Market researcher / Product manager for breeding product development and uptake

The Excellence in Breeding Platform (EiB) (www.excellenceinbreeding.org) is a CGIAR cross-commodity platform that supports the modernization of breeding programs targeting Africa, Asia, and Latin America for greater impact on food and nutrition security, climate change adaptation and development. By providing important outcomes to under-resourced peoples, the CGIAR centers help realize the founding mission of the CGIAR system - they target low-and-middle-income countries for greater impact on food and nutrition security, climate change adaptation and development.

The Platform is part of the new CGIAR portfolio of research programs and platforms (www.cgiar.org/our-strategy), and is led by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, known by its Spanish acronym, CIMMYT®, a not-for-profit research and training organization with partners in over 100 countries (www.cimmyt.org).

The Platform is seeking a breeding oriented Market Researcher to align and lead the knowledge sourcing efforts of breeding teams to more appropriately inform the development of high quality product profiles that are aligned with farmer and consumer needs and the drivers of variety adoption. A high quality product profile describes the characteristics of the varieties or intermediate germplasm that will be developed by the breeding program. The ultimate varieties developed should successfully replace currently grown varieties whilst also satisfying, where relevant, requirements such as gender needs, processing needs, human nutrition and genetic diversity of the local germplasm base. Replacing currently grown varieties will require deep understanding of the drivers of variety adoption, including understanding the needs of food crop value chain actors (e.g. seed suppliers, farmers, processors and final consumers). The successful candidate will not be conducting this research nor developing the product profiles but rather will perform the below specific duties.

The position will be based at either CIMMYT headquarters in Mexico, or at the ICRAF campus in Nairobi and will involve significant international travel.

Specific duties:
→ Develop methods of extracting and aggregating currently available information to understand the drivers of variety adoption and to inform the development of product profiles.
→ Develop methods and tools to understand the drivers of variety adoption and to inform the development of the product profile.
→ Take stock and, in association with relevant marketing and socioeconomic experts inside and outside the CGIAR, develop robust practices for profiling demand and identifying product attributes and their potential use by market actors (seed businesses, farmers, processors, consumers) in different market, cultural, and political-regulatory contexts.
→ Ensure socially inclusive needs and circumstances, particularly of women and youth in rural households in target geographies and of human nutrition, are considered in product profiles and scaling strategies.
→ Work with senior management of breeding programs to mobilize resources (such as socio-economics departments and reallocating breeding resources) for the development of high-quality product profiles and breeding pipeline investment cases.
Work with breeding teams and their management to ensure product profiles are effectively used to set breeding objectives and to guide all relevant breeding program decisions; including promotion of germplasm, parental selections and strategic investments into pre-breeding / parental development and other upstream investments.

Work with CGIAR centers to create a cross disciplinary role within the breeding team to increase impact of breeding by;
- gaining an intimate understanding of the factors affecting variety replacement (including accurate product profiles),
- actively participating in the germplasm advancement process, and,
- active involvement in the seed multiplication and dissemination process, including engagement with the seed industry.
- Develop a business case including a cost-benefit analysis for the above role(s).

Work with programs to hold a high-quality annual meeting to review and finalize promotion of germplasm (annual advancement meeting)

Work with quantitative geneticists to incorporate the value the market places on different product attributes into selection indexes.

Work with funders to understand the key information they require to confidently invest in CGIAR and NARS breeding programs.

Support breeding programs to clearly communicate the value proposition of their program by mapping the breeding pipeline to the market classes they are breeding for together with a detailed description of that market (number of farmers, hectares, tonnes, etc.). i.e. to develop the “breeding pipeline investment case”.

Coordinate with other groups also working with the CGIAR on product profiles (such as The Syngenta Foundation) to create alignment between approaches and recommendations.

Work with the private sector to extract value from their approaches of setting breeding objectives and to link private sector contribution and support with specific breeding programs.

Prepare training strategy: lead and contribute to training and mentorship activities for EiB partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Contribute to EiB Product design and management module annual and multi-year work plan development, execution and reporting, and manage associated budgets.

**Required academic qualifications, skills and attitudes:**

- MBA/DBA or MSc./PhD. in business development and/or marketing from a recognized institution, or equivalent experience.
- Minimum 5 years’ experience in the agricultural sector. Commercial experience will be viewed favorably.
- Experience in collection and interpretation of market intelligence data; awareness of the challenges of collecting such data and of variety replacement in low- and middle-income countries.
- Familiarity with the seed sector / seed value chains and experience with defining breeding product profiles is desirable.
- Awareness of marketing methods including how to understand requirements for variety adoption and methods for marketing, with very limited budget, new varieties to developing world farmers.
- Interest in social inclusiveness, including awareness of the role women have in variety uptake and challenges associated with generating market intelligence pertaining to women’s needs and role in achieving greater household food security and farm incomes.

**Desired skills:**
- Research skills to understand the problem, to develop ways of extracting relevant information from market participants, and to collate and interpret such information to develop a solution to the problem.
- Interpersonal skills to respectfully and tactfully present a paradigm shift in terms of new ways of operating.
- Demonstrated abilities and enthusiasm to work in multidisciplinary and multi-cultural environments.
- Results focused and pragmatic attitude skills.
Teaching, training and capacity development; ability to work effectively within a product-oriented perspective while engaging with organizations/stakeholders that might not share this perspective.

Excellent oral and written communication and presentation skills in English.

The selected candidate must exhibit the following competencies: Team Leadership, Negotiation and Conflict Resolution, Client Orientation, Problem Solving and Decision Making.

The position is for an initial fixed-term of three (3) years, after which further employment is subject to performance and the continued availability of funds. CIMMYT’s internationally competitive salary and benefits include housing allowance, comprehensive health and life insurance, assistance for children’s education, paid vacation, annual airfare, contribution to a retirement plan, and generous assistance with relocation shipment.

Candidates must apply online to IRS19146_Market Researcher. Screening and follow up will begin on Monday April 20, 2020. Applications must include a CV and a letter of interest. Incomplete applications will not be taken into consideration. For further information on the selection process, please contact Yessica Castillo (y.castillo@cgiar.org)

Please note that only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

This position will remain open until filled.

CIMMYT is an equal opportunity employer. It fosters a multicultural work environment that values gender equality, teamwork, and respect for diversity. Women are encouraged to apply.