

Operations and Continuous Improvement Manager

Summary of the Organization

Malnutrition is one of the greatest barriers to the world's poorest people escaping poverty. The 900 million people in Africa and Central America who eat corn daily are some of the most affected, with nearly half of Guatemala's children suffering from stunted growth. Semilla Nueva launched the world's first social enterprise dedicated to the development, production, and sale of more nutritious, biofortified corn seed directly to small farming families. Farmers buying our seed increase their yields and incomes, while improving the diets of hundreds of thousands— and someday millions—of the world's poorest consumers. In 2022, Semilla Nueva reached over 20,000 families, feeding nearly 500,000 people in Guatemala in collaboration with other seed companies and the Guatemalan government. We've launched expansion efforts in Honduras and El Salvador and are developing seeds for Africa.

Semilla Nueva works with some of the world's leading scientists at organizations such as CIMMYT, HarvestPlus, INCAP, and universities like Purdue, Cornell, Tufts, and Harvard. Our donors include some of the most prestigious in impact philanthropy, including Cartier Philanthropy, Mulago and the U.S. Government. Our seeds are based on conventional breeding (non-GMO), although we are not opposed to well-tested biotechnology.

Summary of the position

The Operations and Continuous Improvement Manager under the leadership of the Senior Operations Director, will directly lead all operational and seed production processes for Semilla Nueva. The position will also be responsible for creating and implementing the systems, processes, and reporting that will generate improvements for our commercial, own seed production, third party seed grower model, marketing, international expansion and monitoring and evaluation key activities.

The successful candidate will be a hands-on and participative manager. The ideal candidate will have experience implementing systems and quality control mechanisms using methodologies such as ISO or lean six sigma. He or she will have to effectively work with all the operations team members to ensure proper alignment, standardization, planning, measurement while instilling a culture of change and trust to achieve better results across the department.

The Operations and Continuous Improvement Manager will play a critical role in partnering with the senior leadership team in strategic decision making and operations as Semilla Nueva continues to expand its commercial footprint, increases its third party seed grower model, multiplies production areas and volume, expands into El Salvador and Honduras, launches ambitious marketing initiatives, and increases its operational capacity for our M&E activities. The position will also require collaboration across our other functional areas: R&D, Development, Finance, Administration and Human Resources. The candidate will ideally be based in Guatemala City and will require travel throughout Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras with occasional international travel abroad.

Specific Tasks

- **General**
 - Collaborating with relevant team leads, create planning processes, protocols, workflows and data collection tools for seed promotion, seed production, marketing and impact evaluation
 - Oversee data collection and results management through farmer, agrodealer, seed grower, third party seed grower field visits and data evaluation
 - Create data visualization of results and create action plans based on insights from data analysis for the operations department
 - Uses root cause analysis to solve problems and create improvement opportunities for all for the operations department
 - Create and maintain updated standard operating procedures for key activities in operations department
 - Work with operations and M&E teams to improve plans and processes in real time
 - Create systems and reporting procedures on process, execution, and indicators for USAID related projects

- **Internal Seed Production, Third Party Seed Growers**
 - Create and maintain production dashboards for internal and third party growers
 - Create, maintain and assure updated protocols for seed production process
 - Create and implement quality assurance and audit formats for seed growers and seed processors
 - Create and implement formal feedback channels to monitor and correct issues with seed growers
 - Interact with growers to maintain positive and responsive relationships and ensure rapid corrective actions through dynamic leadership
 - Lead development projects and ideas to innovate in the production process

- **Sales and Marketing**
 - Establish and maintain formal feedback channels for farmers and seed distributors to contact Semilla Nueva, allowing proper tracking and the creation of action plans to address areas of opportunity the organization has
 - Establish, maintain, and create open reporting systems for our sales activities
 - Create an open reporting mechanism to monitor and evaluate agrodealer visits
 - Create an open reporting mechanism to monitor and evaluate field day execution and farmer attendance (segmentation)
 - Manage the implementation and communication process related to the development of new hybrids, studies and/or strategic decisions with strong implications in the overall operation of the organization

- **Logistics and Distribution**
 - Create, implement, and assure the execution of the systems for proper inventory management, cost control and allocations, in time and correct deliveries to our customers
 - Create, implement, and assure the quality control systems that provide a high quality (size, germination) seed that meets customers expectations and all government regulations

- **International Expansion**
 - Create and maintain the systems and reporting that allow to track and keep progress of key agreements and activities to operate and/or sell in countries identified for expansion
- **Monitoring & Evaluation**
 - Create the interdepartmental knowledge sharing to establish, maintain, and update protocols, processes, quality standards, and reporting for all monitoring and evaluation activities related to farmers, agro dealers, and any other area the operations team is responsible for executing
- **Management and Leadership**
 - People and resources management: ability to directly execute, coordinate, manage, and prioritize individual and team workload to meet objectives and timelines
 - Supervise the implementation of trainings related to new or updated systems, protocols and reporting mechanisms for the organization
- **Reporting**
 - Responsible for accurate and timely reporting and analysis of department performance, based on indicator and key deliverable indicators
 - Prepare written reports for management recapping quality issues, trends, corrective actions, and preventive measures taken
 - Conduct regular visits to farm operations to follow up on proper SOP´s procedures execution and submit any related and critical report
 - Create and maintain reporting templates, tools, and information at all times
 - Participate in the development of bi-annual reports to all donors
 - Participate and support in any individual donor reporting requirements

Qualifications

There are innumerable ways to learn, grow, and excel professionally. We respect this when we review applications and take a broad look at the experience of each applicant. We want to get to know you and the unique strengths you will bring to the work. This said, we are most likely to be interested in your candidacy if you can demonstrate the majority of the qualifications and experiences listed below.

Required:

- Degree in agriculture, agronomy or related field
- Advanced degree, certification or masters in operations management or related field
- Experience in data collection, management, interpretation, and visualization
- Experience in agriculture project planning, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation
- At least 10+ years of overall professional experience; ideally 5+ years in continuous improvement, innovation and/or agriculture operations management experience
- Ability to integrate different and complex department processes and streamline, simplify and improve results through improved monitoring, measurement and design iteration
- A sharp eye and instinct for spotting bottlenecks and inefficiencies in key processes
- A passion for change and the ability to create better systems and outcomes through constant

evolution and trial and error

- Comfortable working in a constantly changing environment
- A successful track record in setting priorities; keen analytic, organization and problem solving skills which support and enable sound decision making
- Excellent communication and relationship building skills with an ability to prioritize, negotiate, and work with a variety of internal and external stakeholders
- Ability to multitask and track different projects and initiatives until completion
- Excellent organizational skills, ability to work independently as well as in a team environment, assess priorities using attention to detailed processes
- Takes initiative and is self-motivated, resourceful, detail-oriented, dependable, and resilient
- Proficient in use of Google suite and data visualization software
- Must be proficient in spoken, written, and reading business English and Spanish
- Seed industry experience
- Proven quality control skills and ability to create systems that measure KPIs that allow continuous process improvement
- Experience working with methodologies such as ISO, lean six sigma or project management certification
- Genuine connection to Semilla Nueva's mission through professional, volunteer, or lived experience with anti-poverty, nutrition, or public policy work

Desired:

- Agriculture work experience in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras

Salary: Commensurate with experience

Before applying, please review our website, blog, and Annual Report which are found at www.semillanueva.org

To apply please email us your CV to trabajo@semillanueva.org with the subject line "Operations and Continuous Improvement Manager – your name"

Semilla Nueva is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to sustaining a diverse community with a work environment that is welcoming, respectful, and encouraging to all. We foster a culture of inclusion that celebrates and cultivates diversity along multiple dimensions, including race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, out of home care, age, national origin, socioeconomic status, religion, ability, culture, and experience.