We are recruiting for a Senior Programme Manager (Nesta Challenges)!

Overview

Nesta Challenges exists to design and run challenge prizes that help solve pressing societal problems that lack solutions. We shine a spotlight where it matters and incentivise people to solve these issues.

We have launched prizes as diverse as the £10m Longitude Prize for antimicrobial resistance, the Afri-Plastics Challenge to develop and scale innovative solutions to plastic mismanagement and the Open Up Challenge focused on accelerating access to open banking powered services for consumers and small businesses. See www.challenges.org to learn more about our work.

We are now looking for a Senior Programme Manager to lead our work with the water sector aimed at delivering transformative benefits for consumers, society and the environment.

Ofwat’s Innovation Fund is a pioneering £200m programme to unleash a wave of innovation in the water sector and tackle some of the major challenges of our time. As part of this we have launched three competitions so far and the Senior Programme Manager will lead on the design and delivery of the next phase of competitions together with our delivery partners Arup and Isle Utilities.

The competitions are complex and high profile and this role offers someone the opportunity to work at the forefront of innovation for public benefit in the water sector.

20 consortiums have been awarded funding so far and examples of their innovations include technology that can decarbonise wastewater treatment, leak detection using dark fibre and restoration of seagrass in the UK.

The role

The successful candidate will have strong experience in design and delivery of complex multi-stakeholder programmes and be confident managing a diverse delivery team including several partner organisations.

They will bring a strategic mindset to supporting our partners and engaging with diverse stakeholders, and will be happy navigating through complexity to develop and execute ambitious plans.

They will be a confident leader, communicator and facilitator who is passionate about innovation, and excited by its potential to help the water sector to better meet the needs of, and create long-term value for, customers, society and the environment.

Strategy
• Lead all aspects of the strategic development of one of our more complex prizes, exercising judgement, solving problems and creating opportunities at a programme level.
• Complex prizes will be of significant size, difficulty and risk and involvement will span all phases.

Programme Management
• End to end prize planning and implementation, including identification and mitigation of both short and long term risks - anticipating and adapting to circumstances and seizing opportunities that retain and improve quality of delivery.
• Determining appropriate milestones and KPIs, monitoring progress and driving strong impact evaluation strategies.
• Driving the strategic implementation of EDI principles.

Communications & Events
• Planning and facilitating workshops.
• Speaking and chairing public discussion.
• Driving strategic use of communications.

Teamwork
• Successful management of diverse teams comprising Nesta and partner organisations.
• Effective coaching and development of team members, including supporting colleagues on technical issues and creating and implementing team and organisational wide technical training.
• Effective management of performance issues.
• Working effectively with diverse Nesta departments including financial, legal and communications.
• Occasional International travel and out of hours work.

Business Development
As capacity allows this role may also be asked to get involved in business development from time to time. This would involve:

• Proactively creating new opportunities and relationships that lead to successful business development opportunities, including leading new business pitches, bids and proposals.
• Leading consultancy work for clients interested in challenge-driven innovation, including designing and co-convening workshops and writing reports.

The Person - knowledge and experience of:

Relevant domain expertise
• A background in government, policy, consulting or regulation
Strong programme and client management

- Leading the whole lifecycle of complex projects, exercising sound judgement, decision making, problem solving, planning and organisation, strategic thinking and creativity. Complex prizes will be of significant size, difficulty and risk and involvement will span all phases.
- Leading relationships and building partnerships with demanding clients for who you have delivered such projects.
- Taking initiative and being highly productive, results orientated and quality focused.

Strategy, partnership building and business development

- Leading diverse sector partnerships and negotiating complex programme scopes and budgets with demanding partners and backers to ensure resources and timescales match ambition.
- Developing and maintaining productive long term relationships with key stakeholders.
- Maximising business development opportunities including instigating relevant new conversations and converting these.

Leadership, Teamwork and People Management

- Coaching and guiding other members of the team, delegating effectively, empowering and motivating others, fostering teamwork, developing people and managing performance.
- Providing strategic direction and supporting and directing others through complex stakeholder and programmatic challenges, through effective communication, influencing and active listening, empathy and openness to diversity.
- Taking ownership of responsibilities, exercising adaptability, open mindedness and integrity.

An enquiring mind, able to apply this to complex issues

- Providing strategic direction and exercising excellent judgement supporting and directing others through complex stakeholder and programmatic challenges.
- Ability to apply thinking in fields of emerging inclusive technologies and services and appreciate the implications for social benefit.

Excellent communications skills

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to lead communications projects and develop strategic communications skills within the project teams.
What we offer

Salary: circa £56k plus array of benefits, including health cash plans, dental insurance, the ability to buy and sell annual leave, eyecare vouchers and more

Location: This role is based in Central London, Blackfriars with hybrid working with at least 2 days per week in the office

Term: Fixed term contract

Hours: This is a full-time role but we offer a range of flexible working arrangements and encourage our people to take advantage of them. Many do.

At Nesta, we believe that a diverse workforce leads to an organisation that is more innovative, more creative and gets better results.

We want our workforce to represent the diversity of the people and communities we serve. We also want our workplace to be one where different experiences, expertise and perspectives are valued, and where everyone is encouraged to grow and develop.

This means that when we are recruiting, we actively seek to reach a diverse pool of candidates. It also means that we are happy to consider any reasonable adjustments that potential employees may need to in order to be successful.

We recognise the importance of a good balance between work and home life, so we do everything we can to accommodate flexible working, including working from home, compressed or part-time hours, job shares and other arrangements.

Please just let us know in your application or at any stage throughout the process (and beyond) if these are options you’d like to explore.