



GROUNDED

VACANCY: Operational Manager for the Simalaha Incubator Farm

We are looking for passionate horticulturalist to help us set up and manage a regenerative spice and vegetable farm in the Simalaha Community Conservancy, Zambia.

About the Simalaha and the Incubator farm:

In the Simalaha Community Conservancy (SCC) in South Western Zambia, the Simalaha Community Trust and Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) are developing a wildlife corridor to link Chobe and Kafue National parks. They are beginning to reintroduce wildlife and restore the natural functions of the floodplains and woodlands in the conservancy.

Along with developing a wildlife economy to support and stimulate the recovering ecosystem, Grounded and PPF are working with the SCC to develop and invest in agri-businesses to support the people living there.

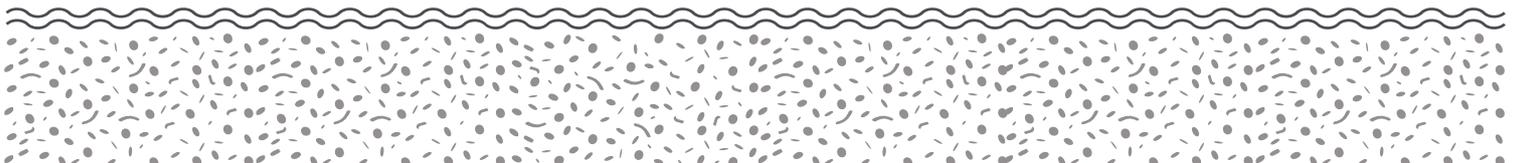
The primary agri-business envisaged is of a regenerative high input 'incubator' farm focused on high value cash crops which can be stored or processed (specifically spices). This farm will provide the best performing subsistence/smallholder farmers with a pathway to commercial production. The development of such a company will fit into the wider landscape vision of the SCC and will be a key example of best practice in the landscape.

Much research and preparation has already taken place, now we are looking for a strong team player with commercial horticulture expertise to implement these plans. The role will be to manage all practical aspects of establishing the farm including farmer training, inputs, and infrastructure acquisition, establishing operating processes, timelines and record keeping, and identifying market linkages to get the business off the ground.

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Responsibilities

During the start-up phase the focus will be:

- Establishment of the farm
 - Development of the production plan
 - Selection of farmers
 - Sourcing of seeds and seedlings, compost and other inputs
 - Develop and implement a compost and organic fertilizer production plan
 - Establishing on site irrigation
- Establish market connections for informal local and regional markets (Livingstone, Sesheke, Mwandi, Katima etc.)
- Logistics

Later in 2019, the goal is to get the business operational.

You will then be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Incubator Farm:

- Farm planning, budgeting and coordination of all farm activities (in liaison with the project coordinator).
- Setting up and managing production contracts
- Production planning
- Producing organic fertilizers and compost
- Ensuring a stable supply of high-quality produce
- Piloting of spice crops
- Setting up of value addition/on-farm processing facilities
- Coordinate logistics, processing, shipping
- Liaising and supporting in sales contracts/agreements
- Supporting marketing and brand development, as well as a corporate identify
- Supporting product development and investigating business cases for alternative products
- Setting up company policies, including HR, Standard Operating Procedures, company management meetings.
- Monitoring compliance with Sourcing Guidelines and traceability guidelines.

Competences

- Strong experience in management and/or development of agribusiness/horticulture venture
- Demonstrated experience in regenerative agriculture, conservation farming, organic agriculture
- Knowledge of supply and value chains of agribusiness within Africa
- Knowledge of local market systems



- Excellent verbal and written communications skills, strong record keeping and ICT skills (MS Office and Google suites)
- Experience leading and building the capacity of teams
- Independent working but happy to play a key role as part of a wider team and support the bigger vision of the work
- Comfortable living and working in a rural area
- Strong affinity with the mission and focus of our organization, as well as with the dynamic start-up / growth phase of the organization
- The candidate should share Grounded values which are to be honest, humble, open, adaptable, fair and to have courage
- Good sense of humour, patience and resilience

General information

This is a full-time position for an initial period of 1 year, with the anticipation of a long-term contract through successfully rolling out of the business and managing the stakeholder relations.

The farm will start small, through a pilot process to allow for an adaptive strategy. However, it is envisaged to scale to between 80 and 150 hectares. The applicant should feel confident that they can excellently manage a commercial production unit of that size.

A fair remuneration package will be offered to the successful candidate, commensurate with experience.

Application

If you are interested and think that your profile fits our needs, please send a short motivation letter and CV to Stephe Mendelsohn via email: stephie@grounded.co.za. The deadline for applications is 28 February 2019. We plan to commence as soon as we find the right candidate.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.