

Future Earth Interim Director

Closing date: 15 February 2013

Introduction

Future Earth is a 10-year international programme on Earth system research for global sustainability. The goal of Future Earth is to develop the knowledge required for societies worldwide: to face challenges posed by global environmental change and to identify and implement solutions and opportunities for a transition to global sustainability.

The development of Future Earth has been at the request of the Science and Technology Alliance for Global Sustainability, which brings together organisations that represent the international science community, funders and users of environmental research, and environmental information providers. Today, these include ICSU, ISSC, Belmont Forum, IGFA, UNEP, UNESCO, UNU and WMO as an observer.

Future Earth builds on and will bring together the excellent research and capacity developed through the current Global Environmental Change programmes – IGBP, DIVERSITAS, IHDP, WCRP –, their projects, and their partnership ESSP – and seeks to introduce a more integrated scientific and organisational approach to the sustainability challenges faced by society.

The ‘Alliance’ has charged a team composed of scientists, sponsors and users, under the leadership of Professor Johan Rockstrom and Professor Diana Liverman, to develop the initial design of Future Earth. The initial design report will be completed by early 2013, and the focus is now moving to the implementation of Future Earth.

Requirement

A Future Earth Interim Director is now needed to provide executive leadership for the Future Earth programme, as it transitions from initial design to full implementation. Working with the scientific community, stakeholders, and members of the Alliance, key tasks include:

- Providing visible executive leadership for Future Earth with the science community and stakeholders.
- Leading the establishment of Future Earth as a new programme, building up its main scientific, organisational, engagement and funding elements from their initial design to full implementation.
- Establishing the permanent Future Earth secretariat, and leading the interim secretariat which will be composed of a small dedicated team, together with contributions from Alliance members and existing Global Environmental Change programme secretariats.
- Engaging the global environmental change research, user and funding communities in the further development of Future Earth.
- Supporting existing global environmental change programmes and projects to merge into Future Earth.
- Creating early funding opportunities to support Future Earth research and developing the mid- to long-term funding base, including engaging new potential funders, for example development donors, foundations and venture philanthropists.

Skills and Experience

- Scientist with demonstrable track record of high-quality environmental research, with a broad understanding of Earth system research, and the policy context for Future Earth.
- Experience of a senior executive leadership role, including research, staff and change management, fundraising and science policy.
- Credibility in the research and stakeholder community to provide the leadership to a major international research programme, with the necessary skills in diplomacy and an extensive network.
- Capability to drive a new international programme forward from its initial design to full operations, having previously demonstrated innovative and entrepreneurial approaches.
- Previous experience of co-design of research with stakeholders, and working across scientific disciplines, including natural and social sciences.
- Excellent formal and informal, written and oral, communication skills.
- Willingness to travel extensively.

Reporting and Support

- The Future Earth Interim Director will be responsible to Professor Jakob Rhyner (UNU) and Dr Steven Wilson (ICSU) in their role as co-Chairs of the Alliance Future Earth Transition Management Project Board.
- Scientific Leadership will be provided by the Future Earth Science Committee.
- The Future Earth Interim Director will be supported by a small dedicated team, together with contributions from across the Alliance members and existing Global Environmental Change programme secretariats.

Conditions

- This recruitment is carried out on behalf of the Science and Technology Alliance for Global Sustainability
- This will be an 18 month appointment, commencing as soon as possible.
- The location and contracting mechanism are open for discussion with the selected candidate.
- Salary will be commensurate with the skills and experience of the successful candidate.

Application procedure

Applicants are requested to submit a curriculum vitae, together with a cover letter describing your vision for Future Earth, the challenges and opportunities you foresee, and how your skills and experience would help you meet the requirements of the role. Please also include the name and contact details of three referees and details of your current salary. Applications (preferably in one combined PDF file), should be sent via email with 'Interim Director' in the subject line to recruitment@icsu.org and addressed to Dr Steven Wilson, Executive Director, International Council for Science (ICSU). The closing date for applications is 15 February, 2013.

For more information on Future Earth, please see the attached working draft documents on the research and governance framework, and the Future Earth website, <http://www.icsu.org/future-earth>.