



blue ventures
beyond conservation

Chief Operating Officer

APPOINTMENT BRIEF
JULY 2022

"A model for everyone working to conserve the natural life-support systems of our troubled planet."

SIR DAVID ATTENBOROUGH

Thank you for your interest in joining our team. Blue Ventures is an award-winning charity working to rebuild coastal fisheries. We are committed to making conservation work for people, demonstrating powerful win-wins for marine biodiversity and coastal livelihoods.

We have a bold ambition: we're working to create a world where small-scale fishers have bigger catches, better livelihoods and improved food security, and where healthy oceans teem with life for generations to come.

We are a diverse family of conservation and development professionals. Across 12 countries, our 300+ staff put fishers first. We fight for their rights. We support them to fulfil their potential. We supply them with everything they need to manage and protect our oceans in ways that benefit people and nature alike. Our decentralised structure keeps us close to the coastal communities we serve, and ensures the work we do is effective and sustainable.

Blue Ventures is going through a period of rapid and sustained growth, and is uniquely positioned to drive impact at scale in the marine conservation sector. We are seeking a Chief Operating Officer who will help us achieve our potential. We are truly committed to ensuring greater diversity and gender equality within our organisation and board.

If you believe that you have what it takes to succeed in this role and share our values and ambitions, then we would love to hear from you. You will find more information about the role in the rest of this pack and on our website, along with further information about our work and our plans for the future.

We look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona". The script is elegant and cursive, with a large 'F' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'a'.

Fiona Holmes

Chair of Board

A man wearing a straw hat and a white tank top is seen from the back, pulling a green rope. He is on a boat with a white hull and blue and black stripes. The text "blue ventures" is painted on the white part of the hull, with "beyond conservation" written below it in a smaller font. The background shows a beach and the ocean under a cloudy sky.

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We rebuild tropical fisheries with coastal communities

Blue Ventures is a marine conservation organisation that puts people first. We support coastal fishers in remote and rural communities to rebuild fisheries and restore ocean life.

Our work began two decades ago in Madagascar's remote coastal communities and is growing globally. Across a dozen countries, we're partnering with traditional fishers and community organisations to design, scale, strengthen and sustain fisheries management and conservation at the community level. We bring partners together in networks to advocate for reform, and share tools and best practices to support fishing communities across the globe.

Blue Ventures is growing rapidly, and we are at an inflection point in our journey, having secured multi-year support for expansion in new geographies.



500 million people
depend on small-scale fisheries

Our mission

Thriving fishers, thriving oceans.

Our vision

Our vision is a world where traditional fishers have better livelihoods and improved food security, and where healthy oceans teem with life for generations to come.



1 billion people
rely on seafood for protein



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Where we work



The role

We are seeking to appoint a Chief Operating Officer (COO) to drive the execution of Blue Ventures' mission and 2025 strategy. This new senior leadership position will play a critical role in helping us achieve the ambitious goals of our strategy, whilst also providing strategic financial leadership to the organisation.

A strategic and consultative leader, the COO will coordinate Blue Ventures' leadership and governance bodies globally, and lead major growth and change management initiatives relating to strategy, systems and structure. The role will be responsible for ensuring effective coordination between different functions across the global organisation to maintain cohesion and alignment with the strategic vision and ambition, while also ensuring operational efficiency to maximise impact and value for money, support our culture, protect our values, and enable our team to thrive. We're looking for an effective systems thinker who sees how the parts of the organisation fit together to perform as an impactful, results-orientated cohesive enterprise.

Working with leaders and their teams across the organisation the COO will lead our strategic and annual planning, ensuring it is driven by insight and achieves maximum impact for our mission. The role will champion structured goal setting across the organisation, nurturing a culture of planning, learning, reflection and review across all teams and departments, and ensuring that all colleagues understand their individual contribution to the charity's objectives and key results.

The COO will also have overall responsibility and strategic oversight for Blue Ventures' finance function, ensuring strong and professional financial management of Blue Ventures' operations globally, as well as our subsidiary and affiliate organisations. This senior leadership role is responsible for running a tight finance operation that is efficient and effective, ensuring compliance with financial regulations, preserving the assets of the organisation by minimising risk, and ensuring the fiscal and fiduciary responsibilities of the organisation are met.

The role acts as a true business partner to senior leaders across the organisation, communicating timely financial insights to shape and inform Blue Ventures' overall strategy and decision making process, and instilling a financial mindset throughout the organisation to help all parts of the business perform optimally. The COO provides decision making support to budget holders and the Senior Management Team (SMT), assists managers to evaluate financial plans, and supports economic modelling.

We are looking for a leader who is fleet-footed, open to new ideas, and who approaches work with creativity and a spirit of innovation and ambition. The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate experience of recruiting, building and developing individuals and results-driven teams, and leading and inspiring teams through periods of rapid growth and change while maintaining pace, focus and morale.

The successful candidate will have a proven track record of overseeing development and implementation of global financial systems, policies, and procedures, and forecasting and managing growth in a globally distributed organisation.

The COO will serve as a member of the global SMT and will report to the founder and CEO, whose other direct reports include the Chief Programmes Officer, the Director of People and Culture, and Blue Ventures' communications and development teams. This is a full time role based in Blue Ventures' global headquarters in Bristol or London in the UK, with regular overseas travel to work closely with colleagues, field teams and partners across Africa, the western Indian Ocean, southeast Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Responsibilities

Strategic planning, goal setting and communications

- Work closely with the founder and CEO, and across the SMT to support the delivery of our mission
- Lead strategic and operational planning processes: defining, guiding, facilitating, monitoring, and improving planning and reporting processes, and coordinating input from other senior colleagues
- Champion Blue Ventures' structured goal setting process across the organisation, ensuring all colleagues are aware of annual and quarterly goals, and that organisational objectives and key results (OKRs) are embedded in team work plans and individual performance plans
- Track the organisation's performance against the strategic plan and OKRs, producing quarterly progress updates for the team, board and external stakeholders, sharing briefings in team-wide townhalls, leadership and board meetings
- Develop and facilitate organisational learning and reflection processes that support adaptation and learning across the organisation
- Lead the provision of financial insights to inform and refine the organisational strategy
- Develop and deliver key initiatives and changes needed to meet budgetary and delivery targets
- Develop and implement a forward-looking financial strategy that addresses the changing constraints and opportunities within the sector, aligns and optimises resources to our organisational strategy for maximum impact

Change management

- Oversee large, cross-functional, organisation-wide projects and initiatives
- Plan and chair leadership convenings across the organisation, including the SMT and wider global leadership team
- Ensure our internal systems enable data-driven business decisions and our technology and tools are effective for users, streamline operations, and drive efficiency
- Build and nurture strong relationships at multiple levels with the global team, trustees, senior colleagues and funders, and strategic partnerships that advance the charity's mission and contribute to its effectiveness

Governance

- Oversee organisation of Blue Ventures' governance bodies, meetings and practices, including membership, governing documents, structures, transparency, conflicts of interest, risk management, and meeting papers
- Maximise equality, diversity and inclusion in governance – including our UK charity and international affiliate organisations
- Serve as executive liaison to support the Board of Trustees, the Board Investment Committee and Finance Audit and Risk Committee, and the American Friends of Blue Ventures (AFBV), to present critical financial information and ensure effective board oversight and governance of financial management

Financial operations

Work with the Finance Director to:

- Lead financial operations and support services for Blue Ventures and subsidiary and affiliate entities, including financial management, accounting, granting, control, reporting, and payroll
- Oversee budgeting, financial planning, regular re-forecasting and modelling
- Oversee organisation and programme-specific audits
- Promote strong financial business partnering – using clearly communicated financial information, and strong commercial and impact analysis to support good decision making
- Support development of tools and systems to provide critical financial and operational information to budget holders
- Oversee, direct, and organise the work of the finance and accounting teams
- Support financial operations of Blue Ventures' US affiliate AFBV
- Oversee management of Blue Ventures' expendable endowment, providing executive representation on the board investment committee

Policies and procedures

- Oversee the development and implementation of policies, procedures and systems to ensure smooth operations and minimise risk
- Support progress towards more efficient financial operations, harmonising financial and operational systems (process, and technology) across the organisation

Miscellaneous

- Oversee all regulatory requirements, legal interactions, procurement, insurance and contracts
- Lead the development of Blue Ventures' carbon positive strategy to reduce emissions and offset unavoidable emissions
- Ensure globally consistent approaches in place for management of organisation premises and equipment
- Serve on the global SMT; participating in key decisions relating to strategic initiatives, business model, resource allocation, and operational execution; collaborating with other leaders to ensure alignment of global initiatives
- Oversee organisational risk register including regular and comprehensive review of risks to ensure adequate mitigations are in place

Team development

- Oversee, direct, and organise the work of the digital, finance, accounting, project management, grants and contracts teams
- Promote a culture of high performance and continuous improvement that values learning and a commitment to quality
- Ensure staff members receive timely and appropriate training and development
- Mentor and develop staff using a supportive and collaborative approach: assign accountabilities; set objectives; establish priorities, and monitor and evaluate results



Who

Full finance professional qualification (ACCA/ACA or equivalent)

A seasoned leader, with a minimum of 10 years of experience in developing and implementing operational strategies and systems in complex environments and/or low-resource contexts

Strong facilitator with significant experience leading planning and review processes at an organisational level

Substantial experience of successfully managing finance functions in multi-country and global organisations

Experience of successfully leading major financial transformation initiatives and programmes

Prior experience in a senior finance position, including substantial Board and Board Committee experience

Experience of sponsoring, planning and/or managing major projects

Experience of developing and delivering multi-year strategic plans, ideally using OKRs

Proven ability to work collaboratively with others in a complex organisation with multiple teams and functions, demonstrating team building and facilitation skills

Experience of building an inclusive intercultural environment where staff of all backgrounds can thrive

Demonstrable experience of successfully empowering, motivating, managing, and mentoring staff from diverse backgrounds (including remote/virtual management)

Excellent communication skills, and ability to convey complex messages clearly in presentations, meetings and written form, and to connect with people of all seniority levels and cultural backgrounds

We would also love to see

Experience as a senior executive of an international non-profit or social enterprise

Experience of living and working in low income and/or tropical coastal contexts relevant to our work

An advanced degree in business, organisational development, or non-profit management

You will be a great fit if

You show a commitment to Blue Ventures' mission and values, evidenced by exhibiting a high level of personal and professional integrity, humility and humanity

You demonstrate a strong bias for action and comfort with the uncertain; you are motivated to move forward, make decisions, and finalise details quickly once information is available

You've shown a willingness and ability to challenge the status quo creatively and productively. You have an analytical mindset and orientation toward measurement, outcomes and continuous improvement and learning

You value in others, and yourself, data-driven and consultative decision making. You think critically and put a high value on offering and receiving constructive feedback and criticism

You're a natural relationship builder and have a proven ability to work collaboratively with others in a complex organisation, demonstrating team building and facilitation skills. You enjoy collaboration and have a genuine interest in learning from and developing others

You're a people person who takes pride and pleasure in developing talent and creating safe, happy, productive and engaging workplace cultures and environments for staff at all levels and from varied backgrounds. You crave building teams, finding talent, nurturing relationships, and tackling challenging people-related issues

You are a passionate professional who combines strong leadership skills with patience and a humble approach

You're able to engage people's energies, hearts and minds in service of a mission. You use exemplary interpersonal skills to establish relationships of trust and influence

You show self-motivation, flexibility, and the ability to work and thrive in a fast-paced, energetic, entrepreneurial environment

You're trustworthy in managing sensitive situations and information; you are discrete, professional, and possess excellent judgement

You're detail-oriented and compliance-minded; you enjoy dotting i's and crossing t's

You are comfortable with a playfully professional workplace culture

Why work with us

Mission: We operate at the frontline of some of the world's most pressing environmental and social problems, innovating effective and scalable responses with tropical coastal communities. We are recognised as a transformative force in our sector.

Working style: We're a fast-moving social enterprise, quick to embrace and implement promising ideas without bureaucracy.

Autonomy: We expect and support our staff to take a lead in their own work, offering scope for creativity and strategic input.

Professional development: We challenge and support our staff to grow their skills, providing considerable exposure to different work experiences and training opportunities.

Adventure: We offer extensive opportunities for travel, working in diverse environmental and cultural contexts.

Family: We look out for one another as we work closely together in challenging situations, celebrating successes and spurring each other on when the going gets tough.

Values: Our organisational values are central to everything we do:



Communities First

Above all, we listen to community needs, responding in a sensitive and pragmatic way for lasting benefits.



Innovation & Courage

We're resourceful and creative. We're prepared to take risks and challenge broken paradigms.



Passion & Belief

Our mission is urgent and critical, we believe that our models work, and we're determined to get the job done.



Openness & Humility

We're an open source social enterprise. We work in a transparent and collaborative way to share what we learn.



Valued People & Effective Teams

We work in diverse and inclusive teams where all members have a voice and influence.



Grounded in Evidence

We have high standards and aren't afraid to be self-critical. If something doesn't work, we change track until we're on the right course.



How to Apply

The preferred method of application is online at www.berwickpartners.co.uk/86479

If you are unable to apply online please email your application to response.manager@berwickpartners.co.uk

All applications will receive an automated response. An application must include both a CV and a cover letter.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Diversity Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process.

We encourage applications from all individuals regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, and evaluate all candidates based on merit. We welcome candidates from countries in which Blue Ventures operates. We offer a supportive environment for professional development, as well as a competitive salary and benefits package.

This appointment brief details the main duties and responsibilities for the position. However team members are required to show flexibility in their approach to work and be willing to undertake other tasks that are reasonably allocated to them but which are not part of their regular job description.

We are a mission-driven organisation, and senior staff in particular are expected to show willingness to adapt to unexpected changes that come with growth – this may include occasional work whenever or wherever requested by their line manager. Where any task becomes a regular part of someone's responsibilities, the job description will be updated in consultation with the team member.

Blue Ventures is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young and vulnerable people and expects all members of staff to share this commitment. We take a zero tolerance approach to anyone who contravenes our safeguarding and protection policies. All candidates will be asked questions on safeguarding and child protection.

Recruitment for this role is being managed by Berwick Partners. For detailed information on how we process your personal data, please review Berwick Partners' privacy policy website <https://www.berwickpartners.co.uk/privacy-policy/>

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by Berwick Partners as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

If you have any queries or would like more information in regard to this document, please contact:

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