Appointment of Executive Director

Cambridge Conservation Initiative
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The Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) is a unique global partnership of eleven international environmental organisations and academic bodies, all based within the dedicated David Attenborough Building, founded by and located centrally within the University of Cambridge. Cambridge and its surrounding area is home to the world’s largest assemblage of biodiversity conservation organisations, augmented by an internationally renowned University and its multidisciplinary departments. CCI’s partners are unified by a simple shared vision: to find the most effective and equitable strategies to reverse the decline of nature. By harnessing the varied skills of the partners’ science, research, education, policy and capacity building activities, CCI is perfectly positioned to act at a scale proportional to the threats that nature and people are facing. The diversity of approaches and capacities of CCI’s partners is also reflected in CCI’s global partnerships with governments, corporations, civil society organisations, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities across more than 100 countries. Today, the CCI members’ partners number more than 3,000.

Since its inception in 2007, CCI has achieved much (see summary below) and continues to build on these successes. However, during this same period the combined and interrelated threats of biodiversity loss, climate change and zoonotic pandemics have reached critical levels. The science is clear that concerted, radical and global action is needed to rebuild our broken relationship with nature. These existential crises require coordinated responses across multiple sectors to stimulate local, regional and global action. As such, CCI recognises that it is only through ambitious partnerships that we can hope to catalyse effective, equitable and lasting change.

CCI is committed to a new phase of evolution; a scaling-up of our ambition for collective impact. This will require science, both social and biological, as well as expertise from the political, agriculture, business and social change sectors. Not only does Cambridge provide extraordinary strengths in these fields but it can also function as an exceptional hub to nucleate essential new global collaboration.

CCI is seeking a new Executive Director to lead and support the next phase of this unique collaboration. This position is an exceptional opportunity for an ambitious and inspirational figure who can harness the power of partnerships from across sectors and geographies.

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The Cambridge Conservation Initiative

About Us

The Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) was created 16 years ago as a unique partnership among leaders in biodiversity conservation research, education, policy and action. Founded by the University of Cambridge alongside nine globally leading evidence-based conservation organisations, it welcomed the Wildlife Conservation Society as its 11th member in 2023.

Our strong convening power allows us to engage directly with a wide audience globally, from leaders in government, business, academic and NGO communities to the general public. CCI’s work spans disciplines, organisations and continents. As a global network of leaders in research, education, policy and practice we are fostering a greater awareness of conservation issues, and accelerating positive change towards sustainable living.

The Cambridge Conservation Initiative partners:
Our Vision & Mission
CCI’s vision is for a diverse world in which nature and society thrive. CCI seeks to transform the global understanding and conservation of biodiversity. Through this, we aim to secure a sustainable future for all life on Earth. To achieve this, our mission is for CCI partners to work together and with others to conserve and restore life on Earth through the effective collaboration of leaders in research, education, policy and practice.

Our Values
The key values of CCI are:

• We are collaborative, using the collective resources of CCI to engage with the global community.
• We develop and test solutions that are innovative, creative and relevant to the real world.
• We are informed by evidence from varied sources.
• We are passionate about nature, and optimistic and ambitious for its recovery.
• We strive for diversity, equity and inclusivity.

Our Strategy
CCI’s current strategy was created in 2021 and runs until 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic that started this decade was in part a manifestation of the impacts that people can have on nature. Now is the time in which damage to, and loss of, biodiversity needs to be reversed in order to secure a sustainable and healthy future for our planet. Many international agreements, plans and frameworks are targeting 2030 as the year by which significant change must be underway, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

By 2030 we will have:

• Contributed extensively to the recovery of nature through restoration of landscapes, seascapes and ecosystem services, the recovery of threatened species and the building of a global cadre of conservationists who are ready for the challenges of the mid twenty-first century.
• Continued to test, improve and apply collaborative models for working within CCI and beyond to ensure the full and effective use of our collective resources.
• Strengthened the recognition of the David Attenborough Building as a global hub for conservation and a model for a living building.
• Developed deeper strategic collaborations with researchers, universities, governments, business, communities and conservation organisations to create dialogues that leverage actions and deliver solutions.
Our Work

CCI partners draw together a wide range of practitioners, policy experts, researchers and other stakeholders to address major conservation issues, creating conservation solutions, highlighting new challenges and opportunities, and delivering new ways of integrating conservation research, policy and practical action for the benefit of biodiversity. Building on each partner’s existing programme of conservation work, CCI joins these organisations together to tackle complex and challenging issues with innovative approaches, using a multi-disciplinary approach that cannot be achieved by any one organisation alone.

CCI Collaborative Programmes:

CCI Collaborative Fund for Conservation:
The CCI Collaborative Fund supports innovative, collaborative conservation projects undertaken by three or more CCI partners working together.

Endangered Landscapes Programme:
The Endangered Landscapes Programme is building a future in which landscapes are enriched with biodiversity, establishing resilient, more self-sustaining ecosystems that benefit both nature and people.

CCI Arts, Science & Conservation Programme:
The Arts, Science and Conservation Programme curates exhibitions, events, residencies, and collaborations, and an outstanding collection of original art, to draw the attention of audiences to the work of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative.

MPhil in Conservation Leadership:
The MPhil in Conservation Leadership has taught 220 students from over 89 countries and has become a flagship teaching programme with input from all partners.
Our Impact

CCI’s distinctive contribution to conservation derives from the unique combination of a world class university that is active in conservation research and teaching, with the world’s largest cluster of conservation organisations that focus on biodiversity research, policy and practice.

To this end, CCI has achieved notable success. It has:

• Brought together an internationally renowned University and its academics across disciplines and the world’s largest cluster of conservation organisations to create a shared vision, strategy, governance and series of collaborative programmes.

• Created the David Attenborough Building, which provides shared spaces, facilities and services for the eleven CCI partners having been carefully co-designed to foster collaboration. The building hosts numerous conferences, symposia and other events and attracts leading researchers, thinkers, policy makers and practitioners from across the world to collaborate.

• Developed a series of new approaches to facilitate interdisciplinary, cross-institutional collaboration that fosters new thinking, ideas and solutions for biodiversity conservation, by bringing together experts in research, policy development and conservation practice.

• Used its unique convening power to collaborate with, and influence, key institutions (e.g. Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, Natural Capital Coalition, World Economic Forum, UK government – DEFRA/Treasury) to promote evidence-based conservation of biodiversity and to integrate the values of nature into government and business decision making.

• Seeded over 60 innovative collaborative projects integrating research, practice and capacity building to tackle globally important conservation challenges through the CCI Collaborative Fund.

• Established a novel Masters course in Conservation Leadership that has taught 220 students from 89 countries to date, and become a flagship teaching programme.

• Designed and implemented a large-scale multi-million dollar innovative Endangered Landscapes Programme across Europe to create a new conservation narrative: one of positive forward-looking recovery, expansion and creativity that relies more on natural processes and less on intensive human intervention.

• Curated an Arts, Science and Conservation Programme that draws artists and conservationists together to inspire new audiences to engage with and value nature.

• Initiated collaborative programmes of work to contribute to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, in consultation with the CBD Secretariat.

• Secured substantial new funding to support CCI collaborations, posts, capital projects, scholarships and activities, including an endowment to support the Director’s Office.

• Supported the Student Conference in Conservation Science which has brought together 3419 early career conservation scientists from 136 countries and two Earth Optimism public engagement festivals, the second of which engaged over 16,000 people online.
Organisation

CCI is governed by a Council formed of senior representatives of each of the eleven partners, and works with the Director to drive CCI strategy. The CCI Council is the primary decision-making body for the overall initiative. On behalf of the CCI partners they adopt and oversee progress on achieving the CCI Strategy. Working groups for all the CCI programmes and activities report to the Council.

It is advised by an Advisory Board who meet annually and provide guidance and suggestions. The CCI Advisory Board provides guidance on the global niche and future direction of CCI, helping to identify new strategic opportunities and secure support for CCI collaborative activities.

CCI Council | Cambridge Conservation Initiative

The Director’s Office supports the collaboration and currently comprises staff responsible for administration, fundraising, communications, coordination and various of the initiative’s delivery programmes as shown in the organogram below. The Director has overall line management responsibility for this office, but not for any of the constituent partners to the collaboration.

The CCI Executive Director’s Office is largely supported through private philanthropy, including an endowment in perpetuity to support staff costs. This financial year CCI will disperse over £230,000 on collaborative projects across its partnership. These figures do not include the very substantial budget of the Endangered Landscapes and Seascapes Programme, which managed by CCI on behalf of the Arcadia Foundation.
The University of Cambridge is one of the world’s oldest and most successful universities. It comprises 150 faculties and departments, together with a central administration and other institutions. Our institutions, museums and collections are a world-class resource for researchers, students and members of the public representing one of the country’s highest concentrations of internationally important collections. We are a renowned centre for research, education, and scholarship that makes a significant contribution to society. The University is consistently ranked amongst the top universities in the world. Our affiliates have won more Nobel Prizes than any other University.

Our sustained pursuit of academic excellence is built on a long history of first-class teaching and research within a distinctive collegiate system. For eight centuries our ideas and innovations have shaped the world. Our principal goal is to remain one of the world’s leading universities in an increasingly competitive global higher education sector. Today the University of Cambridge is at the centre of a cluster of over 4,300 businesses employing 58,000 people.

Our capital investment projects include the West Cambridge site, the North West Cambridge development and the growth of the Biomedical Campus in the south of the city.

The North West Cambridge development includes the opening of a primary school – the first in the UK to be managed by a University. So we are deeply embedded in, and committed to serving, our local community. These are all conspicuous signs of a University that is not only adapting to new needs, but also anticipating the future.

The University has an annual income of £2 billion. Research income, won competitively from the UK Research Councils, the European Union (EU), major charities and industry, exceeds £500 million per annum and continues to grow.

The University awards degrees and its faculties and departments provide lectures and seminars for students and determine the syllabi for teaching and conducting research. Our instinct for seeking out excellence and setting up enduring and mutually beneficial collaborations has led us to establish strategic partnerships across the globe. Whether it is the successful Cambridge-Africa Programme involving universities in Ghana, Uganda and elsewhere on the African continent; or the close association with the government of India to pursue new research in crop science; or the creation, with Germany’s Max Planck Institutes, of a Cambridge-based centre for the study of ethics, human economy and social change – international partnerships are now an inextricable part of the University’s make-up.
Executive Director

Job Description

The Executive Director is an inspirational leader for the CCI, working at the highest levels to promote the CCI, both nationally and internationally; agreeing strategic direction and priorities with CCI Council, and working closely with the senior leadership of all CCI partners to develop, enhance and champion the Initiative.

The Executive Director contributes to and drives forward CCI’s shared vision, oversees the setting of strategy alongside the appropriate governance systems, and fundraises for and promotes CCI collaborations as agreed by the partners through the Council.

The Executive Director and their team help to provide the ‘glue’ that facilitates, supports and maintains the collaboration between CCI partners so that they can collectively deliver CCI’s vision, strategies and programmes.

Their main responsibilities are to lead the CCI as a partnership for collaboration; as a physical realisation in the David Attenborough Building; as a national and global champion for interdisciplinary conservation; and to achieve this through leadership of the Executive Director’s Office, based within Cambridge University. Specifically:

• Lead CCI as a champion for interdisciplinary conservation and enhance its reputation both nationally and internationally, by interacting at the Chief Executive level with business, research and conservation organisations, government agencies, funders, and by promoting CCI externally at key global fora.

• Maintain close working relationships with CCI Council members and staff of CCI partners and the University to promote the CCI and its collaborative opportunities, and to develop, refine and deliver CCI mission and strategy and brand in balance with those of each CCI partner.

• Lead CCI’s fundraising approaches, and the development and stewardship of donor relationships, including working closely with the University’s development and philanthropy teams.

• Lead the development and implementation of CCI programmes and activities nationally, internationally, and within the David Attenborough Building, by working with the CCI Council to develop diverse means and approaches to foster collaborations across CCI, and by leading the creation and delivery of business plans for CCI operations and collaborations.

• Ensure that the Director’s Office operates effectively in recruiting, managing, developing and supporting a team of staff to provide leadership and facilitation for CCI partner collaborations, to deliver the vision for CCI in the David Attenborough Building, and to work closely with the staff of CCI Services and the University to ensure effective CCI operations.

• Champion CCI values, organisational culture and wellbeing by driving forward CCI as a truly diverse, equitable and inclusive partnership in which to work and one which champions actions to ensure that the science, policy and practice of conservation become more diverse, equitable and inclusive.

• Manage CCI governance to enable the CCI Council and Advisory Board to achieve their roles and responsibilities, and annual cycles of financial planning, record-keeping and reporting to CCI Council, the host department, the University and major donors.
Person Specification

Essential:

• Passion for nature conservation and the benefits of cross disciplinary working, partnerships and bridging research, policy and practice.
• Skills in leadership, facilitation and consensus-building.
• Track record in large-scale fundraising and building close relationships with philanthropists and other major donors.
• Experienced and supportive line manager for a team of professional staff.

Desirable:

• Experience leading multi-partner initiatives.
• Being comfortable with influencing and enabling decision-making rather than through exercising formal authority.
• Experience in budgeting, annual work planning and resourcing.
• Track record in managing strategic development in a complex partnership and developing innovative collaborations.
• Ability to identify opportunities for innovative and cross-sector partnerships across disciplines and sectors (public and private).
• Broad experience from global conservation policy/practice, academic research or capacity development.
The Executive Director role is a full-time appointment to the University of Cambridge. The appointment will be made subject to satisfactory references.

The University offers a wide range of competitive benefits, from family leave entitlement, to shopping and travel discount schemes. Our generous annual leave package contributes to the positive wellbeing of our University employees. The University also has a career break scheme for academic and academic-related staff, with additional flexible working policies for all other staff.

CAMbens employee benefits

The University offers employees a wide range of competitive benefits, known as CAMbens. CAMbens offers something for everyone across a range of categories, including:

- Financial Benefits, including shopping discounts (both local and national) and a Payroll Giving scheme.
- Relocation and Accommodation Benefits, including relocation assistance and interest-free Rental Deposit Loans.
- Travel Benefits, including Cycle to Work, discounts on train season tickets and interest-free Travel to Work loans.
- Family Friendly and Lifestyle Benefits, including support with childcare and family friendly policies
- Health and Wellbeing Benefits, including a University Staff Counselling Service, discounts at the University Sports Centre, and other local gyms, and healthcare schemes.
Your wellbeing

The University's Sport Centre, Counselling Services and Occupational Health are just some of the support services available to University employees to promote their physical and mental wellbeing. The University delivers The Festival of Wellbeing annually, which is a programme of stimulating talks and activities, which aim to promote wellbeing and good mental and physical health. The University also hosts the Cambridge Festival, which is a great opportunity to get your first taste of public engagement, through volunteering, supporting hands-on activities or proposing a talk.

Development opportunities

We support new employees to settle in through various activities as well as supporting their professional and career development on an ongoing basis. Our Personal and Professional Development (PPD) team provide development opportunities for all University employees, including face-to-face sessions, online learning modules and webinars. All employees also have unlimited access to LinkedIn Learning to support their development. Both new and existing employees can undertake funded Apprenticeships, which lead to a range of vocational and professional qualifications. We offer reduced staff fees for University of Cambridge graduate courses and the opportunity to attend lectures and seminars held by University departments and institutions. A range of University training providers also offer specialist learning and development in their own areas e.g. teaching and learning, digital literacy, finance, health and wellbeing, safety.

Family-friendly policies

The University recognises the importance of supporting its staff. We have a range of family-friendly policies to aid employees' work-life balance including a generous maternity, adoption and shared parental leave entitlement of 18 weeks full pay, and paid emergency leave for parents and carers.

Other family-friendly support includes:

Our highly regarded workplace nurseries, a childcare salary exchange scheme and a high quality holiday Playscheme may be available to help support University employees with caring responsibilities (subject to demand and qualifying criteria). Further childcare information can be found here: https://www.childcare.admin.cam.ac.uk/

The Newcomers and Visiting Scholars Group is an organisation within the University run by volunteers whose aim is to help newly arrived wives, husbands, partners and families of Visiting Scholars and members of the University to settle in Cambridge and give them an opportunity to meet local people. The Postdoc Academy supports the postdoctoral community within Cambridge. Further details are available here: https://www.postdocacademy.cam.ac.uk/
How to Apply

Cambridge Conservation Initiative will be advised and supported in the appointment process by their executive search partner Perrett Laver. All applications will be considered by the Selection Committee. Perrett Laver will conduct preliminary discussions with longlisted candidates, and the Selection Committee will meet to select the final shortlist of candidates in early December.

Application is by submission of a complete curriculum vitae and letter of motivation outlining your interest in and suitability for the role.

Completed applications should be uploaded at https://candidates.perrettlaver.com/vacancies/ quoting reference 6876. For an informal and confidential discussion about the role, please contact Ibby Imam on +44 (0)20 3928 7383 or via email at ibby.imam@perrettlaver.com.

The deadline for application is Sunday 19 November.

Interviews will be held in early January.

Cambridge Conservation Initiative is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all. This job description sets out the skills and experience we believe are needed to be able to do this job but, research also tells us women are much more likely than men to take this list of requirements as absolute and self-select out of the process. If you think you can deliver this role then we want to hear from you, regardless of the boxes you didn't tick.

If you require any reasonable adjustments to assist you in the selection process, please advise us of these so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

We work to ensure that our recruitment processes are as inclusive as possible to everyone. This includes making adjustments for people who have a disability or long-term condition. If you would like us to make adjustments during the application process, please contact Esther Elbro at the following email address: esther.elbro@perrettlaver.com. If you have comments that would support us to improve access to documentation, or our application processes more generally, please do not hesitate to contact us via the following email address: accessibility@perrettlaver.com.
Contact
One Embassy Gardens,
8 Viaduct Gardens,
London,
SW11 7BW.
UK
T: +44 (0)20 7340 6200

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https://www.cam.ac.uk/