



Position Brief  
Chief Operating  
Officer

Forest  
Stewardship  
Council



## OVERVIEW

Reporting to the Director General/CEO, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Forest Stewardship Council is a critical leadership role responsible for overseeing the organization's key operational, compliance and service functions, including human resources, finance, legal, procurement, and IT support. These core functions support in more and less direct ways the daily functioning of the global FSC Network comprised of field consultants, experts, FSC Network Partners, and FSC Branch offices present in over 60 countries worldwide. Overseeing total headcount of approximately 50 people, the COO will work closely with the CEO and other senior leaders to ensure the efficient, effective, and aligned functioning of FSC's internal operations, enabling the organization to achieve its mission, vision, [strategy](#), goals and security aiming to shield FSC from misconduct, malpractice and claims.

This and other C-suite roles at FSC International will also assume a Managing Director post for other FSC legal entities which includes the assumption of legal liability according to German law. The COO will play a vital leadership role by modelling and reinforcing a culture of thoughtful problem solving, analytically informed decision-making, organizational learning, and the highest standards of professionalism and operational delivery.

This will be done through seeking and implementing ways of communicating, operating, and achieving goals more efficiently while balancing complexity and attendant risk with ensuring the competitive edge of FSC.

## KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1. Strategic Leadership & Operational Oversight:

- ▶ Collaborate with the CEO and senior leadership team to develop and implement the organization's strategic objectives and operational plans and to ensure that the organization's talent and people strategy, investment strategy, its organizational model and IT services reflect and support the strategic objectives.
- ▶ Provide strategic guidance and leadership to ensure operational excellence and goal achievement.
- ▶ Develop and track systems and metrics for measuring of the KPIs to ensure achievement of the strategic plan and ensure high levels of performance and continuous improvement.
- ▶ Establish and maintain efficient processes, policies, and procedures through increasing use of digitalization and automation across departments to drive organizational success.
- ▶ Represent FSC in external partnerships, collaborations, and industry forums as needed.

### 2. Team Management & Development:

- ▶ Foster collaboration and communication across departments to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities as well as alignment with organizational goals.
- ▶ Lead in a participatory style that motivates team members and fosters a culture of excellence, productivity, quality, accountability, innovation, continuous improvement, and success.
- ▶ Inspire, coach, develop, and provide direct oversight to team members; use feedback, delegation, and empowerment to grow leadership capabilities and identify potential successors.
- ▶ Support the further growth and role of the specialized teams with their executive department heads and empower and shield them in their compliance roles.



### 3. People & Culture:

- ▶ Partner with the Chief People Officer in overseeing all aspects of human resources, including recruitment, talent development and retention, workforce planning, performance management, and employee engagement.
- ▶ Support and promote the DEI initiatives within the organization.
- ▶ Work with HR to ensure that recruitment and talent development processes are efficient, effective, and aligned with the organization's goals, that a training and development function is created to ensure that the organization has a pipeline of capable leaders who are trained and developed for growth and continuous improvement.
- ▶ Ensure compliance with labor laws and regulations, as well as the development and enforcement of HR policies and procedures.

### 4. Finance:

- ▶ Partner with the Head of Finance in overseeing and modernizing the organization's financial processes and operations, including budgeting, financial planning, financial reporting, and stewardship and investment.
- ▶ Work with the finance team to ensure effective financial controls and risk management practices are developed and maintained.
- ▶ Ensure compliance with FSC's fundraising efforts and streamlining efforts in successful and rightful financial transactions and money flows globally.

### 5. Legal & Compliance:

- ▶ Partner with the Head of Legal who oversees legal affairs of the FSC Group, which covers in particular contract management, insurance portfolio management, intellectual property matters including trademark portfolio management and license management, and provides support in various legal affairs relevant for the corporate group, such as corporate, tax, labor, antitrust, competition, IT and data protection, public and environmental laws in collaboration with external legal and tax counsels.
- ▶ Ensure compliance with all relevant laws and regulations, including those related to non-profit organizations, environmental standards, and certifications while taking into account the delicate balance between ensuring rigorous legal compliance and enabling the organization to make informed business decisions.

### 6. Procurement:

- ▶ Ensure procurement processes and vendor relationships are cost-effective, high quality, and ethically sourced.
- ▶ In collaboration with the Procurement Department, develop and implement procurement policies and procedures that align with FSC's mission and values.

### 7. IT Support:

- ▶ Support the Head of IT Support in managing the organization's technology infrastructure, systems, and security.
- ▶ Champion opportunities for technology improvements that enhance operational speed and efficiency.



## KEY LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

- ▶ **Strategic Clarity:** Envision the future, develop a clear strategy, and enable innovation to drive sustainable organization performance.
- ▶ **Organizational Alignment:** Define, develop, and align plans, structures, and systems within and across business units to optimize the delivery of strategic outcomes to reach the goals of the global strategy. Attainment of goals is monitored through SMART goals and easily understood metrics.
- ▶ **Results/Change Execution:** Drive the execution of plans or change initiatives towards delivering successful outcomes at pace to reach the goals of the global strategy.
- ▶ **Talent Developer:** Attract, inspire, and develop talent to maximize their contribution as well as secure a sustainable pipeline of leaders and other key talent.
- ▶ **Team Builder:** Enhance and sustain collective performance by creating, developing, and championing high-performing teams. Promote a team culture of collaboration and mutual accountability.
- ▶ **Stakeholder Influencer:** Identify and cultivate influential relationships with the Board of Directors, members, and other key stakeholders with an ambassadorial impact that creates and drives value for the organization. Deal effectively and wisely with tensions and conflicts and use it as an opportunity to create new areas of growth.
- ▶ **Leadership Agility:** Deal effectively with new and unfamiliar situations by developing sustainable solutions despite multiple dimensions of complexity; optimize the contribution and impact of team members and employees; ambitiously reach for higher goals; and pursue and champion personal growth through challenging and stretching contexts.

## EXPERIENCE NEEDED AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IDEAL PROFILE

The COO will need:

- Passion for the mission and a genuine desire to bring best practices to it.
- At least fifteen years of progressively responsible experience with a minimum of 5 years of executive management-level experience in strategy and/or operations
- Experience working and leading in large, international organizations, preferably with some combination of not-for-profit, public sector, and/or commercial exposure.
- Degree or equivalent experience in a related field. (e.g., Finance, Operations Management, Business Management, Business Administration).
- Exceptional project management, consultative, and facilitation skills and demonstrable experience supporting teams in Finance, IT, Legal, Procurement, and Human Resources functions.
- Exceptional written and oral communications skills and A servant leadership approach that aims to ensure cross-organizational communication to ensure efficiency.
- Outstanding interpersonal skills, ability to work effectively at all levels of the organization, and demonstrated talent for collaboration, team building, and relationship management.
- Strong appreciation for legal and/or regulatory frameworks balanced with a common-sense approach to problem solving.

## Chief Operating Officer



- A keen understanding of the regulatory landscape, effective risk assessment, and the ability to guide the organization in managing legal considerations within the context of strategic objectives.
- Ability to advertise and defend the roles of and employees behind HR, Finance, Legal, Procurement and IT Support in front of the FSC Board or Directors, CEO, Senior Team and entire staff body.
- Flexibility, resilience, and the ability to thrive under pressure.
- A bias for continuous improvement and action to achieve it.
- The diplomatic skill to guide others to consensus.
- The ability to balance discipline and rigor with innovation and creative thinking.
- A healthy sense of humor and balance of confidence and humility.

## How to Express Interest

We appreciate all expressions of interest, referrals, or nominations for this role. A comprehensive CV along with a cover letter which sets out your motivation to take on such a role and encapsulates the aspects of your experience relevant to the required criteria should be submitted, preferably by 15 February, 2024, to:

[FSC.COO@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:FSC.COO@odgersberndtson.com).

Or to arrange for a conversation in confidence, please contact:

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