



# Position Specification

**Center for Global Development**  
President

## Our Client

The Center for Global Development (CGD) is an independent, nonpartisan, and nonprofit think tank that works to reduce global poverty and improve lives through innovative economic research that, in turn, drives better policy and practice by the world's top decision makers.

CGD's scholars conduct rigorous, impartial analysis, informed by evidence and experts from around the world. CGD is the only think tank located in both Washington, DC and London, UK with a singular focus on international development addressed through the multiple channels of sustainable development finance, global health, gender, migration and displacement, and education. Their expertise in rigorous economic research and practical policy and advocacy experience gives them a unique advantage in developing innovative, evidence-based solutions within the confines of limited fiscal space internationally and at country-level, and in translating research findings into concrete proposals for government, private sector, and civil society audiences.

CGD focuses on the intersection of developing countries and the governments, institutions, and corporations that can help them deliver the greatest progress. They have helped to change the policies and practices of the world's most powerful decision makers, and have made a real difference in the lives of people in the developing world. CGD is currently focused on the following areas critical to development progress:

- Global Health Policy
- Migration, Displacement, and Humanitarian Policy
- Sustainable Development Finance
- Education
- Gender
- Governments and Development

CGD benefits from the support and guidance of an influential [Board of Directors](#) led by Lawrence H. Summers and composed of prominent individuals from the public and private sectors with a passionate commitment to development. The Center was founded in November 2001 by [Edward Scott Jr.](#), [C. Fred Bergsten](#), and [Nancy Birdsall](#). A technology entrepreneur, philanthropist, and former U.S. government official, Ed Scott provided the vision and financial commitment that made CGD possible. Fred Bergsten, director emeritus of the [Peterson Institute for International Economics](#), lent his formidable reputation in academic and policy circles and provided CGD a temporary home within the Peterson Institute. Nancy Birdsall, a former head of the World Bank research department and executive vice president of the Inter-American Development Bank, became CGD's first president.

CGD is based in Washington, DC with an office in London, UK. In 2022 the two offices had revenues of \$26 million. As of the end of 2023, the combined offices employed a total staff of 111 people, including a research staff of 19 senior fellows and 13 fellows. For more detailed information on CGD please refer to: [www.cgdev.org](http://www.cgdev.org).

## The Role

Based in Washington, DC and reporting to and working with the Board of Directors, the President has responsibility and accountability for the strategic, programmatic, financial, and management operations of the organization. They will ensure that the organization's governance and programs are ethical, transparent, and aligned with the Center's values and goals of fostering an environment for creativity, innovation, and collaboration.

Specifically, the President will:

- Provide intellectual leadership, fostering an environment for creativity, convening, imagination, and innovation;
- Develop a future vision for the organization that is grounded in evidence and focused on innovative and creative policy outcomes;

- Attract and motivate a team of researchers focused on the incubation of bold ideas and committed to curiosity, creativity, and innovation;
- Maintain existing and cultivate new relationships across the development community to enable the Center to remain a leading force in facilitating the development and implementation of effective policy solutions to global poverty;
- Provide credible organizational management and visionary leadership, particularly in the face of uncertain geopolitical considerations;
- Grow and diversify CGD's reach and impact through financial support, including nurturing and expanding existing funding relationships and cultivating new sources – both project-based and unrestricted;
- Communicate CGD's mission and future direction to diverse stakeholders, ensuring that evidence-based proposals and best-practices are promoted and disseminated, leading to tangible actions and policy solutions;
- Ensure that governance, asset management, and programs are ethical, transparent, aligned with the Institute's values and aims, and led by dedicated, diverse, and creative staff and officers.

## Candidate Profile

The President of CGD will be a visionary and competent leader who possesses the intellectual breadth, independence of thought, practical experience, and demonstrated leadership to ensure CGD pursues its work facilitating innovative economic research that drives better policy and practice by the world's top decision makers, unconstrained by pre-determined and/or partisan boundaries.

The successful candidate will be an inspiring, inclusive, and generous leader committed to an un-hierarchical, collaborative, and diverse work environment and will have the ability to recruit, support, and retain top talent. They will have the intellectual self-confidence to let the organization flourish while containing a diversity of views. They should be able to develop positive and productive relationships, diplomatically build internal consensus, and engage people and institutions towards achieving ambitious goals.

They will bring demonstrated leadership and intellectual versatility and be credible across the nexus of research, policy, and implementation. They will demonstrate not only intellectual curiosity and rigor, but also a deep respect for the importance and validity of scholarly research and ideally, an understanding of how to translate research into policy.

In addition, the President must be an able and disciplined leader, able to steer the Center towards maintaining its strategic focus, delivering on its commitments, and expending its financial and other resources efficiently. Above all, they must be able to direct, promote, and safeguard the Center's work and reputation for integrity, impartiality, and impactful, evidence-based initiatives and discussions.

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:

### Leading Teams

- Must be able to attract, support, and motivate Senior Fellows so that they can produce innovative, distinctive, and actionable ideas. Ensure that they are uniquely positioned to make substantive contributions to the debate on the future of international development efforts in a changing world.
- A highly encouraging and persuasive leader who can renew CGD with people and ideas.
- Demonstrated commitment to diplomacy, cultural sensitivity, and diversity. A flexible leader with warmth, drive, passion, and determination.
- They will possess a track record of advancing and sustaining an organizational culture of diversity, inclusion, and equity.

- A charismatic and encouraging leader who motivates the team, particularly Fellows, towards boldness and curiosity. A leader who values the geographic diversity of CGD and the true global mindset of the organization.
- Culturally astute and aware; has a true appreciation of the issues and cultural contexts facing policymakers in various cultural and political settings.
- Commitment to good governance, transparency, fiscal integrity, and operational excellence; ideally brings experience managing global teams.

## **Intellectual Range and Visionary Leadership**

- Demonstrated capacity to define and communicate an inspiring vision for CGD that demonstrates the Center's unique proposition of developing bold, creative ideas across the international development landscape.
- A deep understanding of policy and politics, and of current geopolitical dynamics, with a demonstrated ability to engage critical decision-makers in constructive dialogue and forge new ideas.
- Must have the vision, energy, and focus to advance CGD strategically, organizationally, and financially.

## **Credibility and Commitment to Research & Idea Incubation**

- A demonstrated commitment to evidence-based research over rhetoric, and an inspiring and visible body of work or practical experience.
- Credibly curious across the full range of CGD's work and commitment to the intellectual life of the Center.
- A strong, well-informed grasp of the complex issues CGD aims to influence.

## **Convening Power and Communications**

- The ability to unite staff around a common identity through compelling influence and galvanizing leadership.
- Proven experience as a relationship builder with a demonstrated understanding of the international development ecosystem and a strong, high-level network in international development and policy circles.
- A proven convener, mediator, and negotiator who readily connects with others and can build trust to move forward an agenda.
- Has the presence, gravitas, and keen sense of judgement to convene and engage diverse constituencies in a common dialogue.

## **Resource Development & Partnership-Building**

- Track record or demonstrated capacity to raise the financial resources to invest in intellectual capital and innovative programming, while maintaining and growing an independent scholarly environment.
- Experience or capacity to expand CGD's fundraising internationally and into new and diverse spheres of influence.
- Track record of persuasive engagement of external stakeholders; experience of creating and managing sensitive, strategic relationships.

## **Above Partisanship**

- An unwavering commitment to rigorous, fact-based research and policy analysis. They will think through issues on the merits, independent of partisanship.
- Has excellent judgment; makes decisions that fairly balance a variety of factors and points of view; navigates confidently in ambiguous situations.
- The public reputation of any candidate should not strain CGD in remaining a trustworthy, non-partisan organization.

## Contact

Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search. Given the need for confidentiality throughout this process, prospective candidates are invited to reach out directly to our search consultants at [CGD@russellreynolds.com](mailto:CGD@russellreynolds.com) with a resume and brief explanation of interest.