Role Specification

President Executive Board
Wageningen University & Research

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Wageningen University & Research is a collaboration between Wageningen University and the Wageningen Research foundation. Wageningen University and Research centre plays a key role in providing the knowledge and experience to find solutions for some of the greatest challenges of our time, like the climate crisis, biodiversity and the transition to a sustainable agro-food system. Wageningen is among the very top universities in the world in its areas of expertise.

‘To explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life’

That is the mission of Wageningen University & Research. Over 6,800 employees and 12,973 students from more than hundred countries work everywhere around the world in the domain of healthy food and living environment for our society.

The strength of Wageningen University & Research lies in its ability to join the forces of specialised research institutes and the university. It also lies in the combined efforts of the various fields of natural and social sciences. This union of expertise leads to scientific breakthroughs that can quickly be put into practice and be incorporated into education. This is the Wageningen Approach.

The scientific quality of Wageningen University & Research is affirmed by the prominent position we occupy in international rankings and citation indexes.

The domain of Wageningen University & Research consists of three related core areas:

• Food, feed & biobased production
• Natural resources & living environment
• Society & well-being
Strategic Plan 2019-2022* ‘Finding Answers Together’

WUR’s Strategic Plan 2019-2022 is titled ‘Finding Answers Together’. The strategic plan calls on new and existing partners, students, alumni and citizens to explore the potential of nature together, to acquire greater insight into the challenges that confront us and to discuss and navigate conflicting interests. WUR aims to collaborate on scientific, substantiated and socially inclusive answers that can jointly help shape the transitions.

The full strategic plan is available [here](#).

*Recently extended by two years

Key Facts & Figures

- 19 Bachelor and 30 Master programmes
- 242 professors
- 12,973 currently enrolled students
- 56,700 alumni
- 6800+ employees
- Ranked #53 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2022 (highest ranking of the Dutch universities)

A full breakdown of the facts and figures is available [here](#)
WUR Social Media channels (click on the logo to visit the page)
About the organisation

Wageningen University & Research is a collaboration between Wageningen University and the Wageningen Research foundation. Together, they form WUR.

Wageningen University & Research has 5 science groups. Every science group consists of a department of the university and one or more specialised research institutes. The science groups are each led by a Managing Director and Director Operations. There are also several organisational components that are not part of a science group such as Wageningen Food Safety Research.
About the organisation

The Board of Wageningen University and the Board of the Wageningen Research Foundation form the Executive Board of Wageningen University & Research. The Board is a collegial Board with a shared responsibility to lead the organisation.

Full bios of the Executive Board members are available here.

prof. dr. ir. I.O. (Louise) Fresco
President
Resigning 2022 (second term)

prof. dr. ir. A.P.J. (Arthur) Mol
Rector Magnificus/Vice Chair
Since 2015 (second term)

L.A.C. (Rens) Buchwaldt MBA
Member Executive Board
Since 2017 (second term)

(Education & Research)

(Finance, Business & Services)
About the organisation

The **Supervisory Board** of Wageningen University and the Supervisory Board of the Wageningen Research Foundation supervise the governance, the policy and the general course of events of Wageningen University & Research. They also advise the Executive Board. The members of the Supervisory Board are appointed by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science and the Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

- **Ir. M.A. (Mariënné) Verhoef**  
  *Member*

- **drs. T. (Tjarda) Klimp**  
  *Member*

- **Ir. J.R.V.A. (Jeroen) Dijsselbloem**  
  *Chair*

- **Prof.dr. E. (Elbert) Dijkstra**  
  *Member*

- **Ing. B.C. (Bert) Jansen**  
  *Member*

- **Vacancy**  
  *Member*
About the organisation

The participatory structure is an important partner in policy formation for the Executive Board and the managing directors of the organisational units.

Central participatory bodies

Wageningen University & Research has three central participatory bodies. In the Central Works Council (COR), members hold seats elected by and from among the members of the Joint Works Councils. The Student Council (SC) and the Student Staff Council (SSC) are central participatory bodies of the university. The SR consists of students and has a term of one year. The SSC consists of members of the Central Works Council, supplemented by two directly elected employees of Wageningen University & Research, two directly elected PhD candidates and at least six members of the SC. Students and staff have an equal number of votes in the SSC.

The Central Works Council and the SSC work together within the WUR Council: they meet and prepare the dossiers jointly.
About the role - priorities

Priorities for the role

Develop an inspiring vision and strategy

• Lead the broader team, in developing the strategic plan from 2024 onwards, creating an appealing vision and strong positioning for the future.

• Balance powerful own vision with inclusive processes and a transparent culture.

Stimulate the executive team and the wider organisation

• Collectively develop the agenda and support implementation. Help clarify goals and responsibilities. Support the members of the team in the achievement of their objectives.

• Build a strong team and organisational capabilities for the future.

• Foster a collaborative culture. Stimulate and facilitate connections. Continue to drive the "One Wageningen" concept.

Represent Wageningen University & Research externally

• Represent WUR in its mission to improve the quality of life

• Act as ambassador; build/strengthen ties with relevant stakeholders nationally and internationally.

• Stimulate wider team to build and leverage their external network
The ideal candidate

| Career Experience                                      |  | 
|-------------------------------------------------------|--|---|
| Proven people leader with external stature and gravitas |  | 
| Proven track record of inspiring, leading and building teams and organisations |  | 
| Affinity with knowledge-driven environments and topics relating to food/ environment/society |  | 
| Relevant R&D industry experience                       |  | 

| Functional Experience                                  |  | 
|-------------------------------------------------------|--|---|
| Experience managing both internal and external stakeholders |  | 
| International experience and exposure                |  | 
| Excellent communicator and negotiator with high emotional intelligence |  | 
| End-responsible experience                             |  | 
| Strong and relevant academic network and/or relevant sector-oriented network |  | 

| Personal Attributes (must have)                       |  | 
|-------------------------------------------------------|--|---|
| A leadership style based on openness and expertise    |  | 
| Grounded, transparent and approachable, able to navigate through different levels |  | 
| Awareness of societal and environmental developments and implications for WUR |  | 
| Ambition to lead an organisation to the next level    |  | 
| Complementarity to the other executive board members in terms of personality and content |  | 

Given the current gender diversity in the Executive Board, a female candidate is strongly preferred.
WUR Leadership Profile

The WUR Leadership Profile model provides clarity and a common language for the conversations about leadership and leadership development for all levels. WUR has identified 5 elements of responsibilities and 3 levels of scope and impact for leadership.

The 5 elements of leadership

Self Awareness: Know yourself in order to lead others

Vision: Establish vision and strategy and make these actionable

People: Maximize people’s potential and focus on talent and energy

Collaboration: Build strong team(s) and foster collaboration

External awareness: Act with social responsibility and external sensitivity
Leadership Competencies

Vision and results
The future President will, with the organisation, be able to translate external and internal developments into an inspiring dot on the horizon and collective ambition for WUR. Combines that with a curiosity and recognition of scientific and academic capabilities of the organisation and strives for excellence. The President has an interest, resilience and follow through to make things happen. He/she must recognize and understand the key impact drivers within WUR and use this knowledge to focus on maximizing impact. The candidate ensures that the organisation develops clear goals and plans and delivers against them.

Collaboration
The President is an inclusive leader who builds partnerships with colleagues and counterparties (governments, businesses, ngos, institutions, other stakeholders) based on trust, collaboration, and influencing style. The candidate demonstrates a proven ability to influence and develop consensus across multiple partners with humility. The President gains the confidence of the stakeholders and be viewed as a team player. The individual is personable, but firm, drawing on past experiences to influence others. He/she will communicate his/her point of view in a clear and compelling way yet demonstrate flexibility and willingness to incorporate others’ perspectives.

External Awareness
The ideal candidate ensures an outside-in perspective, builds good understanding of (changing) needs of society and opportunities to strengthen impact and reputation to ensure that WUR is able to ‘find answers together’. The president inspires others to achieve the strategic goals and contributes to society and the quality of life.

People
The ideal candidate will have a track-record of building, motivating and guiding teams towards higher performance by creating an environment of trust that encourages talent to stand out while maintaining high achievement, empowerment and accountability. He/she will strike the right balance between listening to people’s concerns and providing clear direction to deliver results. The President must demonstrate effective communication, persistence, and leadership. Someone who will elevate the Board to confront difficult decisions directly, objectively and swiftly, working with and through the teams to effect change.
Procedure

The Supervisory Board will post this vacancy both internally and externally and is assisted in the procedure by Egon Zehnder. Candidates are asked to express their interest by sending a cover letter and a recent resume to WUR2022@egonzehnder.com (deadline: Sunday October 9, 2021).

All applications will be treated confidentially.

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Egon Zehnder is the world’s preeminent leadership consulting firm, sharing one goal: to help people and organizations transform. We know what great leaders can do and are passionate about delivering the best solutions for our clients. As One Firm, our more than 500 Consultants in 68 offices and 40 countries combine our individual strengths to form one powerful collaborative team. We partner closely with public and private corporations, family-owned enterprises, and non-profit and government agencies to provide a comprehensive range of integrated services: Board advisory, CEO search and succession, executive search, executive assessment, leadership development and organizational transformation.

Our leadership solutions cover individual, team and organizational effectiveness, development and cultural transformation. We work with world-class partners including Mobius Executive Leadership, a transformational leadership development firm. In addition, we have partnered with Paradox Strategies, co-founded by Harvard University Professor Linda Hill, to develop the Innovation Quotient (IQ), a proprietary culture diagnostic.

Our goal is that the work we do contributes to successful careers, stronger companies – and a better world.

For more information, visit www.egonzehnder.com.