



Laksiri Abeysekera

Laksiri Abeysekera is a senior finance and operations professional with over 40 years of international experience in strategic financial management, corporate governance, and institutional development. He has held senior leadership roles across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, including at two CGIAR Centres, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and World Agroforestry (ICRAF), as well as at the International Centre for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA). He served ICRAF for 18 years in Nairobi, Kenya, where he held several senior roles, including Deputy Director General – Finance and Corporate Services. In this capacity, he provided strategic oversight of financial services, human resources, procurement, IT, contracts and grants, and risk management. His leadership was instrumental in strengthening internal controls, introducing full cost recovery and IFRS, enhancing operational efficiency, and supporting ICRAF's global expansion. During his tenure, the Centre achieved a marked increase in net assets and a significant improvement in liquidity, enhancing its overall financial sustainability and operational resilience. He later served as Director of Corporate Services at ICBA in Dubai, where he led major institutional reforms by introducing a comprehensive suite of policies and systems, adopting IFRS standards, and introducing full cost recovery and reporting frameworks that significantly improved operational effectiveness. Mr. Abeysekera is currently a Senior Fellow at CIFOR ICRAF and played a key role in establishing its office in Sri Lanka, including facilitating the signing of a host country agreement with the Government of Sri Lanka. He served as Interim Head of the Sri Lanka Country Office until the end of 2024. In his current part-time role, he advises the Director of Corporate Services of CIFOR ICRAF and supports the USD 40 million Green Climate Fund–financed Knuckles Ecosystem-Based Adaptation Project, implemented jointly by ICRAF and the Ministry of Irrigation in Sri Lanka. In addition to his advisory role at CIFOR ICRAF, he served as a Board Member of the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) in San Francisco from 2015 to 2020. He currently serves on the Board of the Global EverGreening Alliance (GEA) in Melbourne and is a Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Audit Committee at LAUGFS Holdings Ltd. in Sri Lanka. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, UK, and a Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA). He brings to the AfricaRice Board deep expertise in fiduciary oversight, results-based management, and institutional governance, and is widely respected for his integrity and leadership in multicultural settings.