

JOB DESCRIPTION: PAST CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (November 2024)

PAST, the Palaeontological Scientific Trust, was founded in 1994 to preserve and promote Africa's rich fossil heritage and to fund palaeontological research and education across the continent. Through research, education and promoting a public understanding of where we come from, PAST aims to benefit humankind in the present through a knowledge of our shared origins.

Reporting to the PAST Board and based at the Evolutionary Studies Institute at Wits University in Johannesburg, the CEO takes full responsibility for the successful and sustainable functioning of PAST, driving the vision and the mission of the organization at a strategic level and keeping it vibrant and relevant, thus leading the organization into its next chapter.

Key responsibilities include:

1. Governance: Liaising closely with the board and keeping them apprised of major developments
2. Stakeholder relationships: Managing all higher-level relationships with donors, partners and stakeholders
3. Fundraising and business development: Actively fundraising, building relationships with ongoing and new donors
4. Report writing and oversight of reports to board, donors etc.
5. Oversight and overall management of all PAST projects and programmes
6. Overseeing the research grants programme
7. Advocacy and outreach
8. Overseeing all financial and operational aspects of the organization

1. Governance

- Ensuring that the required Board meetings take place
- Preparing reports to the Board including Board packs and the Trustees Report for the Annual Financial Statements
- Overseeing the completion of the Annual Financial Statements in conjunction with the financial officer
- Maintaining communication with the Board and PAST's International Advisors on a regular basis

2. Stakeholder Relations

PAST works with many partners and stakeholders and it is a key function of the CEO to ensure that all relationships run smoothly and effectively to ensure that PAST is able to fulfil its mission. This includes liaising with stakeholders at all levels including:

- Academics and scientists
- Donors
- Senior education professionals
- University and museum officials
- Grant applicants and awardees
- Service providers and other partners

3. Fundraising and Business Development

This key aspect of the CEO role involves:

- Identifying influential people and sourcing new funding opportunities
- Recruiting new members to PAST's Shared Origins Club
- Writing new and renewal funding proposals
- Securing fundraising (closing the deal)
- Liaising with all donors, past and future, and maintaining close donor relationships

- Ensuring that all donor reports are prepared and submitted timeously

4. Report writing

The CEO has overall responsibility for all PAST reports, proposals, written submissions etc. This includes:

- Reports for Board meetings
- Proposals and reports to donors
- PAST Annual Report
- All other PAST publications

5. Project and Programme Management

The CEO is responsible for the management of all PAST projects and programmes and campaigns. This includes:

- Guiding the operation and development of the research grants programme in conjunction with the Chief Scientist
- Managing and overseeing the school education programme
- Overseeing the public understanding programme

6. Grantmaking

- Screen applications in conjunction with the Chief Scientist and Scientific Advisory Committee
- Ensure that the Board approves grant decisions
- Ensure timeous notification of funding decisions to applicants
- Oversee disbursement of awards in conjunction with the financial officer
- Track grantee progress
- Spotlight select grantees on PAST's social media platforms

7. Advocacy and Marketing

The CEO is responsible for overseeing the PAST brand. This includes:

- All campaign management
- Marketing the organization at all opportunities
- Overseeing the production and dissemination of PAST media, social media and publications
- Hosting events
- Advocating for the organization and its needs
- Advocating the relevance of the science to society today

8. Overseeing the finances and management of the staff

a. Overseeing the finances includes:

- Coordinating with the finance officer around expenses and disbursements
- Drawing up budgets including a high-level budget for the organisation
- Overall responsibility for annual financial statements and ensuring clean audits

b. Management of staff:

PAST currently has a small staff, but this may grow and it is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure that new staff are recruited and onboarded as required and that all staff are working to the best of their ability.

Key attributes:

- Minimum Masters-level background in science, preferably the biological or geological sciences, and ideally with training and research experience in palaeontology (origin sciences).
- Proven management skills with some experience in the financial oversight of an organisation or department
- Demonstrated skills in stakeholder and especially donor relations at a senior/executive level
- Demonstrated track record in fundraising
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written
- Exceptional ability to engage with a wide range of stakeholders
- Experience in marketing or brand management would be preferable
- Evidence of commitment to advocating PAST's philosophy of enhancing African scientific leadership in the origin sciences, educating youth and the general public about the social value of the origin sciences and embracing and promoting the ideals of PAST's All from One campaign
- Ability to advocate the relevance of the science to society today and the ability to relate the science to non-scientists in a very accessible and practical way
- Ability and experience in engaging with a Board of directors and managing the governance relationships
- A strong leader who is personable, sensitive, empathetic, with a high level of emotional intelligence
- Passionate about the mission and vision of PAST and its goal to gain recognition for Africa as a region of excellence in the field of paleontology