



JOB DESCRIPTION

Post title:	Head of Research and Policy
Salary Range:	Competitive
Hours:	5 days (flexible for right candidate)
Contract length	Permanent
Responsible to:	Chief Executive Officer
Location:	UK or similar time zone (remote based)
Date Issued:	N/A
Start date:	March 2025

KEY WORDS: *Research; policy, strategy; monitoring and evaluation; cashmere; sustainability; voluntary certification schemes; supply chains; preferred fibres; fashion and textiles; sustainability leadership; Mongolia; China; sustainable livestock production.*

JOB CONTEXT:

The Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA) is a non-profit international organisation working with the extended cashmere supply chain, from herders to retailers, to promote a global sustainability standard for cashmere. Our vision is a responsible & inclusive global natural fibres sector that safeguards the health and well-being of people, animals and the environment.

Founded in 2015, we are a standard holding and capacity building organisation with offices in both the UK and Mongolia. Our SFA Animal Fibre Standard offers a holistic, evidence-based sustainability standard for cashmere and other animal-based fibres that is both global in focus and locally adaptable.

A unique opportunity has arisen in our UK team for a permanent post in the role of Head of Research and Policy, commencing early March 2025.

Role:

The Head of Research and Policy will work closely with the CEO and other members of the senior leadership team to guide the SFA's strategic direction and implement our 2030 Strategy. Drawing on their in-depth knowledge of rangeland systems, the post holder will be focused on demonstrating impact with a robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework, overseeing an innovative research programme, building relationships with partners and key stakeholders, and providing policy advice and thought leadership on sustainability issues facing animal fibre supply chains.

The Team:

The Head of Research and Policy will report to and be supported by the SFA CEO (his/her line manager). You will be joining our close-knit and remote-based UK team, which is comprised of a Head of Standards, Training & Assurance Manager, Research Manager, Membership & Supply Chain Officer, Marketing & Communications Manager and several contract workers. We work closely with our SFA Mongolia team and our China country-partner, ICCAW.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

The duties of the Head of Research and Policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Undertake and commission research on trends and topics relevant to the SFA
- Write briefings, position papers, reports and submissions to government and other stakeholders
- Write and compile external presentations and provide information for external comms
- Develop and maintain links with members, key stakeholders and partners and represent the SFA as required
- In collaboration with the CEO, help secure funding for innovative research projects from a range of funders
- Assist with the writing and compilation of presentations; gathering and providing information for the website, bulletins and other information dissemination as required.
- Provide advice to senior stakeholders and decision makers.
- Conduct interviews, coordinate meetings, conferences and debates with key stakeholders and decision makers.
- Deliver presentations and speeches on the SFA Mission and 2030 Strategy.
- Monitor relevant policy developments and carry out advocacy activities on strategic priority areas
- Oversee the implementation of the SFA's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework and its ongoing improvement
- Provide thought leadership across our service areas including through articles, blogs, peer-reviewed journals, research reports and other forums.
- Drive increased impact across SFA's work programmes and evidence this through annual reports and publications
- Help position SFA as the global authority for sustainable cashmere

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE:

Required:

- Expertise in rangeland systems, including pastoralism and land degradation
- Demonstratable experience in a senior executive role
- A strong track record of strategic planning and team leadership
- Excellent written and verbal communication; ability to communicate to a wide range of audiences
- Confident in representing the organisation at external events and building strong relationships with partners and stakeholders
- Fluency in English

Desirable:

- Experience working with voluntary certification schemes, ideally in the fashion and textiles sector
- Previous experience working in a non-profit organisation
- Expertise in biodiversity conservation
- Quantitative and qualitative data analysis
- Knowledge of sustainability challenges related to the production of cashmere or other natural fibres
- Established relationships with other leading standard setters, technical experts, rangeland academics and practitioners

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Be educated to post-graduate degree standard or equivalent qualification or experience
- At least 5 years of work experience, ideally 2 years at executive level

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES:

We are seeking candidates who excel at strategic thinking, thrive in the research-practice interface and have a passion for demonstrating impact. You'll enjoy working in a small, fast-paced team environment, where the nature of the work requires dynamic and flexible working. This role will suit candidates who are natural leaders, can think on their feet and have the confidence to communicate our work to our members and stakeholders. Being a small NGO with limited resources, we're looking for people with a critical mind and excellent project management skills who remain calm under pressure, can oversee an ambitious research and policy agenda and keep an eye on the big picture. You'll be passionate about strategy and demonstrating real impact on the ground for livestock herders and the rangelands that support them.

To Apply:

To apply for this role, please send your CV and a cover letter indicating why you would be a good fit for the role to Zara Morris-Trainor at zara.mt@sustainablefibre.org. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. Please note that applications without a cover letter will not be considered.

The SFA is an Equal Opportunity employer. All employment decisions at the SFA are based on organisational needs, job requirements and individual qualifications, without regard to race, colour, religion, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or disability. We will not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on any of these characteristics.