



Director of Strategic Impact

Description

About the International Institute for Environment and Development

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is a global research organisation dedicated to sustainable development, connecting local needs with global challenges. They operate on six continents, advocating for the world's most vulnerable communities to influence decisions that impact them. Based in London, Edinburgh, and Amsterdam (IIED Europe), with 200 staff and associates worldwide, IIED has led sustainable development policy for over 50 years.

Facing urgent global challenges, IIED leverages its history, partnerships, community ties, innovation in policy, and a committed team to drive societal change. They host significant initiatives like the Green Economy Coalition, the Reversing Environment Degradation in Africa and Asia programme, the Least Developed Countries Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience, and serve as the secretariat for the LDC Group in climate talks, recently adding the chair's office of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Acknowledging the evolving relevance of their long-standing methods, IIED's new strategy, launching in May 2024, aims to address the complex interconnectivity of today's global issues with innovative, collaborative approaches. Recognising the limitations of traditional project planning in a rapidly changing world, IIED is shifting towards forming dynamic, diverse alliances to tackle systemic issues, focusing on justice and decolonisation, and creating significant, scalable impacts through collaborative, adaptive efforts.

About the Role

The Director of Strategic Impact (DSI) will play a pivotal role in driving IIED's strategy, focusing on addressing the critical challenges of nature loss, climate change, and inequality through innovative experimentation and rapid learning. This leadership position involves refining key ideas, fostering partnerships, and forming impactful alliances for greater influence and visibility.

IIED's portfolio will contribute to achieving six interconnected propositions as follows:

1. Help displaced people to have brighter futures;
2. Redirect power and secure rights by transforming trade, investment and finance;
3. Evolve cities as places of inspiration and justice;
4. Nurture food systems that nourish us and the planet;
5. Transform climate resilience for survival and prosperity;
6. Reinvent nature governance and stewardship.

This person will work closely with the Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Strategy and Learning, Chair of IIED's research committee, and around 15 dynamic Task Teams, each looking to turn great ideas into implementation at scale around a shared vision. The Director of Strategic Impact will also have the freedom to build on and advance their own impact agenda, acknowledging there would need to be alignment with at least one of the six propositions. They would report progress to IIED's Board of Trustees on a periodic basis and be part of IIED's senior management, with an expectation to line-manage several leaders within the organisation.

The role will be expected to make connections between IIED's portfolio of Task Teams and key international influencing opportunities. Having an external orientation and connecting with key policy processes will be critical. Also, being able to develop influencing strategies, campaign logic and acting as an entrepreneur in the way policy is shaped.

IIED would like to specifically encourage candidates of diverse cultural, geographical, and experiential backgrounds, including those from majority-world countries, to enrich their organisational diversity. They would consider those wishing to remain based in a majority-world country, which aligns with IIED's commitment to supporting a distributed workforce.

Duties and Responsibilities

Strategy Implementation

- Partner with creative talent across IIED to identify and sharpen great ideas, innovations, and scalable interventions to be advanced by Task Teams (cross-functional, multi-skilled teams averaging eight full-time employees);
- Identify influencing opportunities for IIED and partners to maximise the impact of these interventions;
- Hone IIED's propositions and ensure that compelling interventions are being advanced across IIED to help achieve these in alliance with others;
- Mobilise IIED alliances by identifying stakeholders ready to work closely to achieve a shared intent and build compelling portfolios of interventions together.
- Coach colleagues and partners to facilitate politically astute processes and fundraising strategies;
- Initiate new Task Teams, support the closure of others, and nurture a dynamic landscape in IIED based on mobilising the talented people most effectively behind this adaptive portfolio of interventions;
- Ensure that Task Teams live IIED values anchored in equity, inclusion, and justice, and ensure the organisation takes a decolonisation lens to all they do.

Public Affairs and Influence

- Draw on IIED's world-class research experience and help spot opportunities, horizon scan, and develop a more robust approach to IIED's work;
- Be a voice of IIED and encourage others to find their voice, too.
- Work across IIED and broader alliances to galvanise support for evidence-based campaign-style action and proactive positioning based on looking at upcoming agendas and opportunities;
- Align a clear IIED message when colleagues hold different views or advocate for different approaches;
- Be media savvy and work closely with IIED's media team and Executive Director to ensure IIED's message is heard in an impactful way, linked to their mission and six propositions.

Capability Development

- Support a culture change, systems thinking and capability development in IIED, working in close partnership with senior management;
- Nurture a culture of smart risk-taking and being ready to fail, learn and adapt fast;
- Build dynamic teams capable of creating impact in different ways, drawing on systems thinking and further strengthening capabilities in innovation, systems mapping, design thinking, and portfolio approaches;
- Work on 'inner development' for colleagues, partners, and the postholder, acknowledging that achieving transformational change also requires changes in a person's own mindset, nurturing well-being and resilience.

Alliance Building

- Grow and deepen strategic and tactical partnerships to develop the alliances to help ensure IIED is testing options at the scale and speed needed for societal change;
- Harness empathetic, ethical relationships in service of large-scale change to benefit those they serve;
- Build an effective network of partners who are comfortable actively managing strategic risk and are ready to start journeys of discovery to push the boundaries to create opportunities for speed and scale;
- Embrace the values of ethical partnerships in all IIED does and encourage others to do the same while helping to forge alliances.

Attracting Institutional Funding

- Attract institutional funding for IIED, where they have set themselves a target of drawing 70% of their retained income from unrestricted or flexible funding sources by FY26. This will involve attracting funding from governments, philanthropies, corporations, and individual donors;
- Support fundraising for individual Task Teams, partnering with colleagues to explore and execute large-scale, multi-year, strategy-aligned funding.

Learning, Research, and Amplifying Key Initiatives

- Play a key role in two initiatives currently offering excellent opportunities for IIED's impact, influence, and innovation to be foregrounded:
 - Maximising the value of IIED hosting Professor Jim Skea, chair of the IPCC and the chair's office;
 - Amplifying the impact of the Hidden Handbrakes campaign in partnership with The Generation Foundation.
- Work closely with the Chair of IIED's research committee, the Head of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, and the Director of Strategy and Learning to guide a forward-looking research and learning agenda that generates new knowledge through leadership and offers platforms for engaging in the space between Task Teams.

People and Organisational Leadership

- Report to the Executive Director and join board meetings to give progress updates;
- Lead and support a diverse team of leaders within the organisation, fostering an inclusive and collaborative work environment;
- Guide, mentor, and develop team members at the core of shaping Task Teams;
- Model the mindsets, teamwork, and distributed leadership models that are vital in changing complex systems;
- Ensure that task teams are inclusive of the rich and diverse range of talent in IIED and work with others who are responsible for nurturing well-being and capability development to ensure people are effectively deployed.

Skills and/or Experience

Essential:

- Dynamic, inclusive leader adept in philanthropy, grant-making, research, strategic planning, advocacy, programme development, and evaluation;
- Proven research track record with evidence of high quality, policy-relevant and influential publications and impact;
- Advanced degree in a relevant field or equivalent professional experience that demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the sector;
- Proficiency in building relationships and networks with community organisations, funders, and donors, including international networks;
- Being a trusted voice and positioning IIED as a convenor and bridge builder (e.g. with respect to key UN processes, G20, COPs on climate/nature side).
- Inspired by a bold vision, with a deep understanding of and connection to community values;
- Proven leadership and change management experience in complex organisations, including senior management roles and strategic development with board accountability;
- Awareness of the key issues, actors and debates involved in the global sustainable development agenda. Experience working in or with the Majority of World countries.
- Experience working internationally, with the ability to craft strategy into actionable plans, emphasising user-centred design and diverse stakeholder experiences;
- Excellent technical awareness of a range of topics relevant to IIED's propositions;
- Demonstrated success in fundraising from various sources, particularly in securing flexible funding;
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, with expertise in decolonisation and anti-racist practices;
- Exceptional adaptive leadership, analytical, problem-solving, communication, and public speaking skills;
- Ability to work in a dynamic, flexible working environment and be a key voice in guiding how the organisation adapts to learning and opportunities.
- Interpersonal abilities, capable of negotiating and influencing across different cultures;
- Fluency in English, with outstanding organisational and project management skills;
- Effective people management capabilities, able to lead, motivate, and develop multidisciplinary, multicultural teams;
- A proactive, solution-oriented mindset, systems thinking, open to prototyping, testing, and adapting.

Desirable:

- Skills/experience in collaborative, inclusive, transparent governance models, decision-making processes, and meaningful stakeholder engagement;

Meta Fields