



**INTERNATIONAL  
CRANE FOUNDATION**



**ENDANGERED  
WILDLIFE TRUST**  
Protecting forever, together.

## **Chief Scientist - Africa**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) is a global conservation organization dedicated to securing all crane species and the ecosystems, watersheds, and flyways they depend on through strong science, community partnership, and practical conservation action across North America, Asia, and Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa, we work to safeguard the four threatened crane species—Wattled, Blue, Grey Crowned, and Black Crowned Cranes—by reducing threats, strengthening sustainable land and water management, and supporting conservation practices that benefit both people and wildlife. Our teams in East and Southern Africa and across the Sahel and Sudan Savanna lead programmes in sustainable water management, protected area stewardship, conservation on agricultural lands, climate adaptation, and conservation-friendly livelihoods, all guided by strong research and monitoring and an adaptive, learning-driven approach. ICF has registered offices in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia; an integrated partnership in South Africa, hosted by the Endangered Wildlife Trust; is expanding work in the Sahel and Sudan Savanna regions; and maintains many strategic partnerships across Africa.

### **PURPOSE OF THE POSITION:**

As ICF's Chief Scientist – Africa, you will serve as the senior scientific leader guiding the strategic use of world-class science to shape conservation impact across the continent. You will champion an evidence-driven culture across all Africa programmes, strengthening the scientific rigour behind our planning, monitoring, and adaptive management systems while empowering country teams to apply effective, field-tested, robust, and resource-appropriate methods with confidence and independence. Through mentorship, you will cultivate more effective conservation leaders and field practitioners—ensuring that research and monitoring are designed with the best available tools, methods are analytically robust, and data answer the mission-critical questions that drive conservation outcomes. You will oversee the development of long-term monitoring indicators and related methods and protocols for cranes, ecosystem health, and community well-being, ensuring that ICF's impact is measurable, credible, and defensible. You will also expand ICF's network of scientific partners, bringing in expertise from conservation biology, ecology, hydrology, social science, and other sectors to elevate our work. By ensuring that our research and monitoring address priority questions that most advance our mission, shape scientific findings into actionable policy guidance, support science-based publications, and shape project design, you will play a central role in driving conservation outcomes that matter—both for cranes and for the people who share their landscapes.

## ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

The position will have the following scope of work and responsibilities:

- **Collaborative leadership on the use of strong science for conservation planning and adaptive management.**  
Lead the integration of rigorous scientific methods across Africa programmes, ensuring high-quality research, monitoring, evidence-based decision-making, and effective use of impact indicators linked to theories of change.
- **Strong mentorship on all aspects of scientific research from design through publication.**  
Guide staff, research associates, and students through all stages of the research process—from concept and design to analysis, publication, and communication—fostering scientific excellence, independence, and a culture of learning.
- **Strengthen long-term indicators for monitoring, evaluation & impact assessment.**  
Develop and refine, in collaboration with ICF's Conservation Adaptive Management and Planning team, Information Science Team, and Africa staff, ecological and social indicators, and ensure robust, scientifically grounded methods for long-term data collection and analysis, including field studies, aerial surveys, and desk-based analyses.
- **Develop and maintain strategic scientific networks**  
Build and leverage a strong network of cross-disciplinary scientific expertise (ecology, hydrology, social science, and others) to enhance project quality, innovation, and impact across the Africa Programme.
- **Prioritizing research to further our mission in Africa.**  
Work closely with country leaders and staff to ensure the most important research questions necessary to guide programme focus, practice evidence-based adaptive management, and achieve the impact we seek are understood and prioritized.

## ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Convey knowledge into policy and action.**  
Guide the interpretation of scientific results to facilitate effective adaptive management, policy development, and stakeholder communication.
- **Support new science-based publications to showcase ICF and partner work.**  
Explore potential for new ICF publications that capture our long-term engagement, experience, and expertise related to cranes, wetlands, climate change, water, ecological management, and other relevant topics.
- **Fundraising & Proposal Development**  
Review the scientific component of funding proposals to ensure sound science in design, methodologies and measurable outcomes.

## REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS:

- A PhD (or equivalent experience) in a relevant field (e.g., ecology, conservation science, hydrology, environmental or social science, natural resources, climate change).
- A proven track record of at least 10 years leading applied, mission-driven research and conservation programmes, preferably in Africa.
- Strong peer-reviewed publication record, policy briefs/technical reports, and evidence of influencing conservation practice or policy.

- Multi-country, multi-partner experience, with proven success operating across diverse contexts.
- Demonstrated ability to mentor staff, research associates, and students in the full process of research and monitoring, including design, field data collection, data analysis, and publication, and communicating results, building independence and excellence.
- Expertise in applied conservation science, monitoring, and adaptive management, including the design and use of robust ecological and social indicators; long-term data collection systems (e.g., field studies, aerial surveys, desk-based analyses); and strong quantitative, analytical, and geospatial skills to support evidence-based decision-making across diverse African landscapes.
- Broad interdisciplinary grounding across ecology, hydrology, social science, and climate-related fields, with the ability to integrate multiple scientific disciplines and traditional knowledge, ensure methodological rigour, oversee high-quality research design and analysis, and guide teams in producing credible, policy-relevant science.
- Ability to build/leverage cross-disciplinary expert networks (universities, think tanks, centres of excellence) to ensure that all aspects of our work are covered, and for innovation and credibility.
- Applied experience with field logistics, permitting, biosecurity, data sovereignty, and research ethics.

#### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Confidence in and ability to travel extensively across Africa, and occasionally to the ICF Headquarters in the USA.
- Understanding of safeguarding, safety, and security protocols, and duty-of-care standards for field teams.
- Familiarity with FPIC, participatory methods, gender and social inclusion, and co-production of knowledge.
- Competency or working knowledge in one or more of these areas is an asset: water resources, catchment management, rangelands/agriculture interfaces, and climate-resilience programming.
- Evidence of shaping **regional or national policy** or contributing to international conventions/technical working groups.

#### **CORE COMPETENCIES:**

- Excellent communication skills for both technical and non-technical audiences
- Collaborative
- Resilient and adaptive, comfortable working in complex, resource-constrained settings
- Systems thinker with pragmatic execution
- Ability to build trust and collaboration across diverse cultures and stakeholders

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT AND PHYSICAL ABILITIES:**

This position may be based within one of the countries where ICF operates, namely Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa (with the Endangered Wildlife Trust, under the partnership between the International Crane Foundation and Endangered Wildlife Trust), Uganda, the United States of America, or Zambia. The position will operate out of one of our offices (if the location allows) or, alternatively, from a home office. If a home office is to be used, the office must have a clearly defined area that provides a quiet, uninterrupted working space, with strong, reliable Wi-Fi and cell phone connectivity, and reasonable access to an international airport.

This position requires extensive, regular travel in Africa (approximately 3 months per year).

The physical abilities described below are necessary for the employee to perform the essential functions of this position. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- Ability to operate a computer and phones.
- Ability to communicate with a wide diversity of audiences, including staff, Directors, partners, donors, and governments, including one-on-one communications and small and large group meetings.
- Ability to travel and base outside the home (internationally and regionally) for extended periods of time as necessary to fulfill the duties of this position.
- Ability to work outdoors, including field project sites in remote areas.
- Ability to work across multiple time zones.

We are an equal opportunity employer. Qualified candidates should submit a CV, daytime telephone contact, email address, names and addresses of three referees, and a cover letter explaining how their experience will contribute to the requirements of the position, as one PDF file.

Applicants are requested to submit a CV and a detailed cover letter motivation as to how and why they would be the best possible candidate for this position. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted within 20 days of the closing date. The EWT reserves the right not to make an appointment. All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence. **Closing date for applications 15 February 2026.** To apply please e-mail your CV and a detailed motivation letter to [Application link](#). Applications, and any applicants who will not have heard from the International Crane Foundation **by 5 March 2026**, should consider their application unsuccessful.