



Position Specification

SDG Impact Finance Initiative
CEO SIFI

Our Client

Based in Switzerland, the SDG Impact Finance Initiative (SIFI) aims to advance progress in developing countries towards the achievement of the SDGs by mobilising additional capital through innovative finance solutions and collaboration between public and private partners. Co-founded in 2021 by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Credit Suisse Foundation and the UBS Optimus Foundation, the Initiative aims to raise and disburse CHF 100 million in grant capital, technical assistance, design funding and seed capital to catalyse up to CHF 1 billion in investment by 2030.

The Role

Reporting to the Executive Board, the CEO provides strategic, operational, and external leadership to drive SIFI's strategic ambition to contribute to unlocking CHF 1 billion in capital for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. They are responsible for shaping the strategic direction, overseeing the implementation of SIFI's programmes, driving fundraising, cultivating strong relationships with SIFI's Board, its funders and partners, and leading a small, high-performing team. The CEO serves as the primary representative of the organisation, fostering partnerships with donors, public and private stakeholders.

Key responsibilities:

1) Strategic Leadership and Organisational Management

- Lead the development and execution of SIFI's strategy in alignment with the Board's guidance, with a particular focus on a strategic partner onboarding programme.
- Strengthen SIFI's role and relevance within the blended finance ecosystem.
- Build, mentor, and manage a 5-7-person team, ensuring a collaborative, high-performance culture.
- Provide oversight of investment-related governance and strategic alignment with the Investment Committee. Oversee monitoring, evaluation, and learning to ensure results-oriented delivery.
- Holistic approach to fundraising and program management with effective capacity management.

2) Stakeholder engagement and collaboration

- Serve as the primary representative to government donors, philanthropic foundations, family offices and private-sector partners with a view to significantly increase the range of non-government donors and strategic partners.
- Provide access to executive-level decision makers in the philanthropic ecosystem.
- Define targets for stakeholder engagement to expand the membership, build partnerships with donors, public and private sector stakeholders, and proactively raise funding opportunities.
- Provide executive-level coordination of the Advisory Council, leveraging its expertise, networks, and convening power to support partnerships, visibility, and fundraising.
- Represent the organisation in high-level events and communicate SIFI to the public and its stakeholders and proactively engage with the impact investing and development finance community based on best practice.

3) Governance and Board relations

- Work closely with the Board to ensure effective governance, strategic alignment, and timely decision-making.
- Prepare clear, data-driven reports and recommendations for Board meetings.
- Ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.

4) Financial Management & Fundraising

- Develop and manage the annual budget, ensuring sound financial stewardship, risk management, and fiscal accountability.
- Drive fundraising strategies, including grants, concessional instruments, institutional partnerships, and strategic collaborations.
- Oversee financial reporting to funders and the Board, ensuring transparency and accuracy.

5) Program and impact oversight

- Ensure high-quality delivery of the organisation's programmes and impact.
- Maintain a strong understanding of market trends, financing mechanisms, and policy developments to inform strategic decisions.
- Promote innovation and continuous improvement in the organisation's offerings.

Candidate Profile

Experience

- 10-15+ years of progressive leadership experience at the intersection of sustainability, development, and finance, including, impact investing, or related fields, with a focus on emerging and developing economies.
- Proven track record leading teams and organisations (experience managing small teams or start-up environments is a strong asset).
- Demonstrated success engaging with public-sector donors, philanthropic organisations, and/or multilateral institutions.
- Experience with institutional fundraising, donor relations, or grant management.
- Demonstrated experience in public speaking and external representation at conferences, high-level events, panels, and in media or thought leadership.
- History of success working with Boards of Directors.
- Background in financial management and program oversight is desirable.

Skills and competencies

- Strategic thinker with the ability to translate vision into execution.
- Strong relationship-building, and diplomatic skills with high-level stakeholders.
- Significant successful experience of fundraising from public and private stakeholders.
- Excellent communication skills: written, oral, and public speaking.
- Strong understanding of various impact investing and blended finance instruments, including grants, first-loss guarantees, equity, etc.
- Ability to lead, motivate, and develop a small, mission-driven team.
- High integrity and commitment to transparency, equity, and accountability.

Personal qualities

- Mission-driven and passionate about advancing the achievement of the SDGs.
- Collaborative, empathetic leadership style.
- Entrepreneurial mindset – comfortable with growth, change, and limited resources.
- Resilient, adaptable, and capable of operating in a dynamic, multi-stakeholder environment.

Qualifications

- Higher education qualification in economics, development finance, business administration, or a comparable field.
- Strong networks of industry leaders within the impact investing and development finance space.
- Strong knowledge of emerging and developing economy contexts and operating environments.
- Have or be able to secure permission to live and work in Switzerland; neither visa sponsorship nor a relocation package will be offered.
- Formal training or dedicated professional development in people management and leadership is highly desirable.
- Languages: excellent written and spoken working language proficiency in English. Good working language proficiency in German or French is highly desirable.

This position is based in Switzerland and involves regular domestic and international travel (approximately 20%, arranged as flexibly as possible). The majority of the team is based in Geneva, where the successful candidate is

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expected to spend around 50% of their time. Candidates must hold, or be eligible to obtain, the appropriate authorisation to live and work in Switzerland.

SIFI has retained Russell Reynolds Associates to advise on this appointment. To apply, please send your written application, including a letter of motivation, with the reference "CEO SIFI" to Russell Reynolds Associates, responses@russellreynolds.com.