

HEAD OF IMPACT, RESEARCH & POLICY

at the Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA)



Remote (UK)

OVERVIEW

Post Title: Head of Impact, Research & Policy

Salary Range: Competitive

Hours: 5 days/week (*flexible for the right candidate*)

Contract Length: Permanent (*following a 3-month trial period*)

Responsible To: Chief Executive Officer

Location: UK (*remote-based*)

Application Deadline: 01/12/2025

Start Date: ASAP

KEY WORDS: *Rangelands; pastoralism; land degradation; Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL); impact management; research; policy & advocacy; sustainability standards; voluntary certification; animal fibres; cashmere; supply chains; biodiversity; climate & nature outcomes; Theory of Change; ISEAL Impacts Code; data systems; Mongolia; China.*

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 standards-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 Impact, Research & Policy, commencing as soon as possible.

THE ROLE

The Head of Impact, Research & Policy will work closely with the CEO and senior leadership team to shape SFA's strategic direction and deliver our 2040 Strategy. Drawing on deep expertise in rangeland systems, they will strengthen the organisation's evidence base through a robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework, lead an innovative research and innovation programme, and build partnerships that enhance SFA's credibility and influence. The postholder will also provide policy advice and thought leadership on sustainability challenges across animal fibre supply chains. This role is pivotal to realising SFA's 2040 vision—establishing our certification and MEL systems as the global benchmark for natural fibres, delivering verified outcomes for rangeland health, animal welfare, and herder livelihoods.

THE TEAM

The Head of Impact, Research & 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, Standards Manager, Training & Assurance Manager, MEL Managers and Coordinators, Membership & Supply Chain Officer, Marketing & Communications Manager and several contract workers. We work closely with our SFA Mongolia and China office and in-country partners.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

A. Impact, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

- Own the SFA Impact and MEL system, ensuring alignment with the organisation's Theory of Change and recognised good practice for sustainability standards.
- Develop and manage a comprehensive MEL framework and database of indicators/metrics across SFA's work programmes.
- Finalise KPIs, indicators, and sampling strategies for SFA organisational-level KPIs, including assurance.
- Build and maintain a fit-for-purpose data architecture (data model, collection tools, quality assurance, storage, analysis, dashboards, privacy and ethics).
- Commission independent evaluations and impact studies; manage baselines, midlines and endlines across programmes and geographies.
- Establish internal learning cycles, after action reviews, and synthesis processes to inform standards, programme and policy improvements.
- Ensure accurate and timely reporting through annual impact reports, policy briefs, datasets and publications.

B. Research & Policy

- Coordinate the SFA's research programme to support MEL and inform strategy, policy and programme design.
- Develop and deliver a multi-year research agenda on rangeland ecology, pastoral livelihoods, animal welfare, fibre quality, traceability and market incentives.
- Lead/co-author peer-reviewed articles, technical reports, and practice notes; oversee research ethics, data sharing and intellectual property.
- Monitor relevant global and national policy developments on animal fibres, rangeland stewardship, animal welfare and deforestation-free/nature positive supply chains.
- Coordinate advocacy activities on SFA's strategic priority areas and ensure policy coherence across departments.

C. Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and strengthen relationships with members, key stakeholders, donors, universities, and technical partners to co-fund research and impact initiatives.
- In collaboration with the CEO, help secure funding for innovative research projects from a range of funders.
- Cultivate relationships with brands/retailers, producer groups and agencies to drive impact.
- Prepare external presentations and review materials for external communications.

D. Leadership & Management

- Within SFA, leads cross-team alignment on research, impact, and policy to advance SFA's 2040 vision.
- At the sector level, positions SFA as a global thought leader shaping sustainable fibre standards and policy.
- Manage and mentor a small research and MEL team, fostering collaboration, innovation, and professional growth.
- Champion a culture of learning, inclusion, and shared accountability across teams and partners.
- Uphold the highest standards of research ethics, safeguarding, and data protection, managing risks associated with fieldwork.

SKILLS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Required:

- Expertise in rangeland systems, including pastoralism and land degradation.
- Senior-level experience designing and governing MEL/impact systems for sustainability standards or landscape programmes.
- Demonstrated ability to translate evidence into policy and practice.
- Excellent written and verbal communication for technical and public audiences; confident public speaker.
- Track record of partnership building and fundraising for research or evaluation.
- Fluency in English and strong intercultural competence; willingness to travel to rangeland geographies.

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.
- Strong quantitative and qualitative research skills (sampling, causal inference, mixed methods, geospatial/remote sensing, participatory approaches).
- 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 7 years of work experience, ideally 2 years at an executive level.

HOW 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 jobs@sustainablefibre.org with the subject “Vacancy: Head of Impact, Research & Policy”.

Applications must be submitted no later than the 1st of December. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, so early submissions are encouraged.

Please note that applications without a cover letter will not be considered. **STRICTLY NO AGENCIES.**

HIRING STATEMENT

The Sustainable Fibre Alliance is committed to building a diverse and inclusive team. We are committed to attracting, developing and retaining exceptional people, and to creating a work environment that is dynamic, rewarding and enables each of us to realise our potential. Our work environment is safe and inclusive for all employees and partners, respecting the full spectrum of diversity, including race, colour, religious creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, political affiliation, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, and other protected classifications.

Comprehensive onboarding and support during the 3-month probation period.

Please be informed that by applying for this position, you automatically accept our Data Protection Information on processing your personal data.