



# Appointment of Director, Environment Programme

Candidate Brochure

April 2026



AMERICAS ASIA PACIFIC EMEA

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a dense, lush green forest. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, contrasting with the deep green of the trees. The river flows from the top of the frame towards the bottom, curving slightly to the right. The forest is thick and covers both banks of the river.

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# About us

**Through our grant-making, we contribute to a safer, fairer, and more sustainable world.**

Oak Foundation was formally established in 1983. Early grants were made in Denmark to organisations supporting single mothers and torture victims, and in Zimbabwe to groups supporting vulnerable children and families, primarily at community levels. Grants continued to be made annually in several countries until a new phase began in the early 1990s, when annual grant-making increased, and staff were hired to run substantive programmes.

Since then, Oak has been growing steadily and today we have eight global programmes and two country programmes. Our main programmes are: Housing and Homelessness, International Human Rights, Issues Affecting Women, Prevent Child Sexual Abuse, Learning Differences, Environment, Global Climate Initiatives, and Special Interest. Our country programmes are Oak Foundation Denmark and the Zimbabwe Programme.

Oak Foundation has its main administrative office in Geneva, Switzerland and a presence in four other countries: Denmark, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Zimbabwe.

You can find more information about our programmes and our values on our [website](#).

## Our values

### **Help people and communities to thrive**

We are dedicated to supporting organisations to help people and communities thrive in just societies, where everyone is safe and has the opportunity to succeed. This also includes safeguarding our natural environment for future generations. We trust our partners and understand that positive change requires time and sustained effort.

### **Respect and acknowledge the contribution of others**

As a grant maker, we are but a small part of the changes we seek. Our role is to support others to make the world a safer, fairer, and more sustainable place to live. We take pride in our partners' achievements and are honoured to support their efforts.

### **Achieve high impact**

We are a non-partisan foundation. We support civil society as a pillar of democracy. We believe in the power of collective action in achieving ambitious goals. We believe the best grant-making reflects both careful due diligence and a willingness to take risk. We support our partner's capacity to assess and measure progress. We invest in visionary leadership and provide resources to strengthen civil society organisations.

### **Learn continuously from both success and failure**

We seek to build honest relationships with partners in which both success and failure offer opportunities for learning. We strive to be respectful listeners and responsive to change, unexpected consequences, and external developments that require shifts in strategy and expectations. We welcome feedback and believe learning should improve grant-making in real time.

### **Be authentic**

We strive to stay true to our values and our mission in all that we do. We support, learn from, and appreciate what each person brings to our work. We are a united team – across programmes, functions, and offices – together contributing to our common goals

# Environment Programme

## Safeguarding our future by restoring our connection to nature

The Environment Programme makes grants that focus on safeguarding our future by restoring our connection to nature.

The Environment Programme has three sub-programmes: Marine Food Systems and Livelihoods, Nature and People, and Regenerative Landscapes. We take a systems change approach by aiming to address the sources of the challenges we face as a society to improve the health and strength of communities and our natural environment. This approach allows us to see inter-connections and envision solutions across sectors to achieve multiple social and biodiversity benefits. In all three sub-programmes, we place people and communities at the heart of our grant-making. We value innovation and collaboration in our commitment to safeguarding our natural environment for future generations.

We support efforts in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, especially if there is a regional or global impact.

## Marine food systems and livelihoods

**Creating a thriving and sustainable future for our oceans and the communities that depend on them.**

We support efforts that protect the food security of coastal and Indigenous communities while ensuring the health of marine ecosystems. This includes enhancing the governance of small-scale fisheries, building resilience to climate change, empowering communities, conserving fish stocks and habitats, and increasing transparency and labour rights in fisheries.

## Nature and people

**Promoting the coexistence and wellbeing of people and the rich biodiversity where they live.**

We support efforts that promote a “living landscapes” approach that safeguards biodiversity while considering the livelihoods and wellbeing of people and communities. We also support efforts that protect wildlife from illegal trade and ensure its safe and sustainable future.

## Regenerative landscapes

**Envisioning a world in which degraded landscapes and ecosystems are restored for the benefit of both people and wildlife.**

We support efforts that focus on: regenerative agriculture (i.e., promoting a farming system that’s good for people and good for nature); and rewilding (i.e., restoring land and biodiverse spaces that have been modified by human activities). We focus on buffer zones outside protected land and areas that include communal lands in Southern Africa.

You can read more about our sub-programme areas by visiting <https://oakfnd.org/programmes/environment/>



# Role Description

Based in the Foundation's Geneva office, the Director is responsible for the overall leadership of the Environment (EP) Programme portfolio and the management of a team of five staff. (We expect to hire two additional programme officers in the next twelve months). Grant-making in 2026 totaled USD 32 million. The Director reports to the President and implements the grant-making aspirations of three Trustees.

# Main Responsibilities

## Strategy Development

The Director is responsible for ensuring that the programme strategy continues to evolve by:

- Planning annually the implementation of the strategy;
- Initiating and encouraging strategic thinking in the team, with Oak's President and with the lead Trustees, and to identify and develop opportunities;
- Identifying emerging issues or challenges to be addressed in the context of a broad programme agenda;
- Creating the space for the team to develop their thinking and expertise on new issues and approaches.

## Grant Management

- Under the overall direction of lead Trustees and President, managing the grant portfolio, providing technical input and overseeing budget allocation across the Programme for final sign-off by the Board;
- Managing field building activities including network development, funder relationships, convenings, and collaborative projects;
- Overseeing monitoring, evaluation, and learning;
- Supporting the team in negotiating major and innovative grants, including negotiations with other private and public funding partners;
- Reporting to the Advisory Panel on the Programme's outputs and budgeting.

## Team Management

- Leading the EP team with a collaborative, supportive, and empathetic leadership style able to achieve and maintain clarity, performance, and decision-making;
- Fostering a collegiate culture where team members share targets and responsibilities;
- Managing team targets and deadlines whilst also supporting individuals to take responsibility for the part that they play in achieving these;
- Providing opportunities for each team member to participate in Oak wide working and grant-making groups.

## Relationships and Communication

- Forging, managing, and negotiating excellent relationships with grantees, Trustees, colleagues, peer organisations and other stakeholders;
- Representing the EP programme and the Oak Foundation externally and contribute to thought leadership.





# Person Specification

## Skills and experience required

- At least 15 years experience in the environment sector, and expertise and networks in these sectors.
- Demonstrated ability to manage and motivate a team of senior-level, diverse, international professionals.
- Ability to represent the EP Programme and Oak Foundation with clarity and impact to a range of stakeholders.
- Experience working in diverse geographies, and diverse experience in working with philanthropic, corporate, financial and multilateral sectors would be valuable.
- Advanced research and analytical skills and ideally an understanding of evaluation techniques and principles.
- Excellent relationship-building and negotiation skills, and ability to engage internal and external stakeholders.
- Understanding of non-profit financial reporting, budgeting, and organisational strategy.
- Strong critical thinking skills and ability to analyse information from a variety of sources including potential and current grantees, researchers, and the media.
- Excellent written and oral English communication skills, fluency in another language is preferred.

## Qualities and values

- Humility, tact, maturity, a sense of humour and a deep commitment to Oak's organisational values.
- Sensitivity to the relationships between funder and recipient, and the ability and willingness to listen and learn from partners.
- Deep commitment to continuous leading and recognising the contributions of others.
- Willingness to travel (approx. 20-25 per cent, including multiple international trips each year).

# How to apply

Oak Foundation will be supported in this appointment process by the Executive Search Firm Perrett Laver in partnership with Alec Allen.

Completed applications or any queries on this role should be sent to [applications@oak-foundation.com](mailto:applications@oak-foundation.com). Please state that your application or query is for the Director, Environment Programme role in the subject line of your email and kindly quote reference **8435**.

The closing date for applications is **10:00am CET on Sunday 14th June 2026**.

EU and non-EU candidates are eligible to apply.

The role will be based in Oak Foundation's Geneva office and the salary is competitive with the seniority of the appointment.

Candidates must be a resident in Switzerland at the time of employment due to cross-border regulatory requirements and travel obligations.

Applications should consist of a full curriculum vitae detailing professional qualifications and experience, accompanied by a covering letter describing how candidates meet the person specification outlined in the document, why the appointment is of interest, and what they believe they can bring to the role.

Perrett Laver in partnership with Alec Allen will support the selection committee in the discharge of its duties, both to assist in the assessment of the candidates against the requirements of the role and to identify the widest possible field of qualified candidates.

## Data Protection

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to Perrett Laver and we take this responsibility very seriously. Any information obtained by our trading divisions is held and processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. The data you provide us with is securely stored on our computerised database and transferred to our clients for the purposes of presenting you as a candidate and/or considering your suitability for a role you have registered interest in.

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