



## **Position Description**

**The Sustainability Institute  
Executive Director**

### **Organization**

An overarching challenge of our age is to develop sustainable systems that improve and maintain the health and quality of life. Developing and fostering these systems is the mission of the Sustainability Institute (SI), founded in 1996 by the late Donella (Dana) Meadows. We conduct research to identify the principles and mechanisms necessary for sustainable solutions. We use systems thinking principles and system dynamics modeling to identify leverage points in human and natural systems and to design interventions that produce positive effects. Because human interactions and relationships are critical for healthy systems, we apply principles of organizational learning. We seek solutions that embrace, maintain and expand diversity and equity, including inter-generational equity. Through writing, speaking and mentoring, we work to influence mindsets in a way that will promote effective change. Through consulting, coordination and collaboration, we build individual and organizational capacity to analyze, understand and manage complex environmental, social and economic systems.

Current projects are centered primarily in the practice areas of climate change, food production, poverty reduction and chronic illnesses. The work is carried out in a variety of ways including:

- Inspiring, informing and empowering individual, organizational and societal action;
- Convening diverse groups of stakeholders to develop sustainable systems;
- Building leadership capacities in sustainability professionals and others who directly impact sustainability;
- Developing and sharing tools, training, and publications on sustainability.

The SI has a staff of twelve, an active seven-member board, and an annual operating budget of approximately \$2 million. Current sources of funding include foundation grants, individual and organizational contributions, and fee for service consulting. SI operates out of an energy efficient, renovated 1950s farmhouse in Hartland, Vermont.

For more information, please visit <http://www.sustainabilityinstitute.org>

### **Position**

Over the past year, the staff and board of the SI have engaged in comprehensive self-analysis and review. The Executive Director position has been defined based on that review. We have analyzed our structure and operation, and how they serve our mission. We concluded that we could be more effective with appropriate changes. We are restructuring, drafting a new organizational profile, and developing and implementing integrated policies and procedures for human resources and finances. We have made strong, explicit commitments to an internal culture of respectful collegiality and accountability. Our new Executive Director will provide leadership in a strong organization that is committed to evolving in response to our own experience, as well as to the challenges of a complex and rapidly changing world.

## Responsibilities

- Lead the Institute in a comprehensive strategic planning process and ongoing implementation and evaluation.
- Integrate projects and programs-- guided by our vision, to accomplish our mission.
- Foster a rigorous, respectful, collaborative working culture, with effective communication and outreach.
- Enhance the capability of staff through team-building, evaluation based on clear expectations, and collaborative decision-making.
- Ensure greater awareness of the Institute's work through a comprehensive, communications strategy reaching decision makers, opinion leaders and the general public.
- Serve as the Institute's lead spokesperson, promoter, advocate and resource developer.
- Identify and create professional opportunities for staff.
- Develop opportunities for effective staff-Board interactions and communication.
- Support and guide the Board in the execution of its organizational and fiscal responsibilities.
- Monitor and maintain smooth functioning of all operations, including finances.
- Assist in design of internal systems and external projects that align with the values, limits and possibilities of a sustainable future.

## Qualifications

- Deep personal commitment to and professional experience in sustainability (which includes social and economic justice as well as environmental stewardship).
- Demonstrated success in management, fundraising and public relations.
- Extensive nonprofit knowledge and experience, highly desirable.
- Collegial leader, experienced in participatory decision making.
- Ability to coach, support, inspire and enable professional staff in individual and team efforts.
- Well-networked. Respected by donors, collaborating leaders and other key stakeholders.
- Working knowledge of systems thinking and organizational learning, highly desirable.
- Excellent written and verbal communication.
- Willingness to take risks, learn, and develop personally and professionally.
- Advanced degree in a relevant field or comparable experience.

Salary commensurate with qualifications. Excellent benefits.

The Sustainability Institute is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages candidates of all backgrounds to apply for this position. It is the goal of SI to seek out and employ well-qualified individuals based on skills, abilities and responsibilities identified in the job description. SI makes a special effort to encourage applications from persons who reflect the diversity of the communities and constituencies with which SI works. SI is committed to creating internally a diversity of race, gender, age, sexual orientation and physical ability.

## To Apply

Please apply online only. Applications can be submitted by following the links from

<http://www.sustainer.org/SInfo/jobs.html#ED> or directly at:

<https://sustainabilityinstitute.wufoo.com/forms/sustainability-institute-employment/>. Applications received by June 22nd will be included in initial review. The position is open until filled.