

DR. ALEX DEHGAN – PROFESSIONAL BIOGRAPHY



Alex Dehgan is the CEO & co-founder of a new startup, [Conservation X Labs](#), focused on harnessing exponential technologies, open innovation, and entrepreneurship for addressing global challenges, including launching the first Grand Challenge for Conservation on Aquaculture, creating the first digital makerspace, and developing a new handheld microfluidics based DNA field scanner. He is also The Chanler Innovator in Residence at Duke University and previously served as the Inaugural Rubenstein Fellow, where he researches and lectures on technology innovation for the SDGs.

Dr. Alex Dehgan recently served as the Chief Scientist at the U.S. Agency for International Development, with rank of Assistant Administrator, founded and headed the Office of Science and Technology, and created the vision for and helped launch the Global Development Lab, the Agency's DARPA for Development. As the Agency's first chief scientist in two decades, Dr. Dehgan implemented the President's promise to restore science and technology to its rightful place within USAID. Alex was the architect of a number of new Agency institutions, including the Grand Challenges for Development program, Agency partnerships with universities (HESN) and federal science agencies (PEER), the independent office of science and technology (OST), the position of the Agency geographer and the GeoCenter, and data for development programs, and the Global Development Lab. In less than four years, Alex built OST from scratch to an 80-person office, a \$100 M dollar research program, and leveraged or raised \$500 million dollars from other donors and partners. Alex was also part of the founding team for the creation of the Policy, Planning, and Learning Bureau (PPL), rebuilt technical capabilities in the Agency by putting scientists, physicians, and engineers directly into USAID missions and technical bureaus, and led efforts for the Agency's research policy and first ever scientific integrity policy.

Prior to coming to USAID, Alex worked in multiple positions at the Department of State, including the Policy Planning Staff, the Office of the Secretary, the Office of the Science Adviser (STAS), and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq. At State, Alex developed political and science diplomacy strategies towards addressing our most challenging foreign policy issues in Iran, Iraq, and the greater Islamic world, including helping initiating the Obama Administration's diplomatic efforts with Iran through science diplomacy working with Amb. Dennis Ross, and serving as a liaison to the late Amb. Richard Holbrooke.

Alex Dehgan was also the founding Afghanistan Country Director for the Wildlife Conservation Society's Afghanistan Biodiversity Conservation Program. Through his leadership, WCS led efforts to create Afghanistan's first national park, conducted the first comprehensive biological surveys of the country in 30 years, helped develop Afghanistan's biodiversity conservation laws and policies, and curtailed illegal wildlife trade on US and ISAF military bases. Alex is also currently writing a book, *The Snow Leopard Startup*, through Public Affairs, an imprint of Perseus Books Group, on setting up the first national park in Afghanistan.

Dr. Dehgan holds a Ph.D and M.Sc. from The University of Chicago's Committee on Evolutionary Biology, where he focused on extinction and adaptation of 12 lemur species during environmental change in tropical forests in Madagascar. He also holds a J.D. from the University of California, Hastings, and a B.S. from Duke University. He was chosen as an "Icon of Science" by Seed Magazine in 2005, received the World Technology Award for Policy in 2011, and has been recognized through multiple awards from the Departments of State and Defense, and USAID. In 2013, AAAS selected Alex as one of its 40@40 fellows out of 2,600 AAAS Science Policy Fellows as "an individual who has made exemplary dedication to applying science to serve society, was creative, innovative, and collaborative problem solvers in addressing global challenges, and was an uncommon ambassador for the role of science and technology."