



# AGRA

Sustainably Growing  
Africa's Food Systems

Position and Candidate Specification

## AGRA President

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# About the Organization

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AGRA is a leading development organization devoted to enhancing agricultural **productivity**, food security, and income growth for smallholder farmers across Africa.

It emphasizes **choice and context specific solutions** for African farmers to address their unique challenges and enhance production sustainably, thus connecting them to the expanding agricultural markets.

Since its inception in 2006, AGRA has worked to shift the paradigm of smallholder farming from mere survival based on subsistence farming to vibrant enterprises based on improved access to technology, choices and inclusion in rural development.

As an African organisation housing expertise in agricultural science, economics, policy and commerce, AGRA exists to identify and enable opportunities to inclusively transform African smallholder agriculture delivering through grants, technical assistance, convening actors and advocacy.

AGRA partners with strategic actors, including governments, development partners, continental institutions, the private sector, farmers' organizations, and civil society, to invest in opportunities at both national and continental levels that have the biggest potential to transform and scale food systems across four business lines and three major cross cutting areas.

AGRA supports inclusive agricultural development with four main business lines:

- **Seed Systems/CESSA:** Working with key actors like National Agriculture Research organisations and private sector, AGRA focuses on building resilient seed systems, increasing availability, choice and access to quality and affordable seeds by small holder farmers.
- **Sustainable Farming:** The sustainable farming business line work stream works with implementing partners and governments to identify key productivity constraints, climate risks, and resilience challenges among smallholder farmers through strategic investments, partnerships, and the integration of sustainable farming practices across AGRA's focus countries.
- **Inclusive Markets, Trade and Finance:** Tackling systemic constraints in access to finance, market, and trade, AGRA's goal is to work with strategic partners to contribute to strong agri-food markets across local, national, regional, and continental markets.
- **Policy and State Capability:** AGRA works with governments to build state capabilities to drive inclusive agricultural transformation and investments and supports governments in prioritising critical policies that create an enabling environment for private sector to thrive.

AGRA acknowledges that, to achieve its goals, it must employ a systemic, deliberate approach to addressing exclusionary barriers to food and nutrition security. Therefore, each of its interventions are informed by the following cross-cutting lines:

- **Climate Resilience:** "Business as usual" will not be enough for climate change adaptation and a widespread commitment to preparation, protection, and restoration of people and the environment is key.
- **Inclusivity:** Without women, the disabled and youth inclusive agricultural transformation; is not possible.
- **Nutrition:** While food security is a critical goal, food must also meet nutritional needs. Beyond productivity and food security, AGRA recognises that nutrition-sensitive interventions are critical in our food systems.

AGRA's interventions in the agri-food industry, aim to mobilize system actors around a common vision and purpose by using evidence-based data to catalyse and rally system actors to scale proven practices. With 12 million young people entering Africa's workforce annually, AGRA aims to create 3 million jobs through the Youth Entrepreneurship for the Future of Food and Agriculture (YEFFA) initiative. Already launched in five countries, YEFFA is set to expand across most AGRA focus regions. AGRA aspires to build the alliances, partnerships, and networks required to drive an inclusive agricultural transformation. Working with partners to create an equitable youth-friendly environment that harnesses the youth dividend on the continent, to drive growth and facilitate open employment opportunities for young women and men.

For additional information on AGRA's programs, please visit <https://agra.org/what-we-do/programmes/>.

## THE EVOLUTION OF AGRA

- AGRA's journey from its inception through Phases 1 and 2 laid a strong foundation for agricultural growth and transformation in its focus countries across Africa. Initially, AGRA concentrated on building human capital, particularly in plant breeding. It later shifted to a more integrated approach, targeting key value chains essential for food and nutrition security. Notable achievements during these phases include supporting governments in developing flagship agricultural projects across multiple countries, establishing the first multi-donor platform, 'Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa (PIATA),' focused on shared results and impact, and bringing together strategic partners to shape Africa's priorities through the Africa Food Systems Forum. AGRA has played a pivotal role in supporting, building of functional seed, extension and soil health systems catalysing private sector investments and working with continental partners like the African Union to shape the food systems transformation agenda.
- In its current phase, strategy 3.0, AGRA is doubling down on fostering a food systems inclusive agricultural transformation focused on the 4 business lines.
- Looking ahead, AGRA's vision for the future is to rally common voices around a food and nutrition-secure continent, driven by the private sector in true partnership with local governments and aligned with continental frameworks. To achieve this vision at scale, AGRA's delivery models must be adaptable, responding to both emerging opportunities and the institutional capacities of its partners, while deepening collaboration with other key actors. Furthermore, to realize this next phase of growth, AGRA must be designed for rapid, direct delivery, supported by a strong performance-driven culture.

For additional information on AGRA's Board of Directors, please visit <https://agra.org/who-we-are/our-people/>

### KEY AGRA FACTS

- Operates in 12 countries
- Over 250 employees
- Working with over 50,000 small and medium-sized enterprises
- Partnerships created: Over 500
- Partnerships span: Agriculture R&D, Academia, Private Sector, Government & NGO's, Civil Society and Farmer Groups.

For additional information about AGRA, please visit <https://agra.org/>

### FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

AGRA is well-positioned to execute Strategy 3.0, having secured over \$600 million in new funding, with a goal of raising \$860 million by the strategy's mid-point. To meet its strategic objectives, annual program expenditure is projected at \$98 million in 2024, with expectations to increase to \$140 million in future years as existing awards are leveraged, and additional funding is secured. This anticipated growth highlights the need for disciplined financial oversight, particularly in managing operational complexities and ensuring that expenditures remain closely aligned with strategic priorities. Success will depend on the ability to optimize the use of new resources while maintaining the flexibility to adapt to evolving circumstances.

AGRA has cultivated strong relationships with over 13 top-tier, diversified donors, establishing a solid foundation of long-term funding commitments. However, the increasingly competitive donor funding landscape requires a focus on demonstrating measurable impact and enhancing donor engagement strategies to secure ongoing support. Ensuring long-term sustainability is crucial in navigating this environment. AGRA's financial health is robust, with a solid going concern status, supported by a sustained buildup of reserves, allowing the organization to manage cyclical funding fluctuations without compromising program delivery. With total assets of \$143 million, including \$105 million in cash, AGRA is financially equipped to seamlessly implement its programs now and in the future. Robust ERP systems further enhance the organization's ability to remain agile and responsive in supporting country office operations.

Consolidated financial statements are provided as an annex for further details

# Position Summary

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The AGRA Board of Directors seeks a highly regarded, articulate, and visionary leader with a demonstrated track-record of exceptional results in agriculture and food systems. Following a decade of growth led by Agnes Kalibata, the next President will lead the organization through its ongoing transition in which internal structures, processes, strategy, and culture are being re-evaluated and aligned with the evolving organizational strategy.

Reporting to and working in close collaboration with the Board of Directors, the President will formulate organizational policies and drive strategic initiatives in alignment with AGRA's mission, building on its current momentum and trajectory. This role will facilitate seamless communication and support to the Board and will regularly partner with the Board Chair and Committee Chairs on internal and external matters impacting AGRA. As the Head of a leading agricultural development organization in Africa, this role comes with tremendous external visibility and will involve critical stakeholder engagement and partnerships across the agriculture R&D, academia, private (i.e. consumer and food systems businesses), governments (inclusive of bi-/multilaterals), nonprofit sectors and farmer groups.

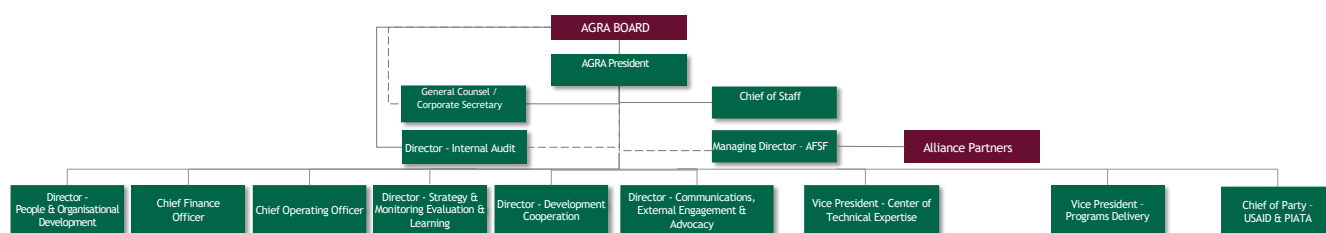
As an African-led, African-based organization, this individual should possess a deep understanding of the regional landscape, as well as deep knowledge of the unique issues and challenges faced by African farmers in today's environment. Continuing to build AGRA's credibility, influence, and external impact, while fostering internal trust and nurturing an environment of transparency, collaboration, and inclusivity, will be essential to ensuring a smooth leadership transition.

**Position Location:** AGRA headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya

Frequent travel required, approximately 50%

## KEY RELATIONSHIPS

|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Reports to:</b>             | Board of Directors                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Direct reports</b>          | Please see the high-level organizational structure on the following page                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Other key relationships</b> | Partners in agriculture R&D, technical implementing partners, academia, private sector (i.e. consumer and food systems businesses), government agencies (countries and bi-/multilaterals), civil society and farmer groups |



## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

The President Will:

- In partnership with the Board of Directors, strengthen and refine AGRA's organizational strategy, capitalizing upon the organization's current position and expertise and paving the way for new donor- and/or private sector-funded projects and programs.
- Cultivate strategic public and private sector partnerships and deepen relationships with Governments, regional blocs and continental partners for impact.
- Continue elevating AGRA's international brand and identity. Serve as a spokesperson for the organization, leveraging mission, vision, and storytelling to communicate impact.
- Optimize organizational structure and processes and accelerate ongoing realignment and change management efforts; expand internal management capability both through direct, hands-on leadership and by empowering other leaders across the organization. Connect decision-making and resource allocation to strategy.
- Foster a high-performing organization by partnering with the senior leadership team on strategic workforce planning, attracting and retaining world-class talent, and engaging staff and developing their capabilities.
- Share learnings of AGRA's work and its partners to catalyse investments and policy actions. The President will leverage data-driven decision-making to drive impact and reinforce accountability.
- Build trust by increasing transparency and collaboration across teams to amplify AGRA's collective impact. The President will ensure ongoing commitment to diversity as well as equity and inclusion for staff of all backgrounds across active regions.
- Be willing to travel up to 50%.

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Understanding that the role in leading and executing change will be multi-year, the priorities for the next President in the next 18-24 months will be to:

### Strategic and Operational Alignment

Driving the organization's impact through the alignment of strategy, structure and talent as the organization continues to transform from a centralized to a decentralized structure. The President will assess the programs and resources under development and make trade-offs, identifying opportunities that will have the greatest impact for smallholder farmers and determining the metrics and measurements that define impact.

### People Leadership

At this moment of significant transition and of the expectation of transformation (internally and externally), the next President will lead at a time of enormous optimism and do so with transparency and will cultivate trust. They will create exponential impact by catalysing processes that leverage the power of the talented team to deliver results.

### Partnership Cultivation

AGRA bears a strong reputation. To meet this moment, where there is great attention on the African continent for agricultural innovation and uplifting people out of poverty, the President will persuasively and authentically nurture relationships at the levels of Presidents and Prime Ministers, and Chief Executives around the world to cultivate alliances to collectively drive more impact. The President will also embed in the climate agenda into which AGRA could feature more prominently

# Candidate Profile

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AGRA's next President will be a strategic thinker, persuasive communicator, and effective leader, ideally with ties to or deep knowledge of Sub-Saharan Africa. This leader will demonstrate an authentic passion for AGRA's mission and be able to articulate a compelling and inspiring vision. They will have a global mindset, informed by professional or lived experiences on the African continent. They will also have experience successfully managing and leading an organization of complexity.

With a robust reputation in multicultural settings and preferably, experience in agriculture and food systems, the successful candidate will need to be accustomed to engaging diverse stakeholders across the public and private sectors. Additionally, they will have experience or conversant knowledge of policy engagement. The next President must have a track record of evaluating strategies and aligning realistic outcomes, to then drive performance which the organization is poised to execute. Specifically, they will take a fresh look at the evolving organizational strategy to ensure that outcomes to deliver the strategy are realistically aligned with the team in place, that clear priorities are understood, likely involving new processes and ways to catalyse efficiency from headquarters through the in-country teams, driving efficiency and greater impact. This leader will demonstrate outstanding communication skills and the ability to remain agile in conversations with various stakeholder groups, adapting their style to different audiences globally. They should exhibit strong financial acumen, operational excellence, and the ability to lead a decentralized organization while also fostering an inclusive culture of transparency and collaboration to drive a diverse team towards ambitious goals.

## IDEAL EXPERIENCE

### Senior Executive Leadership Experience

Demonstrating roles of increasing executive responsibility, has led large, complex organizations or teams through significant change, ideally with a blend of exposure to the private, nonprofit, and public sectors. Track record of implementing transformative culture change along with structures and processes to increase the effectiveness of an organization as it grows and scales.

### Food and Agriculture Expertise

Understanding the interwoven nature of global development topics will be critical. Preference for knowledge of issues and trends in agriculture and a broad understanding of the role that science and policy can play in African agriculture and in improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. Ideally, they have knowledge of crop-livestock farming systems, coupled with experience in climate change and adaptation. Leadership over the development and implementation of large-scale, multi-stakeholder agricultural projects or alliances would be preferred.

## **External Stakeholder Engagement and Management**

Proven ability to build relationships across sectors, including within the private sector and at high levels of government, by leveraging mission, vision and storytelling to demonstrate an organization's impact. Exceptional written and verbal communication skills that are effective with a variety of audiences (employees, governments, donors, etc.); they will be clear, engaging, inspirational, analytical, and agile consistently and across all forms of communications.

## **Global Mindset**

Preferably, has experience living and working internationally and has a broad global network. Brings a comprehensive understanding of the African landscape. Understands and readily navigates different cultures and perspectives when leading teams, collaborating and influencing others. Has a demonstrated ability to uphold the diversity AGRA seeks to foster.

## **CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES**

### **Leading People**

- Communicates the vision and purpose of AGRA with enthusiasm and passion.
- Orchestrates meetings, events, and/or forums to engage the entire organization.
- Enlists the top leadership team to reinforce the organization's purpose, culture, and values.
- Promotes cross-organizational discussion to build or reinforce alignment around AGRA's purpose, vision, and direction.
- Fosters open communication and debate across functions, divisions and locations, resolving different objectives to achieve a common purpose.

### **Strategic Thinking**

- Proposes changes to the current strategy and/or direction while considering their implications across different parts of AGRA or its functions.
- Analytical, data-driven mindset with a problem-solving mentality; exhibits clear vision and the ability to deliver on a focused mission with measurable outcomes.
- Brings new thinking that challenges assumptions and conventional wisdom.
- Describes the trends and evolution of the agricultural landscape over a 3+ year horizon that challenges the current strategy.

### **Collaborating and Influencing**

- Builds partnerships across the systems enterprise to shape collective direction of the sector and AGRA's unique role in it.
- Creates an environment of shared values where collaboration is expected at all levels, internally and externally.
- Systematically and diplomatically builds support at multiple levels and across groups to achieve alignment, acknowledging differences in interests.

## **Cultural Agility**

- Identifies and celebrates differences in business practices and principles in different regional and global markets. Proactively navigates both AGRA's and the stakeholder environment to achieve goals and remove barriers.
- Maintains the core values and purpose of AGRA while retaining the identity and distinctiveness of culturally diverse teams.
- Establishes ground rules and promotes mutual respect across difficult boundaries and cultural groups.

## **OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

- Courageous leadership
- Systems-thinking
- Innovative, dynamic
- Strong EQ
- Flexible, agile, tolerance for ambiguity
- Diplomatic, with executive presence
- Inclusive
- Mission-driven

## **APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS**

If you wish to submit application materials or nominate someone to serve as the next President of AGRA, please email [AGRAPresident@SpencerStuart.com](mailto:AGRAPresident@SpencerStuart.com)