MILLAR CAMERON



Chief Executive Officer
International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC)

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About
International Fertilizer Development Center

The International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) is a non-profit public international organization working at the intersection of agriculture, soil health and market systems development. It was founded in 1974 and is headquartered in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, in the United States. Most of its work is in sub-Saharan Africa.

IFDC works with governments, donors, research institutions and the private sector to improve food security, farmer livelihoods and sustainable agricultural practices. In 2025 it worked in more than 30 countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas and trained over 730,000 farmers, 43% of them women. Most of IFDC's work is large-scale implementation, delivering programs with farmers, agribusinesses and governments. This is backed by applied research on fertilizer and soil health that takes innovations from the laboratory and field trials through to farmers and markets.

IFDC is known for its work on fertilizer innovation and soil health, and for long-standing partnerships with bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations, research institutions and the private sector. Its current portfolio includes large multi-year programs funded by the Government of the Netherlands, the European Union, the Gates Foundation and multilateral development banks.

In 2026 IFDC launched its 2026–2035 strategy, Fuel the Farmer, Feed the Soil, Foster the Future. It is built around three priorities: fertilizer innovation, farmer impact at scale, and sustainable systems transformation.

For more information about IFDC, please visit: www.ifdc.org

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The opportunity

For five decades, IFDC has worked on how fertilizer and soil health translate into better yields, higher incomes and more resilient food systems. That work matters more now. Since the African Union's 2024 Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit in Nairobi, soil health has moved up the agenda of African governments and their funding partners. Few organizations combine IFDC's applied research with its delivery footprint across Africa.

Like many organizations in the sector, IFDC has been through a demanding period for development funding. It has used that time to prepare for its next phase. Its new 2026–2035 strategy brings research and field operations together into a single path from invention to innovation to impact. Implementation remains at the heart of IFDC's work, and the strategy aims to make better use of applied research and innovation to open up new implementation opportunities. The senior leadership team has been strengthened over the last two years. A Chief Operating Officer is leading internal transformation.

The next phase depends on two things: a sharper strategic focus and a broader funding base. The Board is seeking a Chief Executive Officer to deliver both. The CEO will set IFDC's direction and refocus the organization on its distinctive strengths. They will rebuild and diversify its financing, and strengthen a culture of rigor and accountability to better deliver on its mandate.

The ambition is clear. Within three years, IFDC should move beyond being a leader in soil health to being the leader in soil health, built on its strengths in fertilizer innovation. It should have sustainable funding and be able to show impact that funders can use.

The role suits a leader who has taken an organization through change and left it stronger. They will have built funding rather than inherited it. They will be credible with scientists and funders alike, especially in a domain like fertilizers, crop nutrition and/or soil health, and able to bring people with them. Above all, they will want to shape what IFDC becomes over the next decade.



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Main responsibilities

The CEO reports to the Board of Directors and provides strategic, operational and external leadership for IFDC. The role is weighted firmly towards external leadership. Its two priorities are strategic leadership and resource mobilization.

The CEO works closely with the Chief Operating Officer, who leads internal operations and the day-to-day transformation. The CEO sets the culture and is accountable for IFDC's overall performance.

First-year priorities

- A clear execution plan with defined priorities
- A visible culture of accountability
- Stronger relationships with existing funders
- Measurable progress in converting a diversified funding pipeline

What success looks like at three years

- Diversified, sustainable funding
- Recognized as the leader in soil health, built on innovative fertilizer use
- A strategy refined around IFDC's distinctive capabilities
- A stronger applied research and innovation base that drives new implementation opportunities
- A solid talent base and clear succession plans
- Impact measured credibly and at scale



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Dimensions of the role

Strategic Leadership

- Set a clear direction for IFDC and sharpen the 2026–2035 strategy, making bold choices built on IFDC's distinctive assets and capabilities.
- Maintain IFDC's major focus on implementation while strengthening applied research and innovation, using them to drive new implementation opportunities.
- Drive the move to a single path from invention to innovation to impact, bringing research and field operations together without creating new silos.
- Make sure IFDC's impact is measured credibly and at scale and presented in a form funders can act on.

Resource Mobilization

- Lead IFDC's resource mobilization and broaden its funding base across bilateral and multilateral donors, foundations and private capital.
- Personally build and convert new funding pipelines, with a clear account of the change IFDC will deliver in its countries.
- Grow new sources of funding while protecting and strengthening existing government partnerships.
- Set IFDC's agenda and bring funders to it, rather than following donor priorities.

External Engagement and Positioning

- Act as IFDC's lead representative with governments, donors, research institutions, the private sector and peer organizations.
- Maintain and deepen the confidence of government funders, including through review, audit and compliance processes.
- Build alliances and partnerships with commercial, research and development organizations that extend IFDC's reach.
- Strengthen IFDC's position as a leader in soil health and innovative fertilizer use in global and regional policy discussions.

Science and Innovation

- Champion IFDC's scientific work and earn the confidence of its research staff and the wider research community.
- Bring an evidence-based view on how applied research can better support and grow IFDC's implementation work.
- Make sure promising ideas move from research and field trials into products and practices that reach farmers and markets.
- Identify where IFDC's innovation can generate intellectual property and new partnerships.

Leadership, Culture and Accountability

- Lead and develop a strong senior leadership team, much of which has joined in the last two years.
- Work in close partnership with the Chief Operating Officer, who leads internal operations and transformation day to day.
- Set a culture of discipline and accountability from day one: delegate clearly, follow up, and hold people to account.
- Build a solid talent base and clear succession plans aligned with the strategy.

Board and Governance

- Report to the Board of Directors and keep it informed through open and timely communication.
- Oversee financial sustainability, risk and compliance across a multi-country organization.
- Work constructively with the Board, including where views differ, and operate well under scrutiny.

Skills and experience

Required

- Senior executive experience leading an organization at scale with budget or P&L responsibility, including risk and compliance.
- A proven record of setting strategic direction and delivering real change, with clear evidence of transformation actually achieved.
- A track record of personally building new funding, including from non-government sources such as foundations and private capital.
- Scientific literacy and credibility with the research community: an understanding of how ideas become innovations and reach the market, and the ability to speak the language of research. A publication record is not required, but implementation experience alone will not be enough.
- Recognition as a leader in fertilizer, crop nutrition and/or soil health.
- Meaningful operating experience in Africa.
- A background in international development, agriculture, agribusiness, development finance or a closely related field.

Preferred

- Experience with European donors, and Dutch development funding in particular. A strong fundraising record with other funders, including private sources, will also be considered.
- Experience building alliances across research, commercial and development organizations.
- Experience working with government donor bureaucracies and multi-stakeholder programs.
- Experience working with or within CGIAR, national agricultural research systems, multilateral development banks or other public international organizations.

Leadership Competencies

- Strategic Leader: Reads an organization's real position and makes clear choices about where it should go.
- Resource Builder: Opens doors with funders and turns relationships into lasting partnerships.
- Scientifically Credible: Understands the path from invention to impact and is respected by researchers.
- Accountable Leader: Delegates, verifies, and holds themselves and others to account.
- Independent Thinker: Builds a strategy that fits IFDC rather than repeating a previous playbook.
- Trusted Partner: Works with integrity across cultures and keeps the confidence of the Board, staff and funders.

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Scope of role

Reporting to: Board of Directors

Direct reports: Chief Operating Officer and members of the senior leadership team

Oversight: IFDC's global operations across Africa, Asia and other emerging regions

Scale: Programs in more than 30 countries

Location: Africa, at a major IFDC site, or IFDC's US headquarters in Muscle Shoals, Alabama

Travel: Frequent international travel across IFDC's countries of operation and to meet funders and partners

Start date: End of Q1 or early Q2 2027

Appointment: Permanent appointment, with a planned handover from the current CEO

Remuneration: A competitive international package. Details will be discussed with candidates during the process

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Selection process

Millar Cameron is running the search on behalf of IFDC's CEO Selection Committee. All candidates follow the same process and are assessed against the same criteria: strategic leadership, resource mobilization, scientific credibility, leadership and accountability, funder relationships, and board governance, together with meaningful operating experience in Africa. Dates below are indicative.

Long-listing and initial conversations with Millar Cameron:
November 2026

Shortlist to the Selection Committee:
early December 2026

First-round interviews with the Selection Committee, by video:
December 2026

Psychometric assessment and referencing:
completed for finalists before the final round

Final round:
in person for two or three finalists in January 2027, ideally at one of IFDC's main African locations, including a presentation to the Committee and meetings with the senior team

Offer: February 2027

All approaches and applications are handled in confidence.



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How to apply

To apply, please submit your CV and a cover letter (maximum two pages) outlining your motivation for the role and demonstrating how your skills and experience meet the requirements outlined above via the advertisement on our **website.**

Application Deadline
The closing date is **Friday November 20th 2026.** Applications received after this date may not be considered.

Next Steps
We will acknowledge every application. Candidates who are not taken forward will be informed once the shortlist has been agreed with the Selection Committee.

Commitment to Diversity
At Millar Cameron, we are committed to supporting our clients in building diverse and inclusive teams. IFDC particularly welcomes applications from leaders based in or from Africa. If you're enthusiastic about this role but don't meet every requirement, we still encourage you to apply.



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Who are Millar Cameron?

Founded in 2007, Millar Cameron is an executive and professional search consultancy that focuses on Africa and other emerging markets.

Our goal is to provide client-centric, tailored executive search, recruitment and strategic advisory. Our international reach paired with local market knowledge enables us to provide our clients outstanding leaders who deliver consistent results, irrespective of geography.

We employ a rigorous research driven search process to identify the best fit for our clients, taking into account both hard and soft skill sets.

Our extensive experience yields a robust approach to market intelligence and a longstanding network of global relationships.

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PEOPLE . PASSION . PERSISTENCE

Oxford *London* *Nairobi*