

Job: Senior Global Director of Commodities, CABI

What do you do?

I work as the Senior Global Director in CAB International (CABI), which is an international, intergovernmental organization with 48 member countries including China, Australia, Canada, India, many African countries and the UK.

CABI seeks to improve people's lives worldwide by providing information and applying scientific expertise to solve problems in agriculture and the environment.

My job involves overseeing projects concerned with the plant health of commodity crops, such as: coffee, tea, cocoa, bananas, spices. This could be by trialling new ways to manage pests and diseases more effectively or training farmers to reduce the impact of pest and diseases through better crop management.

Improving the quantity and quality of these cash crops allows farmers to earn better incomes and pay for school fees, medicines etc.

What is your average day like?

If I'm in the UK, I often have meetings with colleagues or Skype/video conferences with colleagues based in our overseas centres.

I spend time writing and reviewing papers and preparing proposals for funding to continue our work.

Overseas, I'm usually in the field with staff from our partner organizations looking at our trials, seeing how our work with farmers is making a difference. I also present our work at conferences.

Dr Julie Flood



CV

- Global Director of Commodities, CAB International (CABI).
- Regional Director, Europe (UK) Centre, CABI.
- Senior Plant Pathologist, CABI.
- Head of Plant Pathology, Cocoa and Coconut Research Institute in Papua New Guinea.
- Research Officer, University of Bath.
- Junior Fellow in Botany, University of Bristol.
- PhD Plant Pathology, University of Wales.



When did you become interested in plant pathology?

I became interested in plant diseases from a young age because I grew up on a farm. My interest was encouraged by a biology teacher at secondary school who had studied plant pathology at university.

I studied botany and microbiology at university which had a large plant pathology content and continued my PhD from my undergraduate project. I studied how plants defend themselves against fungi.



Which part of your job do you most enjoy?

I particularly like being in the field. It makes me feel connected with the people we are supposed to be working with - the farmers and producers! It helps to see the limitations the farmers face in many developing countries on a daily basis. Also, I firmly believe that you have to see the pest/disease in the field interacting with its host and its natural environment to be able to understand it and therefore, manage it better.