



The Charles Darwin Foundation for the Galapagos Islands is recruiting a Director of Human Resources

Application deadline: November 15th 2026.

Type of contract: Full-time contract under the Ecuadorian Labor Code, in line with the Galapagos Special Law (LOREG)

Introduction

The Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF) is an international non-profit organization founded in 1959 with an operational base in the Galapagos Islands, a UNESCO world heritage site located 1,000 kilometers off the coast of Ecuador. All research programs operate from the Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS) under the mission of CDF *to tackle the greatest threats and challenges to Galapagos through scientific research and conservation action, in order to safeguard one of the world's most important natural treasures.*

Today we have some 140 full-time staff, working principally at the Research Station in Puerto Ayora, with satellite offices in Quito, and on the islands of Isabela and San Cristobal. About 50% of our team works directly in science, and the other half in administrative areas. Approximately 65% of our staff are Galapagos residents, 22% are temporary-resident Ecuadorian nationals, and the remainder are international specialists.

Objective of the position

The Charles Darwin Foundation is seeking a seasoned, steady and strategic Director of Human Resources to lead our people function as a true partner to the Executive Director and the leadership team. Leading a team of four, the HR Director will shape and deliver a people strategy that serves CDF's mission and Strategic Plan: attracting, developing and retaining the talent our science and conservation work depends on, strengthening a healthy and collaborative organizational culture, and ensuring sound compliance with Ecuadorian labor law and the Galapagos Special Law.

We are looking for someone who sees HR as an enabler of the mission, not an end in itself: a calm and pragmatic leader who builds systems that work, brings clarity to complex situations, sets clear priorities, and earns the trust of a diverse workforce, from field assistants to senior scientists and executive leadership.

Required profile

- Undergraduate degree in Business Administration, Law or Social Work, or related disciplines, and a strong preference for candidates with a Master's degree in disciplines such as Human Resources Administration, Public Relations, Industrial Psychology, or similar.
- At least 8 years of cumulative experience working in a similar leadership position.
- A proven track record as a strategic partner to an Executive Director or CEO, translating organizational strategy into practical, well-prioritized people plans.
- Solid, hands-on knowledge of Ecuadorian labor law, social security (IESS) and occupational health and safety regulations, as well as the Galapagos Special Law (LOREG) and its residency and hiring requirements.



- Demonstrable experience managing diverse, multicultural and multi-disciplinary personnel.
- Demonstrable experience designing and implementing organizational culture and engagement strategies and a positive employee journey, from recruitment to exit.
- In-depth knowledge and understanding of challenges that come with managing human resources in a non-profit, mission-driven scientific organization, including project-based funding and fixed-term contracts.
- A genuine team player who works across the leadership team and with every department to build an HR strategy aligned with CDF's Strategic Plan and responsive to departmental needs and priorities.
- Calm, steady and resilient under pressure: thrives in a fast-moving, high-stakes environment that requires both strategic perspective and hands-on problem solving.
- Mature judgment and proven ability to handle conflict, sensitive personnel matters and complex human dynamics with fairness, diplomacy and discretion.
- Unquestionable integrity and discretion in handling confidential information.
- Experience modernizing HR processes and systems (for example HRIS, payroll integration, HR data and metrics) is considered an asset.
- Language proficiency: Spanish fluency (oral and written) is required as well as an advanced knowledge of English (written and spoken).
- Excellent interpersonal, negotiation and mediation skills, with a service-oriented approach.
- Patience, empathy and adaptability in a dynamic environment that presents numerous opportunities, but also unforeseen events and challenges.
- Ability and willingness to live and work on a remote island, characterized by limited logistical resources and geographic isolation.

Activities

Strategy and Compliance

1. Act as a strategic partner to the Executive Director and the executive leadership team, aligning HR priorities and goals with the current strategic goals of CDF as outlined in the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, contributing to the development of the next strategic cycle, working closely with senior scientific staff.
2. Create, update and develop when required, procedure manuals, policies and regulations for the proper management of human resources (staff, volunteers and scholarship holders), and ensure their fair and consistent application.
3. Plan, implement, and lead a comprehensive Human Resources (HR) strategy and underlying programs that strengthen a healthy, collaborative organizational culture across all areas in support of CDF's conservation goals in the Galapagos Islands.
4. Ensure effective and efficient compliance with labor legislation related to all issues of the organization's personnel: MRL, IESS, SRI, the local Galapagos Government Council, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, UAEF and others in accordance with current regulations.

Leadership



5. Supervise, mentor, coach, support, and direct the HR team and their activities to meet short- and medium-term strategic targets, as well as annual goals, and build out the team's capacity, so that HR can operate strategically and not just transactionally.
6. Act as a trusted advisor, coach and mentor to the executive leadership team and department heads on people management, team development and leadership practices.

Management

7. Review and maintain updated Terms of Reference for all CDF personnel, including the description of positions, and carry out a position analysis to propose improvements to the institutional organization chart, if necessary.
8. Supervise and execute the recruitment, selection, hiring and onboarding processes for all personnel – and develop a compelling employee journey in collaboration with relevant internal teams.
9. Direct, supervise, and execute the training and orientation of new staff and volunteers both before their arrival and during their stay at the CDF.
10. Lead the annual personnel performance and development evaluation program.
11. Participate in the planning and determination of annual salary increases during the budget planning process, and lead the development of a fair, competitive and sustainable compensation and benefits structure.
12. Prepare the annual operating plan for the Human Resources area, with clear indicators to track progress.
13. Use HR data and metrics (such as turnover, recruitment time, engagement and absenteeism) to inform leadership decision-making.

Staff wellbeing

14. Advise directors, project leaders, and coordinators on issues related to effective personnel management and wellbeing.
15. Coordinate and execute integration activities, aimed at improving the work environment and strengthening interpersonal relationships.
16. Oversee the occupational health and safety system across all CDF operations, including field and marine work, in line with Ecuadorian regulations.
17. Efficiently manage the insurance policies of CDF personnel in coordination with the Executive Director.
18. Ensure that CDF's ethics, safeguarding and grievance mechanisms are well known, accessible to all staff, and handled with fairness and confidentiality.

Collaboration

19. Regularly advise the Executive Director on Human Resources matters and agree on priorities for the HR area.
20. Work closely with the Executive Director and the legal representative on processes related to personnel.
21. Maintain constant and open communication with the Financial Director to ensure timely and accurate payroll and the alignment of HR planning with the budget.
22. Coordinate internal communications with the Communications Director to develop an employee journey and ensure consistent, transparent and timely communication with staff.



23. Coordinate with Education Director to ensure a smooth recruitment for student scholars.

Skills

- Strong leadership skills
- Strategic-minded and highly organized
- Outstanding interpersonal and communication skills
- Excellent conflict resolution and mediation abilities
- Diplomatic communications and service oriented
- Strong team work ethic, collaborative partner
- Adaptable and able to work under pressure
- Empathy and patience

Employment Conditions

The HR Director reports to the Executive Director of the CDF, and will be based at the Charles Darwin Research Station on the island of Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador.

The HR Director will faithfully comply with the rules, regulations and procedure manuals of the CDF, as well as strictly observe and comply with the rules and regulations of the Galapagos Protected Areas.

Benefits will be negotiated according to the qualifications of the candidate.

Restrictions

****Note that it is strictly prohibited to bring domestic pets into the Galapagos Islands****

To apply

Those interested in this position should send the following information via e-mail to HRdirector@fcdarwin.org.ec :

- Up-to-date resumé or CV.
- A letter of interest in English (2 pages maximum), describing your interest in the position and skills according to the minimum requirements outlined above.
- The names and email addresses of three professional references and two personal references.

We kindly ask you to send all the necessary documents in a single PDF file. If you need additional information, you can reach us at the same e-mail listed above.

CDF is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes applications from all qualified candidates, regardless of gender, origin, disability or background.