Executive Brief
African Economic Research Consortium (AERC)
Director of Training
July 2020
About SRI Executive

SRI Executive is a leading executive search and strategy consultancy working with organisations in the international development, sustainability, development finance and global health sectors. For over 20 years we have continually championed organisations who have committed themselves to making a lasting difference across the world. As specialists in identifying, assessing and securing exceptional high-level executives and having partnered with over 200 organisations placing leaders in 63 different countries, we not only understand the culture, values and ethos of the humanitarian and not-for-profit sector landscape, but also the specific requirements associated with it.

SRI Executive has been entrusted by our client, African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) to support the executive search of an exceptional leader for the position of Director of Training.

SRI Executive is exclusively retained by African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) to undertake this assignment.

About the AERC

Founded in 1988, the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) is a premier capacity building institution dedicated to the advancement of research and training to inform economic policy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ranked as one of the top 30 International Development Think Tanks in 2013, the AERC is an organisation which has become the epitome of excellence in economic policy-oriented research and collaborative training. Believing that sustained economic development can only be achieved through well-informed policy-relevant research and the effective management of the economy, the AERC work to provide Sub-Saharan Africa with the resources they need, to drive economic change at both a local and global level, across the continent.

With a programme which seeks to build on the ground capability through economic policy research, postgraduate training and policy outreach across a network of researchers, universities and policy makers within Africa and beyond, the AERC work to strengthen local capacity by providing African economies with the analysis they need to make a lasting difference within the country. As a diverse, distinct and integrated knowledge network, the AERC has provided Sub-Saharan Africa with a data system which is informative, enlightening and integral to the design and implementation of sound economic policies within the region.

You can find further details on AERC and their programs on the website https://aercafrica.org/.
Director of Training Role Profile

The Director of Training provides the overall intellectual leadership and guidance and strategic oversight for the Training Programme and ensures that the training programmes of the Consortium are of the highest quality and relevance to the economic and policy needs of Africa. In this respect, the Director must actively manage the capacity-building training programmes at the Masters’ and Doctoral levels in economics and applied and agricultural economics.

The Director also contributes to the development and implementation of the resource mobilization strategy with reference to the Consortium’s Training programmes and collaborates with the Resource Mobilization and Donor Relations Unit to ensure that donor monitoring and evaluation requirements are met. The Director is also responsible for ensuring all other reporting requirements for the Research activities. S/he is a member of the Senior Management Team and supports the Executive Director in promoting teamwork and collaboration, performance standards, and a value for money culture across the Secretariat.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Director of Training will have the following key responsibilities:

1. Training Programme Management

   • Providing leadership in the strategic development of the Training Programme through active management of the Collaborative Masters and PhD Programmes in Economics (CMAP & CPP) and Collaborative Masters in Applied & Agricultural Economics Programme (CMAAE) activities, ensuring that they respond to the longer term needs of Sub Saharan Africa’s needs for research, teaching and economic management and that the training provided is of the highest standards. This role is at the center of creating and providing frontier training with high quality outcomes.

   • Initiating, innovating, and developing activities aimed at improving the scope and quality of training such as workshops and other programmes for trainees and capacity building for their institutions, considering the needs of under-represented groups and countries. The holder should develop, review, and revise the curricular of graduate training which impacts the graduates who go through the programme in Africa.

   • Monitoring changes in the structure, content and financing of higher education in Sub Saharan Africa with particular reference to their possible impact on training in economics at the graduate and undergraduate levels, with a view to introducing new modalities to the training programmes.

   • Provides economics/agricultural economics content that is dynamic and innovative and addresses the changing landscape taking place globally.

   • As part of strategic planning, monitors the labor market for graduate African economists as part of continuously updating the training programmes to help retain graduates within the region in positions that make effective use of their professional skills and knowledge.

   • Continuously provide online training curricular for core and elective courses to be used across the network universities and the academic infrastructure required.
• Overseeing the organization of core training sessions and meetings, including the operation of the Joint Facility for Electives.

• Ensuring that reports on activities are provided to the AERC Board, Funders, Programme Committee, the Academic Board and management as required.

2. Liaison with AERC network and training institutions

• Networking with senior African and non-African researchers and academics as well as with relevant Pan-African and international institutions, to ensure continued relevance of training activities and a high profile for the Consortium.

• Enhancing collaboration among African institutions and scholars engaged in research and training in economics. Establishing and actively maintaining close links with universities both to promote economics training within their structures and to promote research into issues bearing on economic development in Sub Saharan Africa.

• Liaising closely with parallel graduate training programmes for Nigeria and for Francophone Africa.

• Keeping the AERC Programme Committee and its Subcommittee on Training fully informed of pertinent issues, provides advice, and facilitates their work, including the review of submissions for institutions support and for institutional attachments for trainees.

3. Fundraising, Management, and Coordination

• Developing fundraising proposals for the Training programme that is targeted to diverse Funders and specified activities in line with the new strategic plan in place.

• Ensuring that the Training Programmes are adequately funded and there is a strong funding pipeline to enable awarding of grants in a timely fashion.

• Contributing to the development and implementation of the resource mobilization strategy with reference to the Consortium’s Training programmes, and collaborating with the Resource Mobilization and Donor Relations Unit to ensure that donor monitoring and evaluation requirements are met and that any indicated changes are implemented. In addition, develops fund raising proposals.

• Overall responsibility for the management of the Training Department, including financial management of activities and generally oversees day to day activities, including the supervision of a small staff team.

• Ensuring that the Training Department serves the Consortium according to established internal and external performance criteria and within a value for money culture.

• Liaising as necessary with the entire Secretariat to ensure the smooth functioning and high performance of AERC, particularly exploiting successful linkages between AERC’s training and research activities.
4. Secondary Responsibilities

- Playing an active part in outreach activities and coordinating with the Communications Department as needed, including on the posting of training information and results on the AERC website.

- Exercising such managerial responsibilities, including performance management of staff in the Training department, administrative back-up and serving as Officer in Charge as may be delegated from time to time by the Executive Director.

- Special training-related projects/program oversight e.g. Short-term training, specialist data bases for training needs such as DAKMAH, Rutgers, IFAD, climate change programme etc.

- Undertake any other duties as directed by the Executive Director.
  - Fellowships development and management
  - Organizational oversight (GMT, Procurement Committee, etc.)

Required Competencies

- Strategic thinking, leadership, and management skills
- Good financial management skills
- Good knowledge of information and communication technology and computerized management systems
- Computer literacy, virtual learning, and virtual networking
- Well-organized and able to multi-task and meet deadlines
- Excellent interpersonal, networking and negotiating skills including diplomacy
- Excellent people management skills
- Excellent presentation skills
- Excellent report writing skills
- Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines
- Excellent judgment in analyzing data and information
- Excellent oral and written communication
- Good leader and team player

Qualifications and Experience

- A PhD in Economics and a track record in economic research reflected in published works as well as experience in graduate training in economics in Africa.
- At least 10 years relevant experience, including management, teaching and training experience at the university level.
- Ability and willingness to travel widely in Africa
- Ability to manage grants and fundraising
- Ability to work in French would be an asset
- Ability to provide cohesive leadership
- Strong passion for training
- Ability to integrate process, innovative and knows the global trend
Terms of Appointment

This is a full-time position with a fixed-term five-year contract subject for renewal. Salary is competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

Nairobi is the capital and the largest city of Kenya. The name comes from the Maasai phrase Enkare Nairobi, which translates to "cool water", a reference to the Nairobi River which flows through the city. The city proper had a population of 3,138,369 in the 2009 census, while the metropolitan area has a population of 6,547,547. The city is popularly referred to as the Green City in the Sun.

Nairobi was founded in 1899 by the colonial authorities in British East Africa, as a rail depot on the Uganda Railway. The town quickly grew to replace Machakos as the capital of Kenya in 1907. After independence in 1963, Nairobi became the capital of the Republic of Kenya. During Kenya's colonial period, the city became a centre for the colony's coffee, tea and sisal industry. The city lies on the River Athi in the southern part of the country and has an elevation of 1,795 metres (5,889 ft) above sea level.

With a population of 3.36 million in 2011, Nairobi is the second-largest city by population in the African Great Lakes region after Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. According to the 2009 census, in the administrative area of Nairobi, 3,138,295 inhabitants lived within 696 km² (269 sq mi). Nairobi is the 10th-largest city in Africa, including the population of its suburbs.
Home to thousands of Kenyan businesses and over 100 major international companies and organisations, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) and the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), Nairobi is an established hub for business and culture. The Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) is one of the largest in Africa and the second-oldest exchange on the continent. It is Africa’s fourth-largest exchange in terms of trading volume, capable of making 10 million trades a day.
Key Steps in the Selection Process

1. If you wish to be considered for this position, please forward a copy of your CV in Microsoft Word format, along with any relevant documentation to Carolina Mallari, at cmallari@sri-executive.com on or before 20 August 2020. All information will be treated in the strictest confidence as we pride ourselves on our professional service. We will revert to you as soon as feasible when we have reviewed your application.

2. During the recruitment process, should you demonstrate sufficient relevant experience, SRI Executive will require your cooperation in completing a Competency Profile. You will also be required to participate in several telephone or Skype screening discussions with the SRI Executive team to ensure there is a clear understanding of the Terms of Reference and to ascertain if there is the appropriate “fit” (technical and behavioural) for you and AERC.

3. Based on the screening discussions, SRI Executive will provide a shortlist of recommended candidates to the AERC for further review. Suitable candidates to take forward for first round interview will then be selected by the Search Panel. SRI Executive will contact suitable candidates and arrange interviews. First round interviews will be conducted by video-conference.

4. Based on the outcome of first round interview, successful candidates will be invited to participate in a face-to-face interview at AERC office in Nairobi, Kenya. Please note a meeting with SRI Executive representatives may be required prior to this. You may be asked the terms and conditions that you would require for an offer to be acceptable to you.

5. The interviews of the shortlisted candidates will be held by the Selection Panel of the AERC.

6. Please be aware that this appointment will require numerous references on a professional and character level. These will only be at a suitable juncture (agreeable to both parties as suitability for the role is established) and other reviews to ensure all parties are protected and represented accurately.

7. Please note that the successful candidate will be required to furnish us with original copies of their qualifications.

8. After you meet with AERC, we will advise you of their decision and provide feedback. At the selection stage should you be the preferred final candidate, our client will likely extend to you a letter of intention to offer and that the offer will be subject to a reference from your current employer.

* Please note that this process may be subject to some change.

Privacy Policy

Your privacy is important to us. You can view SRI Executive’s Privacy Policy here. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.