

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Head of International Growth
MANAGED BY:	Director of Strategic Partnerships and Stakeholders
GRADE:	HoS 2

THE ROLE

The Head of Head of International Growth will provide leadership for the organisation's innovation, investment and global engagement agenda, positioning the region as a leading destination for technology-related growth, international collaboration, research commercialisation and inward investment.

The postholder will play a lead role in connecting the MCA with the region's research-intensive universities, R&D institutions, technology businesses and strategic investors to accelerate economic growth, strengthen priority sectors and develop globally competitive propositions.

Working closely with senior leaders at the MCA, universities, investors and civic partners, the postholder will shape an evidence-led international engagement framework, assess the strategic value of existing partnerships and networks, and identify priority markets, innovation opportunities and investor relationships. The role will also strengthen how international civic networks, innovation assets and mayoral diplomacy are leveraged to attract investment, accelerate delivery and support long-term regional ambitions. It will ensure tight alignment with skills, business support, infrastructure and place agendas to maximise impact.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

International Development

- Work with the Director of Partnerships to set and coordinate the region's international engagement and strategic innovation partnership approach.
- Provide strategic intelligence on global investment, innovation and technology trends.
- Advise senior leadership on emerging international risks and opportunities.
- Represent the region in international innovation and research forums.
- Support the Mayor and Executive Team with strategic international engagement.

- Drive a compelling narrative that supports long-term regional positioning, investor confidence and international visibility. Work with the Head of Partnership Development to develop a prioritised innovation portfolio that accelerates high-impact programmes, and strengthens growth and influence.
- Identify and develop international and regional partnerships linked to technology, research, innovation adoption, international collaboration and strategic sector positioning. And develop international narratives and thought leadership to enhance the region's global reputation.

Managing Relationships

- Develop strategic relationships with universities, Catapult centres, research institutions, technology firms, investors and government partners to strengthen the region's international and technology profile.
- Maintain strong partnerships with funders, stakeholders and sector representatives to maximise partner engagement and future support.
- Ensure partnerships have clear purpose, shared objectives, appropriate decision making and performance oversight, leading to high quality outcomes.
- Act as a credible representative of the MCA within partnership forums and networks maintaining professional relationships with international and domestic partners.
- Promote a culture of mutual support and shared ownership of regional outcomes.
- Lead the development of strategic relationships with priority international cities, regions, institutions and innovation clusters.
- Coordinate international engagement activity across mayoral priorities and regional partners.

Maintain oversight of strategic partnership initiatives and international engagement activity. System working and collaboration

- Work with the Director of Partnerships to develop an international engagement framework defining the roles of the mayor, officers and partners, including clear priority markets, strategic technology partnerships, research collaborations and targeted investor engagement plans to strengthen global influence and attract inward investment.
- Build compelling business cases which articulate customer propositions, explain the market opportunity and which are supported by a robust financial case, including expected return on investment.
- Manage budget for new partnerships, programmes and research; provide and commission expert insight on new opportunities as required; report against returns of investment.
- Identifying and resolving risks, issues and managing dependencies so all strategic outcomes and benefits can be realised across the region.
- Promote a culture of commercial awareness, partnership working, technology adoption entrepreneurial thinking across the organisation, which may include workshops, training, briefings and advice; help to facilitate the development of good ideas from around the organisation.

- The postholder is responsible for setting clear behavioural standards for their team and empowers and motivates their staff and colleagues to deliver high quality services in pursuit of WECA's strategic goals.
- Support WECA's role as a strategic convener, strengthening collaboration across sectors.
- Carry out specific corporate roles and assignments and such other duties commensurate with the role.
- Will be required to deputise across the Directorate as required.

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS AND EXPECTATIONS

Heads of Service are expected to role model the values of the MCA through their behaviours. Leaders are expected to:

Lead with Ambition

Sets high expectations for outcomes and performance and takes personal ownership for delivery.

Work Collaboratively

Actively works across boundaries, prioritising organisational outcomes over functional silos.

Act Inclusively

Create inclusive, high-performing teams and environments where people can contribute and succeed

Lead with Confidence

Takes timely, evidence-based decisions and owns the consequences.

Drive Innovation & Improvement

Continuously improve services, systems and ways of working in line with the Target Operating Model.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Degree in International Relations, Business or equivalent professional experience.
- Knowledge of relevant legislation, regulations, national policies and professional best practice.
- Understanding of the Nolan Principles of Public life.

Experience

- Experience of developing international partnerships, innovation ecosystems or strategic collaboration initiatives. Experience of building compelling business cases which articulate customer propositions, explain the market opportunities and risks and are supported with a robust financial case that can stand up to scrutiny.
- Experience managing strategic partnership or development funding. Leading strategic partnership and collaboration negotiations with senior stakeholders. Experience of working in a complex stakeholder environment at a senior level demonstrating the ability to develop and maintain effective relationships, ensuring that internal and external stakeholders.
- Influencing International organisations, third sector institutions or local Authorities to coordinate, co-develop and deliver collaborative solutions on a regional scale.
- Experience of working with research-intensive universities, technology organisations, innovation institutions, investors or key sectors to deliver economic growth and strategic partnerships.

Skills and Competencies

- Excellent interpersonal, negotiation and influencing skills, capable of dealing with both internal and external contacts at the highest level.
- The ability to analyse complex data and communicate them simply and persuasively both verbally and in writing to support decision-making.
- Skilled at negotiating, lobbying and coaching stakeholders to reach an agreement for the benefit of those who live, work or visit the region.
- Curious mind and willingness to challenge with a strong understanding of emerging technologies, global economic trends and the changing innovation landscape, drawing on an informed view about the future of the organisation, and a keen interest in developments across relevant industries and markets.
- Prepared to question the status quo and move beyond current convention, stretching others' thoughts to help realise ambitious goals.
- Committed to working in fast-paced, environments, bringing positivity and optimism.
- Managing complex relationships in a political environment for the good of the public, ensuring high quality delivery.
- Skilled at working with large complex data sets, to identify trends and risks, allowing an organisation to lead the way through high quality outcomes.

DESIRABLE

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Senior-level experience working in or alongside combined authorities, local authorities or complex partnership-based public sector environments, with a strong understanding of devolution and mayoral governance.

