic and other advanced tools in seed / nursery systems
- Knowledge of data management, data analysis and statistics
- Experience with intellectual property considerations in agricultural research collaborations
- Broad, deep contacts among senior research managers in plant genetics / seed companies as well as in international research institutions; ability to leverage professional network to support WCR programs.
- Knowledge of coffee genetics and agronomy or experience in a related permanent / perennial crop sector a plus.
- Fluency in English required. Spanish and / or French would be a plus.

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