

CRS JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Chief of Party I – Isidro Director	Reports to: Deputy Regional Director, Programming LACRO
Department: LACRO	Salary Grade: 11
Country/Location: Telecommuter, Central America or US	
Internal Candidature: Click here to apply	External Candidature: Click here to apply

About Isidro

In 2019, CRS launched the pilot *Closing the Opportunity Gap*, to address the lack of financing and credit for the “missing middle” - small and medium sized (SME) producer and agricultural enterprises in Central America. As a result of the preliminary work of the pilot, in late 2020, CRS established the blended finance initiative Isidro which included the registration of a financial vehicle -Isidro Investments LLC- in Maryland. Isidro aims to build the capacity of SMEs, generate rural jobs, raise rural incomes, and bolster community resilience to climate change. This investment initiative has initially targeted business opportunities in Central America with current investments in El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti and Nicaragua, and is expanding to support opportunities in Africa and potentially other regions.

The initiative has identified and strengthened SMEs along agriculture value chains, using a combination of technical support, business development services (BDS) and investment capital. Clients include agricultural SMEs, farmer co-operatives, farmer groups and special attention is given to support youth engagement and land restoration.

Job Summary:

As Director you will provide leadership and overall management of Isidro to reach underserved SMEs with appropriate capital and technical assistance, while also generating a positive impact on livelihoods, rural employment, and land restoration. Isidro has disbursed 7 loans in 4 countries, has 3 companies in the process of diligence, and is constantly seeking to identify new opportunities to provide financing. Your leadership, management and technical knowledge will ensure the delivery of a high-quality design, support the identification of candidate SMEs, drive forward the investment and technical operations of the initiative, and finally, contribute to learning for CRS and the agricultural finance ecosystem.

Roles and Key Responsibilities:

Management and Leadership

- Lead Isidro’s strategic planning and decision-making processes to ensure the initiative’s success, and expansion into other geographies.
- Lead the annual planning and budgeting process for the Isidro initiative, ensuring alignment between the Program Quality department, Charitable Giving, and Regional portions of the budgets.
- Lead ongoing improvements to Isidro’s overall design including its global expansion into new geographies/CRS’ regions.
- Manage Isidro’s pipeline processes in collaboration with Country Programs, Regional staff, PIQA staff, and external partners, to identify, evaluate, and select a diverse pipeline of SME investment opportunities.

- Analyze Isidro's quarterly financial information.
 - Authorize expenses related to investment processes.
 - Authorize transactions.
 - Lead the due diligence process to identify risks in potential client SMEs
 - Final review of investment memorandums and lead the presentation of cases to the investment committee.
 - Request financial approvals from VP Finance for loan disbursements and loans in arrears.
 - Prepare financial reports of the Investment Fund.
- Contribute to CRS' approach to inclusive systems development, enterprise development/private sector engagement, and financial service provision (MF, SME finance, digital finance) and integrate agency learning into Isidro.
 - At the field level, act as the primary point of contact and coordination between CRS regions and country programs and Isidro, which includes the coordination of Isidro's field operations, all the while supporting field level alignment around: market systems development, enterprise development, and the provision of financial services.
 - Support Country Programs with the selection and hiring processes of personnel related to the initiative. Provide coaching support to these personnel.
 - Direct supervision and coaching of Isidro field staff.

Technical Support

- Lead the development, roll-out and continual adaptation of Isidro's pre and post investment technical assistance mechanism for SMEs, in collaboration with the PIQA Agriculture & Livelihoods team and Regional and Country teams.
- In coordination with the PIQA, Private Sector Engagement team, Regional Technical Advisors and CPs, build a roster of internal and external technical service providers and private sector partners.
- Provide capacity strengthening to country teams related to the roll out of Isidro's enterprise strengthening and evaluation tools, such as the agro-enterprise capacity assessment.

Representation & Business Development

- Develop and lead a fundraising strategy and identify potential sources of philanthropic, catalytic, and investment capital for the expansion of technical services and investment activities in interested and affiliated countries while also supporting CRS' related business development processes.
- Engage with Isidro Investments LLC's Board and Investment Committees, presenting portfolio and SME updates, monitoring data, annual budget and plan, strategic advances and any other relevant information.
- Represent CRS in international impact investing and agricultural finance fora as well as relevant trade and agribusiness fairs and conferences.
- Lead technical input for investor materials as requested and engage with Isidro's investors (and potential investors) in virtual and in person setting.
- Represent CRS and coordinate site visits for investment partners and other stakeholders.

Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL)

- Ensure implementation of a MEAL system for this blended finance initiative, with tailored tools, systems, and digital platforms to capture intermediate and impact level results as well as learning.

- Identify opportunities for learning, research and publications and implementation of MEAL policy. Facilitate the dissemination of promising practices and lessons learned to contribute to the agency knowledge management agenda and the large, impact investment and agricultural finance ecosystems. Ensure integration of innovations and best practices.

Basic Qualifications

- Master's degree in international development, Agriculture Economics or other relevant technical area. PhD preferred.
- 7 or more years' relevant management and technical experience in leading market-based agro-enterprise initiatives that impact the lives of smallholder farmer and communities in resource-challenged contexts.
- 5 years experience managing donor funds, including multi country grants. Strong knowledge and experience in budget management.
- 5 years of staff management experience and abilities that are conducive to a learning environment. Experience coaching senior program staff.
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Required Languages: Professional Fluency in both written and spoken English and Spanish.

Availability to travel regularly to Central America and to Africa.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Strong strategic, analytical, systems thinking, and problem-solving skills, with capacity to see the big picture and ability to make sound judgment and decisions.
- Strong relations management abilities. Ability to relate to people at all levels internally and externally. Strategic in how you approach each relationship.
- Team leadership abilities with diverse/multi-disciplinary teams. Coaching skills.
- Strong communications and presentation skills; able to develop tailored and persuasive messaging for varied audiences.
- Proactive, resourceful, solutions-oriented and results-oriented.

Preferred Qualifications

- Recognized leader in sector as demonstrated by peer reviewed publications, conference presentations etc.
- Demonstrated experience of successful program management, including management of complex, high-value, multi-activity projects, with complicated logistics.
- Experience engaging partners and strengthening partnerships. Knowledge of CRS partnership strategy a plus.
- Ability to represent and present at high levels.
- Highly qualified professional 8+ years' experience leading market-based agro-enterprise initiatives that impact the lives of smallholder farmer and communities in resource-challenged contexts.
- Experience in requirements for the financing of SMEs and agricultural organizations.
- Experience in impact investments, blended finance and nature-based solutions for agriculture

- Significant experience working with farmer organizations, rural enterprises and leading value chain work in diverse agroecological contexts.
- Minimum of ten years of work experience in development, including technical advisory roles, project and budget management, and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder processes.
- History of contributing significantly to successful fundraising efforts (business development), capturing funding from public and/or private donors.
- Experience monitoring and evaluating initiatives, and then analyzing and presenting the data/evidence/information in a convincing fashion to achieve clear advocacy outcomes.
- Demonstrable experience representing an organization at the highest levels in meetings with donors, government, international NGOs, local partners, ecclesial and civil society.
- Experience with alternative finance and agricultural finance.
- Experience managing and/or preparing budgets and basic understanding of finance.
- Mastery of MS Office packages (Excel, Word, Power Point), Online Conference applications and solid understanding of information systems and budget management and knowledge sharing networks.

Personal Skills

- Innovative, visionary, and an ability to think at scale.
- Persuasive communicator with the ability to inspire, influence and secure agreements from partners and people in the public and private sector who are not under your direct supervision within a cross-cultural context.
- Excellent strategic, analytical, organizational and systemic thinking skills that can be mobilized to take correct decisions.
- Proactive, resourceful and results-oriented
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, including research publications.
- Excellent presentation, facilitation, training and negotiation skills.

Key Working Relationships:

Supervision: supervises a team of 3 direct reports and 8 indirect reports.

Internal: Reports to the Deputy Regional Director for Programming. Collaborates with Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO) team, Country Program Senior Management Teams, Water Soils and Agriculture Platform, Impact Investing colleagues, Private Sector Engagement colleagues, other regional teams where Isidro is active, CRS advisors for Agricultural Livelihoods.

External: Financial fund consultant/manager, Cooperatives and SMEs, investors, institutional donors

Agency REDI Competencies (for all CRS Staff)

Agency competencies clarify expected behaviors and attitudes for all staff. When demonstrated, they create an engaging workplace, help staff achieve their best, and help CRS achieve agency goals. These are rooted in the mission, values, and guiding principles of CRS and used by each staff member to fulfill his or her responsibilities and achieve the desired results.

- *Personal Accountability* – Consistently takes responsibility for one’s own actions.
- *Acts with Integrity* - Consistently models values aligned with CRS Guiding Principles and mission. Is considered honest.
- *Builds and Maintains Trust* - Shows consistency between words and actions.
- *Collaborates with Others* – Works effectively in intercultural and diverse teams.

- *Open to Learn* – Seeks out experiences that may change perspective or provide an opportunity to learn new things.

Agency Leadership Competencies

- *Lead Change* – Continually looks for ways to improve the agency through a culture of agility, openness, and innovation.
- *Develops and Recognizes Others* – Builds the capacity of staff to reach their full potential and enhance team and agency performance.
- *Strategic Mindset* – Understands role in translating, communicating, and implementing agency strategy and team priorities.

****Our Catholic identity is at the heart of our mission and operations. Catholic Relief Services carries out the commitment of the Bishops of the United States to assist the poor and vulnerable overseas. We welcome as a part of our staff people of all faiths and secular traditions who share our values and our commitment to serving those in need. CRS' processes and policies reflect our commitment to protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation.*

Disclaimer: This job description is not an exhaustive list of the skill, effort, duties, and responsibilities associated with the position.

CRS' talent acquisition procedures reflect our commitment to protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation.

CRS prioritizes candidates who are citizens/permanent residents of the countries where we have CRS offices.

CRS is an Equal Opportunity Employer