

Business Support Manager - DEFRA-funded Programmes

FTA until Mar 2029 with possibility of extension or permanency

PB5

National Operations

Job summary

Forestry England is working on an ambitious plan to help nature recover in the nation's forests. We're improving important wildlife sites, restoring ancient woodlands, creating more open spaces for nature, and even bringing back key species that help ecosystems thrive. We're also trying out new technologies – like collecting traces of DNA from the environment and using sound monitoring devices – to better understand and support wildlife. Our goal is to make England's forests some of the best places for nature, using solid evidence to guide our actions and help wildlife recover for the long term.

The Business Support Manager will play a key role in delivering high-quality business and technical support across Forestry England's National Operations and Forest Districts for its Defra-funded programmes. This includes providing dedicated support, business and technical advice; administrative support; communicating and implementing policy and providing additional support for colleagues in our Forest Districts. A core part of the role will be to act as the secretariat and operational hub for the *Resilience & Nature Recovery Programme*, providing the administrative, technical, and logistical support needed to ensure the Programme Board can govern effectively.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

The work required of this role is variable and flexible to the needs and demands of the National Operations team and the Forest District (our regional business units) functions they support. Tasks and responsibilities of the role will include, but not limited to:

Programme Coordination - Resilience & Nature Recovery Programme

- Coordinating logistics for board meetings, workshops, and programme events.
- Developing and maintaining programme timelines, helping ensure milestones are delivered on schedule.
- Maintaining accurate documentation and programme records.
- Liaising with internal teams, external partners, and stakeholders to ensure smooth communication and alignment.
- Coordinating staff involvement across programme activities.

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- Assisting with outreach, engagement, and the preparation of communications materials where needed.
- Monitoring compliance with organisational policies and funding requirements.
- Identifying process improvement opportunities to streamline programme delivery.
- Support for other DEFRA-funded programmes as appropriate.

Contract Management and Procurement

- Act as contract administrator for a range of contracts that sit under the Resilience & Nature Recovery Programme.
- Lead on tendering processes where required.
- Serve as Procurement Champion, including managing and submitting quarterly procurement pipeline data.

Project Coordination

- Support and coordinate ad hoc and strategic projects (e.g. embedding a culture of Project Management).
- Contribute to continuous improvement initiatives across business systems and processes and integrating projects into business-as-usual.

Guidance and Policy Management

- Maintain and update national operational guidance and processes.
- Ensure guidance is accessible, accurate, and aligned with organisational needs.

Training and Development

- Support training delivery for key systems and processes.
- Work with the Systems Manager and other colleagues to mobilise internal trainers and resources.

You may be asked to contribute to other Forestry England activities, in particular wider support for other DEFRA-funded programmes as appropriate.

Skills, qualifications & experience

Essential

- Experience supporting complex projects, programmes or portfolios, including governance and senior meetings
- Strong organisational and coordination skills, with the ability to manage competing priorities and work effectively with a wide range of stakeholders
- Experience of working collaboratively in a multi-functional team environment
- Experience of procurement processes including managing and administering contracts and tenders
- Competence in the use of MS Office applications

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Desirable

- Knowledge of Forestry England policies, procedures and guidance
- Experience of managing projects or a recognised project management qualification
- Knowledge and experience of nature recovery projects

Additional Information

Your Experience and Technical Knowledge will be tested at the application stage.

Your Technical Knowledge and the following Behaviours will be tested at the interview:

- **Making Effective Decisions:** Use evidence and knowledge to support accurate, expert decisions and advice. Carefully consider alternative options, implications and risks of decisions.
- **Communicating and Influencing:** Communicate purpose and direction with clarity, integrity and enthusiasm. Respect the needs, responses and opinions of others.
- **Changing and Improving:** Seek out opportunities to create effective change and suggest innovative ideas for improvement. Review ways of working, including seeking and providing feedback.
- **Working together:** Form effective partnerships and relationships with people both internally and externally, from a range of diverse backgrounds, sharing information, resources and support.

This post will involve dealing with contacts across England, and travel with overnight stays. The use of Microsoft Teams video software is encouraged to reduce travel; however the postholder will be expected to regularly travel in accordance with the needs of the business and the demands of the post. It is expected that if the successful applicant is new to Forestry England they will be embedded within a [Forestry England office](#) for part of the working week during an induction period. The duties of this post require the applicant to have a full current driving licence that enables them to drive in the UK. Forestry England is willing to consider any reasonable adjustments and/or proposals put forward by an applicant that would allow them to do this work by other means.

This role is funded by Defra rather than through Forestry England generated revenue, and is therefore subject to government spending reviews. While Defra has indicated long term support for the Biodiversity Programme and we expect funding to continue, it is possible that funding levels may change at the end of any financial year depending on Defra's budget allocations. In the event of funding changes, we would prioritise retaining staff posts wherever possible. This approach is consistent for roles within publicly funded organisations. We are committed to keeping staff informed and supported through any changes.

An induction period will be tailored to the skills and experience of the successful candidate.