

Job Profile
**Chief Scientific Officer/
Director of Programmes**



Background

The SFA Foundation is a pan-African organisation that aims to support, strengthen and promote science and innovation in Africa. Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, the goal of the SFA Foundation is to support African scientists and innovators in addressing the continent's most pressing challenges/developmental needs by generating knowledge that solves problems; making use of the knowledge/evidence to inform decision-making; and enabling scientists to collaborate effectively and nurture interdisciplinary expertise. The SFA Foundation is committed to improving the quality of lives for African people and to promote the uptake of research & innovations in communities, industry, private and the public sector. The Foundation is committed to strengthening the entire research ecosystem by creating major science, technology and innovation (STI) programmes implemented through well-established grant-making schemes, advocacy and promotion quality discovery, translational and implementing research, with emphasis on intra-Africa collaborations and evidence-based policymaking mechanisms.

Current Strategy and Beyond

SFA Foundation has developed a new strategy (2022 -2027) and incorporates bold and audacious goals over the next five years that will be anchored on four (4) strategic pillars – Partnerships & Networks, Effective Program Design & Management, Mobilisation of Funds and Operational Excellence.

This strategy is themed '*from Science to Impact*' and is focused on catalysing science and innovation and strengthening Africa's science ecosystem to positively impact lives. That is its lifeblood; it is the reason we exist. Secondly, we aim to be the partner of choice, the go-to-partner for our innovative approaches to transformation by governments, private sector and science influencers on the continent and beyond. This means we are seeking to build strong and reliable partnerships with a diverse constituency not limited to donors, governments, regional & continental institutions, and grantees.

To support this journey, SFA Foundation is seeking to recruit an influential and strategic leader for the position of **Chief Scientific Officer / Director of Programmes** to lead, coach and continue to grow the Programmes, while maintaining broad thematic expertise in relevant science field(s) as detailed in the role profile. We are particularly seeking a science leader who will lead a highly skilled programmatic team that designs, funds and manages science priority programmes that has impact across the continent.

Should you meet the competencies therein, please submit a cover letter and a current Curriculum Vitae not exceeding 5 pages including three professional referees to **recruitment@scienceforafrica.foundation**

The cover letter should be no more than two pages long and explain why you are interested in this post and how your skills and experience make you a good fit. The documents should be saved in MS Word or PDF in the following format: **Your First Name-Your Last Name-Document Name-Date (mmyy)** e.g., **Deus-Wan-CV-092022-SFA Foundation** or **Deus-Wan-CoverLetter-092022 -SFA Foundation**.

You can also click on <https://scienceforafrica.foundation/vacancies.php> for the detailed role profile

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. SFA Foundation has a commitment to safeguarding people and our environment and this forms part of our background checks.



Position Overview

Reporting To Executive Director

Direct Reports Senior Programme Managers

Position Location Nairobi, Kenya

The **Chief Scientific Officer (CSO)** provides leadership and strategic vision for all the scientific aspects of SFA Foundation while overseeing the work of the organisation's programmes and clusters of programmes and platforms. The CSO will be leading a highly skilled and experienced programmatic team that designs, manages and funds a large portfolio of and of science and innovation programmes being delivered across the continent, in partnership with African and global partners.

The incumbent works closely with the Executive Director's in implementing the SFA Foundation strategic pillars based on pan-African science agenda, specific programmes priorities & their strategy development, high-level relationship building and advocacy with partner organisations in order to position and build the premier position, brand and reputation of SFA Foundation in driving science, technology and innovation in Africa. Their expertise and performance must align with the overall mission and goals as outlined in the SFA Foundation strategic plan (2022-2027), whose key priorities is supporting quality discovery, translational and implementation sciences in Health R&D, Climate Sciences and Agricultural R&D priorities in Africa.

The CSO oversees SFA Foundation's scientific functions, including funded projects, as well as the development of new innovations and/or products. Like other jobs for top executives, this management position combines discipline-specific knowledge with leadership and business skills to promote the efficiency, positioning for success and competitive position of SFA as a scientific leading organization in Africa.

Principal Duties and Responsibilities

Science & Programmes Strategy Development

- Lead the development of a comprehensive programmes strategy in-line with the strategy and values of the SFA Foundation and in proactively generating, identifying and pursuing opportunities in priority areas for strategic development and implementation
- Create and implement best practice vision, strategy, policies, processes and procedures to improve performance of SFA Foundation's science and innovation programmes
- Stay up-to-date on scientific and technological advances, oversight research and analysis across a range of sectors, topics and fields in order to inform the development of new schemes and initiatives to be designed and managed by SFA Foundation.

Partnership Building, Resource Mobilization and External Representation

- Lead the development and implementation of a strategic, goal-based development plan to attract, build, and maintain effective and mutually beneficial relationships with individuals, communities, foundations, funders and corporations capable of contributing significantly to SFA Foundation
- Keep abreast of the trends within the STI funder environment to ensure funding diversification initiatives both locally and internationally are in place to strengthen scientific and innovation programmatic funding
- Build networks with a range of science ecosystem actors at senior levels and bring in new opportunities for the organisation by drawing in new partnerships while supporting the ED and executive management team to deepen and to maintain existing partnerships
- Aply represent SFA in various local and international forums, meetings, and visits which require liaison, collaborations and negotiations

with current and potential partners which includes institutions, funders, government agencies, science advocacy groups, local/African and global meetings etc.

- Knowledge of the fields of sustainability reporting and how sustainable funding can be achieved by SFA Foundation as an African funder, and by research and academic institutions to achieve global competitiveness
- Engage with African governments how they can gradually increase local resources to priorities for Africa as part of the ethos of shifting the centre of gravity for science prioritization and decision making to Africa.

Programmatic and Team Management

- Lead the programmes management team in realizing the SFA Foundation vision around shaping the continent's STI strategies and policies; and implementing key science, technology and innovation programmes
- Supervise the implementation of all programmatic and platform activities, ensuring that performance schedules are observed, and outputs are completed and delivered according to expectation and within budget
- Work in liaison with the various stakeholders to ensure that science thematic areas, platforms and programmes and their constituent activities as approved by the board are appropriately implemented
- Provide regular reports to the board in line with the business's Key Performance Indicators (KPI) infrastructure to facilitate analysis and reporting of programmatic performance against plans and budgets, as well as strategic objectives
- Manage and lead the team, ensuring adequate staffing levels, enhance staff training, development, performance management and daily supervision to maximise efficient productivity;
- Provide technical expertise to the team, motivate and coach the team towards delivery of set goals and objectives

Principal Duties and Responsibilities

- Foster a learning environment among the programme team members to encourage learning, innovation and continuous improvement; ensure appropriate training and capacity building activities for program staff members, to support high quality programmes implementation
- Lead in development and provide implementation oversight of a monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning approach for SFA Foundation programmes and supported grants.

Performance Management and Quality Assurance Systems

- Develop and manage programme-wide performance monitoring for all science thematic pillars, platforms and programmes, through the use of relevant performance indicators and other reports
- Work with the Executive Management Team to define discovery and translational science quality standard frameworks for all elements of SFA programmes
- Lead the development of research quality management systems and impact tracking systems and deliver improvements to core processes
- Develop and manage programme evaluation processes and systems to ensure delivery of programmes is as per schedule, budget and to the agreed quality level
- Manage the programmes reporting framework by overseeing and approving all output for sharing with internal and external stakeholders as required
- Lead in the development of standards and policies on risk management across programmes and platforms – including risk identification, mitigation and reporting.
- Lead in the development of programmatic threat identification and evaluation processes as well as oversee their adoption across the programmes
- Lead in the development of different scenarios for the mitigation of possible programmatic risks and provide recommendations for the management of these scenarios.

Person Specifications

Professional Qualifications and experiences

- Doctoral-level degree, such as a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) or Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) in a relevant scientific or biomedical field or in climate sciences, or Agricultural R&D or related fields of science and innovation expertise
- Advantage in continuing education, career training and membership in professional organisations to maintain knowledge in scientific fields. Such experience demonstrates they have programmatic focus on applying business and management strategies to research and laboratory settings, which can be especially valuable for scientists across the continent who wish to transition into mentorship leadership roles, like project managers, independent lab leaders etc.
- Minimum of 10 years' experience of working in public or private sector research funding management at senior level
- A significant track record in research, grant writing and reviewing and fundraising
- Experience in developing, managing, and evaluating scientific grant programmes and grant making practices
- Sound experience in research capacity strengthening
- Knowledge and thorough understanding of science, innovation and programme design and planning
- Proven experience in successfully developing, leading, and supervising complex initiatives and high performing teams
- Proven ability to develop and manage programme / platform budgets and timelines
- Proven experience in building relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, networking, partnership building and relationship management at a senior level
- Proven experience in facilitating technical and strategic design processes, and developing workflow processes and tools to support research platforms and initiatives
- A good understanding of current international, national and pan-African issues in research priorities and pan-African agenda and how they can be addressed through best metrics of accountable management
- Sound knowledge of research and STI technical assistances processes in a similar environment - nationally and internationally.



Key Responsibilities

- **Planning and Organising:** Establishes work priorities based on plans and organises people and resources across multiple science/innovation clusters, platforms and programmes to achieve strategic objectives
- **Achieving results:** Aligns systems, processes, policies and roles to create a performance-oriented culture and acts as a role model
- **Judgement/decision making:** Coaches others on decision making techniques. Evaluates and makes decisions with long term organization impact in mind
- **Technical/Scientific credibility:** Recognised in the academic/international communities for his/her expertise. Identifies trends and opportunities and defines risk mitigation strategies in line with the SFA Foundation's programmatic needs and priorities
- **Science prioritisation:** Must stay updated on science, innovation technological advances and industry trends in biomedical and other sciences, which allows them to advise the organisation's governing body in scientific matters. This may include making recommendations on future projects, such as new research opportunities or technological ventures
- **Be a leading advocate of, equality diversity and inclusion (EDI) in SFA Foundation organisational culture, programmes and cross-cutting departments, externally in SFA grantee institutions, mentorship platforms, sharing EDI templates to uplift gender and EDI policy through requirements for support of science & innovation, programmes in Africa**
- **Strong representation and influencing skills at international levels with a proven ability to build negotiations, relationships and consensus**
- **Well-established resource mobilisation skills and contacts – including significant proven experience over many years with donor agencies**
- **Ability to build personal networks at senior levels and bring in new opportunities for the organisation by drawing in new partnerships while supporting the ED and executive management to deepen to expand while maintaining existing partnerships.**