Forestry England

Job Description – Project Manager External Funding (PB4)

Job summary

Forestry England cares for the nation's forests for people, nature and the economy. We are England's largest landowner, managing over 1,500 of our nation's forests. Over the next three years, Forestry England will receive a significant investment from DEFRA for woodland creation, nature recovery and forest resilience. The extra DEFRA ringfenced funding is for specific programmes, including Forestry England's Biodiversity Programme, and it will enable Forestry England to do even more to increase the biodiversity of the nation's forests and make sure they are resilient to future threats.

Forestry England's Biodiversity Plan sets out an ambitious vision for nature recovery across the nation's forests. Its primary aim is to restore and strengthen resilient biodiversity, delivering our vision to ensure that these forests provide the most valuable places for wildlife to thrive and expand in England.

Forestry England is seeking to develop a sustainable long-term funding model that enables biodiversity outcomes to continue and grow beyond current government funding.

The primary purpose of this role is to ensure Forestry England is well-positioned to sustain and expand delivery of its Biodiversity Plan by understanding future funding opportunities, aligning projects and programmes with emerging investment priorities, and developing a strategic pathway beyond current DEFRA-funded initiatives

This is a key role within the national Nature Recovery Programme Team, and you will support the External Funding Lead in developing and implementing a strategic approach to future investment and funding of the Biodiversity Plan.

The role will focus on identifying and assessing future grant funding opportunities, mapping the external funding landscape, aligning current with emerging funding mechanisms, and helping shape a transition from reliance on DEFRA funding towards a more diverse and resilient portfolio of investment.

You will work closely with colleagues across Forestry England to better understand the potential for a blended public-private funding model, the role will help build strategic partnerships, and secure funding that supports the long-term ambitions of the Biodiversity Programme.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

Key work areas

- Provide specialist technical advice on external funding opportunities within the Biodiversity Programme relating to biodiversity fundraising, ensuring alignment with organisation and programme goals.
- Work as an effective member of the national External Funding team and in partnership with the Nature Recovery Programme team at a national level to embed external funding into programme planning, monitoring, and delivery.

Future Investment

- Map, monitor and analyse the external funding landscape, identifying grant and funding opportunities across public, private, philanthropic and third-sector funding streams. • Horizon-scan for emerging funding mechanisms, environmental finance opportunities and innovative investment models that support biodiversity and nature recovery.
- Assess how existing and proposed biodiversity initiatives align with current and future funding opportunities, identifying gaps, risks and opportunities.
- Develop strategic options and provide evidence-based advice to support investment decisions, project prioritisation, and the transition of biodiversity programmes from predominantly government-funded delivery to a more diverse and sustainable funding model.
- Monitor trends and policy developments in biodiversity finance to ensure Forestry England remains well positioned to access future funding opportunities.

Strategy Development

- Support the development and delivery of a long-term funding strategy to secure sustainable investment for Forestry England's Biodiversity Programme beyond the current DEFRA funding period.
- Build strong, productive relationships with Biodiversity Team colleagues, the Forestry Commission (FC), DEFRA Green Finance Team, Forest Districts, and external stakeholders to generate buy-in of the strategy.

Funding Acquisition

- Identify and pursue external grant funding opportunities that support Forestry England's biodiversity, nature recovery and resilience objectives.
- Lead the development of high-quality funding applications and investment proposals for priority projects.
- Contribute to achieving funding targets and securing investment that supports long-term programme delivery.

Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and maintain strategic relationships with key stakeholders including environmental charities, trusts and foundations, investors, and other stakeholders as appropriate.
- Collaborate with partners to identify opportunities for co-investment, partnership funding and innovative finance models.
- Represent Forestry England at external forums and contribute to sector-wide discussions on biodiversity funding and environmental investment.

And any other tasks, reasonably requested by your line manager.

Skills, knowledge & experience

Essential professional and technical experience

- Proven experience of identifying emerging funding and investment opportunities, assessing strategic fit, evaluating risks and benefits, and presenting evidence-based recommendations.
- Experience of producing external funding bids and track record of meeting or exceeding income generation or fundraising targets.
- Experience of working with multiple stakeholders.
- Understanding of, or strong interest in, natural capital, ecosystem services and environmental markets.
- Competent IT user with experience of Microsoft Office 365 packages, including Teams, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook
- Able to manage a complex workload involving multiple stakeholders, effectively prioritising and meeting deadlines.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, employing emotional intelligence, tact and diplomacy in challenging situations and able to build rapport quickly
- Excellent communication, presentation, influencing and negotiation skills.
- Ability to work independently, proactively and collaboratively within a team environment.

Desirable professional and technical experience

- Working knowledge of the environmental, sustainability or nature-based sectors.
- Project management experience and / or qualification (e.g., APM).
- Experience working with government departments or the public sector.
- Working knowledge of investment and environmental finance mechanisms, including natural capital investment, ESG funds, blended finance, debt and equity markets, and other emerging funding models relevant to nature recovery.

Qualifications

Essential

- Degree-level education or equivalent professional experience in fundraising or income generation.

Desirable

- Fundraising qualifications.
- A recognised project management qualification.
- A member of a relevant professional body (e.g., Chartered Institute of Fundraising)