



## **BOTANIC GARDENS CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL (BGCI)**

### **SECRETARY GENERAL**

Established in 1987, Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) is the world authority on botanic gardens and plant conservation and is the largest global network devoted to conserving the world's plant diversity.

Its vision is a world in which plant diversity is valued by all, is secure and continues to support all life.

Its mission is to mobilise botanic gardens and engage partners in securing plant diversity for the well-being of people and the planet.

With over 950 members in 120 countries, BGCI is a membership organisation with five main objectives: saving plants; inspiring and leading people; sharing knowledge and resources; addressing global challenges through public engagement and education, and ensuring an effective and resilient BGCI. It works to a five year Strategic Plan setting out these objectives and monitors its progress against clearly defined targets.

BGCI is a U.K. registered charity. In addition to its head office at Descanso House, Kew, BGCI operates internationally, including through, BGCI-US (a 501(c)(3) registered non-profit organisation in the U.S.A.), BGCI-China (based at the South China National Botanical Garden), BGCI-Africa (based in Nairobi, Kenya), and SE Asia and South America. BGCI provides the Secretariat for a number of international initiatives, including the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation, the Ecological Restoration Alliance of Botanic Gardens and The Global Biodiversity Standard.

The Board of BGCI is undertaking an international search to recruit an outstanding candidate to become its Secretary General, when the current holder of that position, Dr Paul Smith, steps down in 2026.

### **Job Purpose**

The Secretary General provides leadership, inspiration and direction to ensure the successful development and delivery of BGCI's strategies and policies on behalf of the Board of BGCI, its members, donors, partners and wider communities. Their focus will be on the growth and impact of BGCI through increasing the financial and staff resources and expanding BGCI's networks, outreach and influence.

### **Reporting**

The Secretary General is responsible to the Board of BGCI, with direct reporting to the Chair of the Board.

# MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

## Leadership

- Represent BGCI on the world stage, engaging with international policy initiatives in biodiversity, conservation and sustainable development, especially those relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) and other plant-protection related policies. Harness the global membership, regional networks and international offices to deliver BGCI's mission and strategic plan.
- Synthesise and channel into policy and representation the requirements of the global botanic garden community. Effectively represent the mission of BGCI with governments, agencies, members, and other communities to ensure general understanding and goodwill towards BGCI's mission.
- Lead the review and revision of BGCI's rolling five-year strategic plan, ensuring the development, acceptance and implementation of strategic policies and plans that enable BGCI to meet its established short and longer term objectives and quantitative goals.
- Set the agenda for, and support the Chair of, BGCI's International Advisory Council, maintaining and strengthening its role as the global leadership forum for the world's botanic gardens.
- Work with the Chair of the BGCI Board to develop agendas for BGCI Board meetings; oversee the preparation of papers for Board meetings and ensure they are shared with the Board in a timely manner.
- Lead efforts to secure funding from established and new sources to support and increase the scale and impact of BGCI's operations.

## Management

- Set and manage BGCI's annual work-plans and budget, ensuring that BGCI is organised to achieve its objectives in the most effective and economic way and at the same time is able to respond to new and upcoming challenges. Oversee the finances and ensure the preparation of plans, budgets, reports and accounts to meet statutory requirements and the needs of BGCI.
- Manage the BGCI staff and volunteers in the UK and internationally, ensuring successful delivery of the 5 year Strategic Plan with BGCI programmes and projects meeting the highest standards. Delegate accountability for the day-to-day running of BGCI to various staff and consultants, as appropriate. Implement appropriate employee development plans.
- Work to enhance and develop a culture in which all staff are fully engaged in efforts to secure and increase the growth and impact of BGCI in addition to delivering their specific roles.
- Maximise the benefits of relationships between the Board of BGCI, BGCI-US, BGCI-Africa and other international offices, networks and cross-regional collaborations.

## **Fundraising**

- Lead on the drafting and submission of funding proposals to a wide variety of existing and new sources of support.
- Build on recent successes in fundraising by promoting BGCI Patron membership, membership in general and by actively pursuing and developing innovative approaches to corporate sponsors and personal donors, as well as to public and statutory funders and building donor relationship management and retention systems.
- Review and revise the existing networks of support for BGCI, and support the Board and staff in fundraising efforts.

## **PERSONAL QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The Board of BGCI is seeking to appoint a person with proven leadership qualities, and outstanding organisational, management, diplomatic and communications skills. Candidates for this post will require a proven track record in the botanic garden/conservation/environmental sector, with demonstrated sensitivity to complex, multicultural and multinational institutions and structures. Working within a partnership model, candidates must be able to show their capacity to innovate and to manage change. They must also be able to inspire donors and BGCI's members around the world, and to have led on the development of significant capital and revenue schemes.

### **Education and Experience**

#### **Essential**

- A postgraduate level qualification (preferably at doctorate level) in a relevant discipline.
- Knowledge of the diverse roles of botanic gardens, ideally gained through direct personal experience.
- Experience of fundraising and the development and management of large projects.
- Excellent mastery of English, both oral and written, combined with outstanding presentational abilities.
- Experience of working at senior managerial level, including working with a Board.
- Experience of managing budgets and setting financial priorities.
- Ability to lead and motivate a team.

#### **Desirable**

- Experience of working for a not for profit organisation.
- Experience and knowledge of HR policies, procedures and legal requirements.

### **Skills and Competencies**

#### **Essential**

- Proven leadership and organisational qualities.
- Outstanding diplomatic, ambassadorial and communications skills.

- Proven track record in the botanic garden/conservation/environmental sector.
- Fundraising expertise and experience.
- Capacity to innovate and manage change.
- Willingness to travel internationally

### **Desirable**

- Command of additional languages.
- Knowledge of plant diversity and conservation approaches.
- Knowledge of database development and their use in relation to biodiversity conservation objectives.

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

The post of Secretary General is a permanent appointment, working 35 hours per week, with a probationary period of 6 months and a notice period of 4 months. The salary will be competitive and commensurate with experience. The Secretary General will also receive access to a contributory personal pension plan through a Group Pension scheme provided by Aviva.

### **APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS**

Applications should take the form of a letter summarising your relevant experience and setting out your vision for the post, together with your Curriculum Vitae and the names and contact details for three referees. Applications should be submitted as email attachments in Word or PDF format. They should be sent as soon as possible, but not later than Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025 to [SGrecruit@bgci.org](mailto:SGrecruit@bgci.org) Queries from potential candidates for the position may also be sent to this email address.