FOUNDATION SMALL

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

SMALL FOUNDATION

SEARCH MANAGED BY
TAFUTA ASSOCIATES

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ABOUT SMALL FOUNDATION

Small Foundation is a philanthropic foundation with charitable status registered in Ireland. Our vision is an Africa free from extreme poverty. Our mission is to catalyse income-generating opportunities for extremely poor people in rural sub-Saharan Africa.

Small Foundation's goal is to collaborate with those creating the environment for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to thrive and deliver opportunity at scale. In particular, we aim to work with intermediaries that increase availability of the finance, social and human capital, knowledge, technology and markets required by a thriving, commercially viable MSME ecosystem. We flexibly use grants, debt, equity and non-financial support to achieve our impact objectives.

Small Foundation is integrating AI and other new technologies into how we work, building systems that prioritise efficiency, effectiveness and impact. These systems reflect our culture: we are a learning organisation, we put collaboration at the heart of our work, we are innovative and willing to take risks, and we strive for impact. All team members are expected to use AI tools confidently and responsibly, in line with our policies on data protection and confidentiality. Human judgement remains at the centre of decisions that affect our partners.



THE ROLE



Job Summary

The Network Executive, based in Lagos, will be part of Small Foundation's Network Practice, reporting to the Networks and Systems Lead. The role will support the work of the foundation through the continued development of the Network Practice, working closely with colleagues across Small Foundation, including the Investment Practice, Operations, and Impact Management and Learning (IML).

Small Foundation's vision for its Network Practice is to support a portfolio of network partners in service of our vision, mission and goal, and to build recognition of impact networks as a way of tackling complex problems. Our 2025 Impact Report shows what this looks like in practice, through the voices of the network leaders and members we work alongside. The Network Executive will play a key role in delivering this vision.

THE ROLE

Key Responsibilities

Partner sourcing and grantmaking

- Find and review potential network partners, screening for strategic alignment, opportunity for systemic impact, risk, financial additionality and position within Small Foundation's portfolio, and make recommendations for decision in line with Small Foundation's decision-making framework.
- Distil analysis into investment documentation to advance through Small Foundation's investment process, engaging with colleagues on strategic fit, impact management and financial analysis.
- Manage grant processes efficiently, ensuring network partners receive clear guidance, and facilitate payments in line with partnership agreements.

Partnership management

- Support the onboarding of new network partners and manage an assigned set of existing network partnerships, understanding each network's operational context and monitoring progress towards agreed milestones.
- Apply Small Foundation's standards for good partner engagement, and plan and support how we work with partners, including at Small Foundation and partner convenings.
- Work closely with colleagues, thought partners, network funders, network coordinators and network members to support and develop effective network approaches, and share opportunities for colleagues to engage with networks.
- Apply network impact measurement frameworks and tools, such as network health surveys, and support network partners to use them, working with the IML team on analysis and reporting.

THE ROLE



Learning and network practice

- Understand the actors and dynamics in the systems our network partners work in, identifying leverage points and supporting activities that strengthen systemic outcomes.
- Collate and interpret data, qualitative learning and stories from network partners, and use them to build understanding of network approaches across the Small Foundation team and among other ecosystem actors.
- Identify and take up opportunities to share experience of adopting and applying a network approach to achieve systemic change.
- Support the continued development of Small Foundation's network thought leadership and practice, through engagement with sector experts, colleagues and like-minded funders, including contributing to tools, processes and resources for the Network Practice and its partners.
- Engage with relevant academic and grey literature on impact network approaches and their application to Small Foundation's vision, mission and goal.

Systems and new technologies

- Use AI and other digital tools confidently and responsibly in day-to-day work, such as partner research, literature reviews and synthesising partner data and stories. Check outputs for accuracy, suggest improvements to systems and processes, and share what works with colleagues.
- Manage workflows and deadlines effectively, applying Small Foundation's tools and systems to deliver quality, compliant work.

THE ROLE

Ways of working

- Share lessons learned with colleagues and apply insights to improve the Network Practice's results.

Other duties

- Represent Small Foundation at relevant conferences, convenings and seminars.
- Undertake necessary training and development, and any other duties commensurate with the grade of the post as directed by the line manager.

Location and Travel Requirements

- The Network Executive will be based in Lagos (Nigeria).
- International travel is expected to make up around 10-20% of the role.



THE ROLE

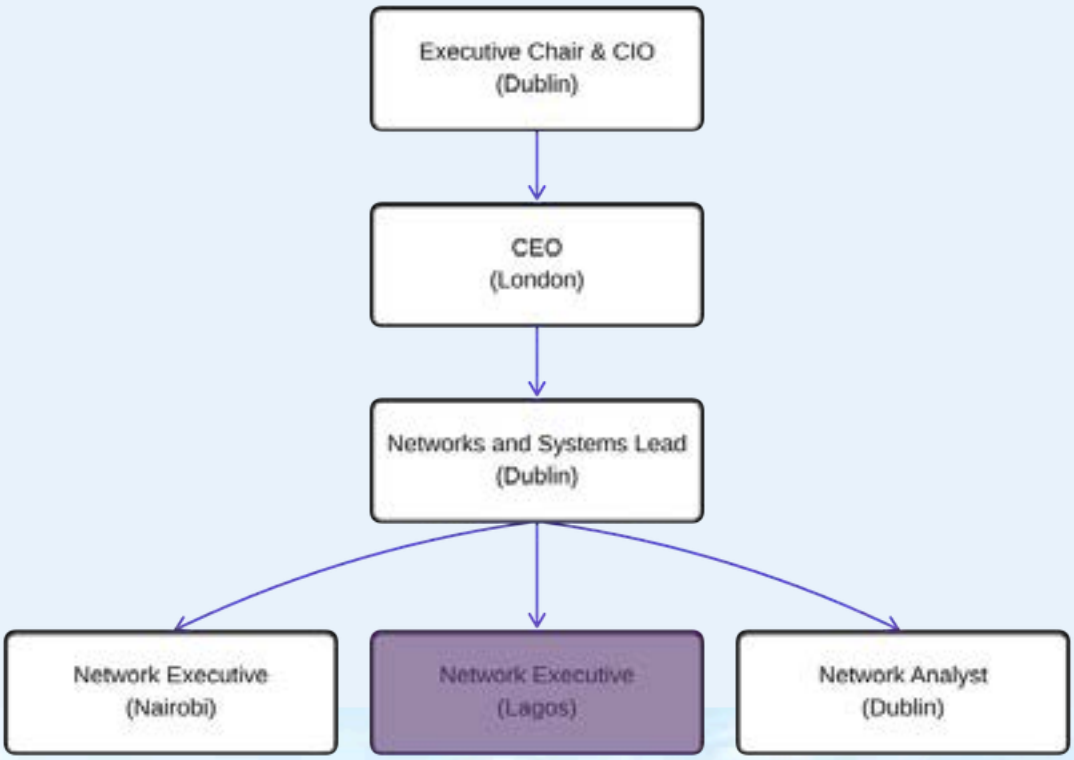
Preferred Qualifications, Skills and Experience

- Strong listening skills, and the ability to communicate clearly and succinctly with a range of stakeholders.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English (ability to speak French is an additional advantage).
- Outstanding relationship management skills, including engaging with stakeholders from a wide range of cultural and professional contexts.
- Excellent organisation skills, including managing timescales and project delivery, and the ability to work on their own initiative.
- An appreciation of complex social and economic challenges, a passion for social change, and strong motivation for Small Foundation's vision, mission and goal.
- Strong analytical skills, with attention to detail and accuracy, combined with comfort with ambiguity and an adaptive approach to problem-solving.
- Enjoyment of working in a dynamic team and with diverse partners.
- A bachelor's degree in a relevant area (master's degree preferred) and at least five years of relevant experience.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office, and willingness to learn and use new software packages.
- Confidence using digital and AI tools, or a clear willingness to learn, with good judgement about their limitations and curiosity about how new technologies can improve how we work.
- Values aligned with Small Foundation's culture: a learning organisation that puts collaboration at the heart of our work, is innovative and willing to take risks, and strives for impact.

The ideal candidate will also have:

- A sound understanding of the needs of smallholder farmers and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in rural Africa.
- Experience of systems change approaches, tools and frameworks.
- Knowledge of the network and MSME ecosystem in Nigeria and the wider West African region.
- A willingness to learn, innovate and travel.

NETWORK PRACTICE STRUCTURE





RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The recruitment process is managed by Tafuta Associates, a boutique executive search firm based in Nairobi that specialises in equipping African impact investors, foundations, advisory firms, and DFIs with the best senior talent.

- We will review applications as they arrive, so we encourage early applications.
- Final stage interviews will be conducted in person in Lagos.
- References will be taken up before the final offer of employment is made.

How to Apply

To apply, please complete and submit your application **here**.

The deadline is **Friday 4th December 2026, 5:00pm WAT.**