CIMMYT is a not-for-profit research institute, one of the largest centers of the CGIAR, a global organization working on the most important Agricultural Research for Development impacts. CIMMYT’s specialty is to provide global expertise in two of the world’s most important field crops along with partners in over 100 countries. As staple foods, maize and wheat provide vital nutrition and health benefits for millions of people in low-and-middle income regions. CIMMYT tackles food insecurity through improved nutrient-rich, risk-mitigating, high-yielding varieties, as well as sustainable agricultural practices and other innovative options to improve the livelihoods of resource-poor farmers. The U.N. projects that the global population will increase to more than 9 billion people by 2050, which means that the successes and failures of wheat and maize farmers will continue to have a crucial impact on food security globally.

We are seeking a Program Director to lead CIMMYT’s core initiative, the Global Wheat Program (GWP). GWP is dedicated to developing wheat germplasm and technologies for low-and-middle income countries. CIMMYT’s germplasm is used by breeding programs around the world to develop or select varieties that are grown by farmers on more than 70 million hectares; the program is the leading driver for global wheat food security. The Program Director will report to the Director General of CIMMYT and is a member of CIMMYT’s Management Committee.

GWP applies multidisciplinary approaches including conventional and molecular breeding, genetics, pathology, physiology, nutrition, and food science. The Program Director will provide strategic leadership while managing the research portfolio in line with CIMMYT and CGIAR strategies and priorities to develop productive, nutritious, profitable and ecologically sustainable wheat crop system technology options. S/he will also initiate/coordinate fundraising to ensure funding continuity for CIMMYT’s wheat focus.

GWP collaborates with wheat research programs worldwide, partnering with National Agricultural Research Systems in more than 80 countries, advanced research institutes, other CGIAR locations, and private sector companies. The Program Director is responsible for coordinating these partnerships and implementing inclusive, empowering, and synergistic approaches.

Our selected candidate will seek and drive new approaches and models for enhancing wheat technology innovation, guiding GWP in the pursuit of new research priorities (with the goal of delivering the best science to wheat farmers and consumers).

Specific duties:

Leadership and mentorship:
- Develop, implement and sustain strategic wheat germplasm development programs for prioritized wheat ecological regions in low-and-middle income countries;
- Lead, supervise, and coordinate work of ~40 scientists with diverse cultural backgrounds, located in Mexico and regional offices in Asia and Africa;
- Mentor program scientists in executing high-quality and relevant research, collaboration, and capacity development activities.

External partnerships:
- Develop, nurture, and oversee high quality partnerships that use and deliver CIMMYT wheat germplasm to benefit resource-poor farmers;
- Continually build existing and new relationships with national programs and farmers’ organizations;
- Effectively collaborate with stakeholders to prioritize professional capacity development opportunities for the wheat scientific community;
- Represent GWP and CIMMYT in international wheat initiatives, consortia, meetings, and by maintaining an online presence – and then utilizing these opportunities to strengthen both existing and new partnerships.
Technical Oversight:
- Develop, implement, and ensure sustainability of strategic wheat germplasm development programs for prioritized wheat ecological regions in partner countries over tens of millions of hectares;
- Implement highly effective and efficient collaborative wheat breeding approaches — commensurate with the best breeding programs worldwide — with a focus on continuous and strategic improvement.

Internal partners:
- Work closely with the other CIMMYT global programs to achieve CIMMYT’s mission for better worldwide food security.

Resource mobilization:
- Together with senior management, represent GWP to research investors in order to secure financial support and develop research proposals aligned with CIMMYT’s research strategy and capacity.

Management:
- Effectively manage and enhance GWP’s human, financial, and capital resources and processes;
- Contribute to the development of CIMMYT’s direction, as a member of the CIMMYT Management Committee, and to its strategies and policies.

Required academic qualifications, skills and attitudes:
- 10-15+ distinguished years in a senior management position in a nonprofit organization, foundation, private company or government agency, with significant scientific leadership and executive management experience;
- PhD in Plant Breeding and Genetics or highly relevant field, with expertise in wheat genetics and related wheat sciences and excellent knowledge of the characteristics, processes and indicators for a world class, science-based breeding program;
- International and developing country experience is highly desired, with a mission/interest on improving livelihoods in third world countries and integrating plant breeding programs for food security.
- A track record delivering superior results and commanding respect in previous organizations via a collaborative and inclusive working style;
- Previous success in roles requiring execution of multiple tasks while responding to multiple priorities in a fast-track organization;
- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain relationships with a wide array of people – junior and senior, from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and of many disciplines;
- Outstanding communication skills (written, oral, presentation) and interpersonal skills;
- A passion for driving organizational mission and impact;
- Ability to exercise tact and diplomacy in the setting of an international organization;
- Transparent communication style: direct, with substance and without hidden agendas;
- A self-starter, with discipline, spark, imagination, and creativity;
- The ability to remain focused in the face of pressure and high capability of delivering against timelines;
- A willingness to travel internationally on a regular basis.

If you are interested in this role or can provide suggested contacts for CTI on this search, please contact us in confidence. Our search is not confidential and this document may be redistributed.

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