Chief Operating Officer - The Wye and Usk Foundation

Job purpose

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is responsible for ensuring that the Wye and Usk Foundation operates effectively, efficiently and sustainably, with the people, systems, resources and governance needed to deliver its charitable objectives.

Working closely with the Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer, Senior Commercial Manager, Board of Trustees and management team, the COO translates organisational strategy into effective operational delivery. The role provides leadership across organisational performance, people management, project oversight, risk, governance and business improvement, ensuring that the Foundation's resources and activities are aligned with its priorities.

Accountabilities

- **People.** Foundation has the capability and capacity required to deliver its objectives, people are deployed effectively across projects aligning skills and aspiration, managers understand their responsibilities and are appropriately supported
- **Culture**. Foster a positive, collaborative and delivery-focused culture where people work well together, take ownership of their responsibilities and follow things through.
- **Operations**. The organisation operates effectively, efficiently and safely, operational risks are identified and managed.
- **Projects**. Projects are appropriately governed and delivered against agreed scope, time, cost and quality requirements.
- **Governance**. Appropriate policies, processes, controls and reporting arrangements are in place.
- **Risk**. Significant organisational risks are identified, managed and escalated.
- **Performance**. Organisational Performance is monitored and transparent.

Key Responsibilities

- **Strategic and operational leadership**
  - Work with the Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer, Senior Commercial Manager and management team to translate organisational strategy into operational plans, priorities and measurable outcomes.
  - Oversee organisational performance, ensuring that activities, projects and programmes are effectively planned, resourced, monitored and delivered.
  - Identify opportunities to improve organisational effectiveness, strengthen resilience and maximise the impact of available resources.
  - Promote collaboration, accountability, continuous improvement and consistent ways of working across the Foundation.
- **People and Organisational Development**
  - Oversee people management arrangements, working with managers to support recruitment, induction, performance management, staff development and workforce planning.
  - Support managers in developing effective teams, addressing performance issues and promoting staff wellbeing.
  - Ensure that appropriate employment policies, procedures, training and management guidance are in place and implemented.

- Promote an inclusive, supportive and accountable organisational culture aligned with the Foundation's values.

- **Project, Programme and Resource Management**
  - Oversee the Foundation's project and programme management arrangements, ensuring appropriate planning, monitoring, quality assurance and reporting.
  - Coordinate portfolio-level oversight of project progress, risks, issues, dependencies and resource requirements.
  - Ensure that project managers monitor delivery against agreed outputs, budgets, timescales and contractual commitments.
  - Work with managers to identify capacity constraints, manage competing priorities and allocate resources effectively.
  - Support the development of funding opportunities and tenders by assessing operational capacity, delivery implications and resource requirements.
- **Financial oversight and management information**.
  - Work closely with the Chief Financial Officer to align operational plans, resource requirements and organisational priorities with budgets and forecasts.
  - Ensure that managers monitor project performance and resource use, managing significant variances, emerging pressures and risks.
  - Use operational and financial management information to support decision-making, identify trends and improve organisational performance.
  - Develop and maintain effective management reports, dashboards and analytical tools, using advanced Excel skills to consolidate data, analyse performance and present clear, reliable information.
- **Governance, risk and compliance**
  - Maintain effective operational governance, policies, procedures, internal controls and reporting arrangements.
  - Support the Chief Executive in providing clear and timely management information to the Board of Trustees.
  - Lead the coordination of organisational risk management, ensuring that risks are identified, assessed, monitored and managed appropriately.
  - Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for health and safety, safeguarding, data protection, information security and other relevant legal, regulatory and contractual requirements.
- **Systems, resources and stakeholder relationships**
  - Oversee the effectiveness of operational systems, information management, administrative processes and shared organisational resources.
  - Ensure appropriate arrangements for procurement, supplier management, equipment, vehicles and other operational assets.
  - Work collaboratively with colleagues, trustees, funders, delivery partners and other stakeholders to support effective delivery and maintain strong working relationships.
  - Represent the Foundation professionally where required and contribute to organisational planning, change and development.

Person specification

- **Essential criteria**
  - Significant experience in a senior operational management, business management or organisational leadership role.
  - Proven ability to translate strategic priorities into clear, practical operational plans, aligning people and resources to deliver against agreed outcomes, whilst managing competing priorities.
  - Experience of leading and developing people, supporting managers and improving organisational performance.
  - Strong analytical skills, including the ability to interpret management information and use evidence to support decisions.
  - Experience of project or programme oversight, resource planning and performance monitoring.
  - A sound understanding of governance, risk management, compliance and organisational controls.
  - Excellent communication, interpersonal and problem-solving skills, with the ability to build effective relationships and provide constructive challenge.
  - A collaborative, pragmatic and solutions-focused approach, with strong organisational and prioritisation skills.
- **Desirable Criteria**
  - Experience within a charity, environmental organisation or water sector.
  - Advanced Excel skills, including the use of complex formulas, lookups, pivot tables and data analysis to produce management reports.
  - Experience of grant-funded projects, tendering, contract delivery
  - Experience of organisational change, business improvement or implementing management systems and processes.
  - Knowledge of environmental conservation, river restoration or catchment management.

Key working relationships

- **Internal:** Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer, Senior Commercial Manager, Board of Trustees and committees, management team, project and programme managers, and all Foundation staff.
- **External:** English and Welsh Rivers Trusts, Funders, delivery partners, HR Providers, professional advisers and other relevant stakeholders.

General

The postholder will undertake other duties consistent with the seniority and purpose of the role, as reasonably required by the Chief Executive.

This job description outlines the principal responsibilities of the role and may be reviewed to reflect organisational needs and priorities.