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Director of Strategy and Growth

New Seed is hiring a Director of Strategy and Growth to support the design, partnerships, and fundraising that will let us move from nourishing 2M people in 2026 to 1B by 2045. New Seed is working to institutionalize government support for our programs in Central America, expanding to four countries in Africa, and working with the world's biggest nonprofit seed bank to develop the gene-editing approach to nutritious seeds worldwide. We're looking for a leader to represent the CEO and leadership team in several parts of this growth. The Director will report to the CEO, and the position is designed with a promotion path to Managing Director within two to three years, depending on performance.

About New Seed

New Seed develops maize seeds that are proven to decrease malnutrition, improve farmer income, and withstand climate shocks. We take high-yielding, climate-resilient hybrids from CIMMYT, national research programs, and seed companies, breed them conventionally (they are not GMO) to contain more zinc, iron, and quality protein, and work with seed companies, governments, and NGOs to make them affordable for the farmers who need them most. In 2025, 11 seed companies produced our seeds and 52,331 farmers used them in Guatemala and El Salvador. Those farmers grew enough maize to improve the nutrition of 1.15 million people. The Guatemalan government now pays 90% of the subsidy cost from its national budget. Our annual reports, including our M&E data and the mistakes we made each year, are at www.newseed.org. Our expansion plan, with detailed cost-effectiveness analyses, is here.

The job

At New Seed, expansion, strategy, and fundraising are part of the same job. Our programs are designed in conversations with our funders and partnering scientists. Our team works out RCT designs with the foundations that pay for the studies. New program ideas take shape between government ministries, our operations and M&E teams, and the donors who will fund them at scale. Right now, our CEO is the only person who consistently sits in the middle of these conversations and understands all sides. We are hiring a Director of Strategy and Growth to become the second.

What you will help us build

Much of this job is building strategy that does not exist yet. These are some of the questions we are working on now. The Director will lead much of the thinking on them, with our scientific, government, and donor partners.

Gene editing. Our gene-editing research started in maize. What is the most strategic way to expand into wheat and rice? What is the fastest route to improving the nutrition of 1-2 billion people? Which new nutrients should we work on? And with wheat and rice, does it make sense to think about how the same traits could also make an impact in wealthier countries?

Africa. We are building our program in Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. What are the right tactics in each of the four countries: which partners, which government programs, and who are the key people to hire?

Central America. In Guatemala and El Salvador, seed supply is no longer our main constraint, and government funding is going well. After reaching adoption levels of 25%+ of Guatemala and El Salvador's farmers (projected in 2028), continued growth will require innovative strategies to further build demand. Should we build projects with PxD, Digital Green, and/or DMI?

What you will do

Synthesize strategy and results. You will work across teams to make sure there is alignment between our strategic plans, our results, partner and funder perspectives, and our leaders' current thinking. Where there is tension, you'll push the leadership team to resolve it. You'll work with funders and partners at critical moments to bring them on board, have them challenge our thinking, and ask for support. The key outputs here are our strategic plans, CEAs, and the large annual report we share.

Build our partnerships. You will complement the relevant team leads as they build our new gene-editing program, expand into Africa, and scale the program in Central America. This will involve deeply understanding our work and participating in the most important meetings with government officials, technical partners, and other organizations.

Fundraise. You will lead our fundraising pipeline, building a team of four engaged in prospecting, cultivation, proposals, and renewals primarily from foundations and major donors. The key deliverables are the pipeline, the proposals and renewals, and the money raised: from about $6M a year today to $10-14M/yr in 2027-9.

Who we are looking for

Our best people share three traits. The first is that they need to understand something before they believe in it, and they are willing to do real work to get there. They question our numbers and our assumptions, and then they read the papers, call the experts, and pull the data to find out if an idea holds up. This is also how they earn credibility with the people we work with. Plant breeders, program officers, and government officials can all tell quickly whether someone understands their world, and they offer far more help to people who do. The second trait is honesty about the limits of what they know. New Seed has built its reputation by being unusually transparent about what has gone wrong, what we have learned, and what we still cannot answer. Our funders support us because of this. This job requires telling funders where our evidence is strong, where it is thin, and what risks we are asking them to take with us, even when a large grant is on the table. The third trait is a deep need to make the world better. Our best people feel they cannot be their truest selves unless their work improves other people's lives, and that need carries them through the parts of this job that are slow, discouraging, or unglamorous. We imagine good candidates would have some combination of:

- You have 10+ years in fundraising, strategy consulting, or nonprofit leadership.
- You have secured or managed seven-figure funding relationships.
- You have gone deep on an unfamiliar technical, regulatory, or political field until experts in that field took you seriously.
- You have stress-tested an idea and then done the work to make it succeed.

Sketches of people we think we might want to hire

- *A founder (or founder type) who built operations and raised money.*
- *A consultant who ended up building longer-term projects.*
- *Someone from sales or business development, with a strong data and stakeholder management bent.*
- *A foundation program officer with a strong entrepreneurial streak.*

Compensation, location, and travel

Salary of $170,000 to $220,000 a year, depending on experience and location, plus a competitive benefits package. Remote, though being based in SF, NY, DC, or Nairobi would be desirable, with travel of about 25% to Guatemala, East Africa, and funder meetings in the United States and Europe.

How to apply

Send your CV and 3-5 bullets on why you might be a good fit to trabajo@semillanueva.org, with "Director of Strategy and Growth" and your last name in the subject line.