

Job Description

DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

1. Background

The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa is an Inter-Governmental Organization that was established by National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) from 10 countries in Eastern and Central Africa in 1994. Since then, its membership has reached 15 Member States, namely: Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Kenya, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. ASARECA's core mandate is to undertake Agricultural Research of Development (AR4D) on behalf of its Member States in partnership with NARIs. It aims to contribute to increased productivity, commercialization and competitiveness of the agricultural sector in Eastern and Central Africa (ECA) so as to ensure sustained economic growth and development.

ASARECA's interventions are guided by its 10-year Strategy and Results Framework (ASRF: 2019-2029) as well as its second Medium-Term Operational Plan (MTOPII: 2024-2028). The Strategy identifies four key intervention areas that significantly impact the sub-region, namely: (i) transformative capacity strengthening and integration; (ii) agricultural transformation technologies and innovations; (iii) enabling policy, functional markets, market access and institutional arrangements; and (iv) knowledge and information management.

The mandate of the rebranded, refreshed and repositioned ASARECA is to: (i) identify regional research priorities and opportunities through credible, authentic and participatory strategic visioning; (ii) commission, broker and manage strategic research partnerships to address identified regional priorities in the most effective, efficient and synergetic ways; (iii) nurture pathways for on-time delivery, spill over and scaling up of regional agricultural research results to deliver agricultural outcomes and impact; (iv) mobilize, allocate and manage regional AR4D investments to support generation of regional agricultural research public goods and services; and (v) monitor and evaluate returns on AR4D investment and repackage lessons and best practices for informed decision-making.

ASARECA works closely with Member States on priority activities such as: (i) coordinating generation, dissemination and uptake of technologies, innovations and management practices of priority commodities along selected value chains; (ii) enhancing capacity strengthening and partnerships development at systemic, organizational and individual level; (iii) coordinating policy analysis, advocacy and reforms; (iv) enhancing access to national and regional markets; (v) mitigating effects of climate change by supporting member countries to mitigate and adapt where necessary; (vi) enhancing market linkages and trade at the national and regional level; and (vii) facilitating communication, information and knowledge management.

2. Overall Purpose

The Director of Corporate Services is responsible for leading and coordinating policy, planning, execution and oversight of Finance & Accounting, Administration, Human Resources, Partnerships & Contracts, Procurement, Assets Management, and Financial Analytics. By adeptly managing these core areas, the Director of Corporate Services plays a central role in enabling ASARECA to fulfill its mission of enhancing agricultural research and fostering sustainable development across Eastern and Central Africa.

The incumbent, through strategic direction and meticulous management, is in charge of ensuring that ASARECA's resources are optimized and its operations are aligned with its 10-year strategic plan. They must possess deep knowledge of the external environment, particularly in terms of priorities, program and expectations from the various stakeholders: policymakers, regional and international institutions. Additionally, experience in resource mobilization is crucial, including a clear understanding of compliance mechanisms and programme management cycles of major development partners funding agricultural research and development in Africa in general and ECA sub-region in particular.

3. Key roles and responsibilities

Leadership and effective management of the Corporate Services

The Director shall be the supervisory authority for the following departments with all their specific job responsibilities as mentioned in the ASARECA Operations Manual:

- Manage the Association's human, physical and financial resources to ensure maximum utilization, efficiency, effectiveness and quality of service.
- Coordinate effective Financial Planning and Analytics to guide the ED and the Board on effective planning.
- Support the Secretariat's efforts towards Resource Mobilization and Funds Management.
- Advise the ED on the formation, development and application of policy and strategic decisions relating to the Secretariat's Corporate Services.
- Develop and embed a culture of stakeholder focus and performance management to ensure high quality and continuous improvement in service delivery, including to the last mile.
- Ensure regular and effective communication between the Corporate Services Directorate and other Directorates and thematic areas.
- Ensure that the organization's approach to data protection, security and retention comply with best practice and that policies and procedures are effectively implemented.
- Develop, continuously improve and implement the organisations approach to risk management.

Planning and Strategic Direction

- Coordinate the review and development or updating assorted Statement of Intent (SOI)
- Contribute to the development of Annual Work Program and Budget (AWPB) as well as the Medium-Term Expenditure framework

Governance

- Supporting the Board in preparing and ensuring that Board agenda serves and reflects appropriate planning cycles.
- Ensuring papers and information are submitted well in advance to the Board.
- Ensuring Board directives are addressed adequately and in a timely manner.
- Ensuring that the Secretariat operates in line with good governance practice and in compliance of all Acts, Rules and Regulations in force.

Management and supervision of all Human Resource functions

- Develop, implement and oversee Human Resource Planning and Development Strategies and policies.
- Review and revise Service Rules and Regulations to manage the changing needs of the Association in line with the ASARECA's Human Resources Management Strategies and Regulations.
- Lead the development and implementation of Human Resource Management Systems, including recruitment and the introduction of Human Resource software.
- Ensure all policies and procedures are compliant with international best practice, understood and implemented by staff to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing.
- Effectively advice and support staff in all issues relating to human resources.
- Ensure HR procedures and practices follow local law and tax requirements where applicable.

Effective management and oversight of all financial functions

- Ensure ASARECA financial procedures are efficient, meet donor requirements, and are understood and implemented across the organisation.
- Implement and improve financial management systems and procedures across the organisation including internal controls and completion of the annual audit.
- Undertake ad hoc financial analysis from time to time, to assist the ED in evaluating potential for cost efficiencies.
- Develop, implement and monitor ASARECA's long-term investment and financial strategies and policies.
- Direct preparation of all financial reports, including income statements, balance sheets, cash flow, reports to shareholder including the Annual report, tax returns and other regulatory returns based on ASARECA's Operations Manual and other standards in vogue.
- Analyze the Secretariat operations to highlight opportunities and areas where business processes can be improved, streamlined and savings realized.
- Plan, organize, implement, and control ASARECA's overall financial performance, including forecasting, budgeting, and developing a longer-term financial strategy.
- Oversee and direct all internal and external financial performance, compliance and risk exposure reporting of the bank.
- Study long-range economic trends and project ASARECA's prospects for future growth in overall services, and opportunities for expansion into new product and service areas.
- Analyze projections against actual achievements and suggesting methods of improving the planning process as appropriate.
- Act as the Financial Advisor to the ED and the Board.

Effective management and oversight of Administration, property, facilities and contracts

- Oversee contractual arrangements for all buildings and facilities ensuring that facilities are fit for purpose.

- Provide effective management of supplier service contracts (e.g. travel, insurance, security, equipment and building maintenance) to ensure efficient services and cost-effective delivery.
- Review options for outsourcing additional non-core functions of the Secretariat.
- Participate or assist with Procurement Committee and ensure procurement is efficient and in compliance with the ASARECA regulations and procedures.
- Keep a proper record and oversight of all contracts, including funding contracts with other agencies.
- Ensure all contracts meet legal and financial requirements.
- Support the ED in ensuring that staff and members are well informed and up to date on developments affecting corporate services including legislation and best practice.
- Work closely with the Director of Research and Innovation as well as the Theme Manager for Communications, Knowledge Management and Foresight to ensure that office IT hardware and systems, including HR, Finance and document management, are fit for purpose.
- Promote ASARECA values and ethos at all times.

Corporate Services

- Putting limited resources as set out by the ED and the Board of Directors to the most productive use with the aim of creating maximum value for the stakeholders.
- Responsible for proper formulation, implementation and review of performance management systems at the Secretariat, such as Contracts with partners and staff based on the Employee Appraisal systems.
- Developing, implementing and overseeing the standards for streamlining and improving efficiencies in bidding and contract management in the procurement of goods, works and services.
- Developing a robust asset management and archival system to ensure proper maintenance and optimal utilization of physical assets and proper storage and retrieval system of the Secretariat's physical records.
- Reviewing and revising the Procurement Rules and Regulations to cater to the evolving needs of ASARECA.
- Strengthening of the Corporate Services and Support functions at the Secretariat as well as member countries, and to ensure robust succession plan is put in place.

Other Functions

- Any other work assigned by the ED and the Board from time to time, including functional responsibilities and special projects.
- Maintaining confidentiality over personal and business information of the Secretariat.

4. Key Performance Measures

The Director is responsible for:

- Implementing of sound investment and financial plan.
- Maintaining accuracy and timelines of financial reporting to all users from the Board through to its functionary staff.
- Audit report outcomes (both internal and external).

- Ensuring compliance and effectiveness of internal accounting control and risk management.
- Developing the Finance and Research function with analytical and planning capability, and efficient management information/support systems.
- Efficiently managing the funds and Asset – liability mismatch gap.
- Overseeing the professional development of staff within its vertical lines.
- Overseeing compliance to International Accounting Standards and other relevant laws.
- Other measures as determined by the ED and the Board.

5. Education requirement and job experience/qualifications

- Minimum of a Master's Degree qualification in Human Resources Management, Organization Development, Corporate Services Management or related field. a PhD qualification in any of the above fields will be an added advantage.
- At least 15 years progressive experience in the area of corporate services and 5 years' experience as manager.
- Experience in Human Resources Management and in using HR systems.
- Experience in accounts management, including budgeting, forecasting, monthly financial reporting and audit compliance.
- Experience of managing facilities and services for a similar regional organisation as well as on systems implementation and change management.
- Experience in Organisational Performance Management Systems.
- Experience in Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks.

6. Additional Skills

In addition to the above qualification requirements, the job holder should possess proven and demonstrated:

- Experience of resource mobilisation, including a clear understanding of compliance mechanisms and programme management cycles of major development partners funding agricultural research and development in Africa in general and ECA sub-region in particular;
- A successful track record in setting priorities and delivering concrete results;
- Deep knowledge of the external environment, particularly in terms of priorities, program and expectations from the various stakeholders: policymakers, regional and international institutions e.g. COMESA, EAC, IGAD, FARA, AUC, UN, CGIAR.
- Analytical, organisational and problem-solving skills which support and enable sound decision making;
- Excellent communication and relationship building skills with an ability to negotiate and work with a variety of internal and external stakeholders;
- Experience in working in a rapidly changing environment as well as leading multi-disciplinary teams of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds;
- Personal qualities of integrity, credibility and dedication to the mission of ASARECA and agricultural development in the ECA sub-region; and
- A track record of management in a regional setting including the management of human and financial resources among others.

7. Supervision and work centre:

The job holder reports directly to the Executive Director, who serves as his supervisor. The work centre for this position is in Entebbe, Uganda.

8. Contacts

Internal contacts:

- Executive Director – frequent.
- Director of Research and Innovation – frequent.
- Theme Managers – from time-to-time.
- Head of Finance – frequent.
- Head of Procurement – frequent.
- Head of Human Resources and Administration – regularly.

External contacts:

- Donor / Development partners – frequent.
- Audit Committee of the Board – frequent.
- Representatives of National Agricultural Research Systems in member States – frequent.
- Key stakeholders and like-minded organizations – frequent.

9. Work environment/additional information

This job involves frequent travel for projects development, monitoring and participation in various fora exposing the job holder to a significant level of hazard and security risk. While in the office, the working environment is safe. The job involves frequent work beyond normal working hours at headquarters and travel over weekends.