

**DIRECTOR AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

CANDIDATE BRIEF AND JOB DESCRIPTION

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
THE ROYAL AFRICAN
SOCIETY

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The Royal African Society

The Royal African Society is a formidable UK-based 120-year old membership charity (with both corporate and individual members), established to promote African voices and an understanding of Africa globally. It has been successful in developing a wide range of programmes, publications and events where it aims to connect, learn about, debate and celebrate all things African, reaching a global audience of over one million people. We believe the world will be a better place if African voices are heard at the centre of global conversations.

The Society runs a very diverse and extensive range of activities, often in close collaboration with outside partners who are crucial to our success.

Our main areas of activity are:

- **Connect:** we run a regular series of events, from annual lectures, major thematic conferences (e.g. African Prospects and Forecasts in 2023, Sustainability in 2022, Climate, *Conflict and Demography* in 2021, and *Mental Health in Africa* in 2019), business events, panel discussions on current issues and book launches. Our business programme brings corporate members together with policy-makers on a wide range of current and regional issues.
- **Learn:** we aim to spread accurate information and new perspectives about Africa into scholarly work and the educational system through our academic journal *African Affairs* (the top ranked academic journal on Africa), our partnership (including joint membership) with the African Studies Association of the UK, and our education programme for schools.
- **Debate:** our web-based *African Arguments* platform with over 1.5 million unique users, provides a medium for African and other experts, academics, journalists and activists to analyse and debate current political, economic, social and cultural issues across the whole continent. As secretariat to the *All-Party Parliamentary Group for Africa* (with 200 UK Parliamentarians as members), we also ensure that African issues are raised and debated in Parliament, particular on the basis of in-depth reports that we prepare every two years on key current issues (most recently, post-Brexit trade, visa problems for African visitors to the UK, Africa in the British school curriculum, and the ongoing inquiry into Africa's energy transition).
- **Celebrate:** our two major festivals *Africa Writes* and *Film Africa*, held in alternate years, are now well-established as the UK's biggest and best festivals of contemporary African literature and cinema.

In all its activities, the Society adheres to five guiding principles as an organisation: to be collaborative, transparent, independent, diverse and progressive.

The Society has offices at SOAS University of London, with whom we have an active partnership. We embrace flexible ways of working and remuneration is in line with the charity sector.

Additional information is available on our website and in our Annual Reports.

The role of the Director and CEO

The Director is the Society's Chief Executive Officer and has overall responsibility for the running of the Society, managing its staff, its finances, its strategy, programmes, public representation and reputation. They are accountable to the Society's Council and report to the Chairperson of the Council.

A core part of the Director's leadership and management aim is to drive the Society's goal to become the leading organisation celebrating culture, advising on policy and driving thought leadership about the continent. The Director will help to attract and showcase ideas and talent from Africa and its diaspora.

As such, the Director plays a key role in setting the Society's overall strategic direction, with the guidance of the Council, and then has responsibility for delivering the strategy.

This requires the active maintenance of three key relationships:

- Firstly, with the Chairperson and Council, who provide direction, oversight and support. By providing the right quantity, quality and frequency of information, sufficient transparency and the necessary background information for crucial decisions, the Director enables a fruitful and mutually supportive relationship;
- Secondly, with the extremely dedicated and hard-working team of 10 permanent (as well as other contract staff and volunteers) staff, the Director provides daily support and guidance. The Director also ensures that contract staff employed for particular projects and programmes are well-integrated into the team and enabled to work effectively.
- Thirdly, with the Society's sponsors, corporate and individual members, and external partners and stakeholders. These provide the necessary financial resources and advocacy for the Society's continued functioning and many of the means of delivery for our programmes and events. The relationships are extensive, diverse and often high level, requiring a good deal of time to cultivate and sustain. They are essential to the Society's sustainability and effective operation. They vary from the CEOs of large private sector entities, charities and public funding bodies, to senior academics, ambassadors, cabinet ministers and parliamentarians in the UK, and presidents, politicians, ministers and other senior government officials, activists and journalists from across Africa. Good links with the African diaspora in the UK are also valuable. Maintaining this wide network is a critical factor for the Society's success.

As the Society's principal spokesperson, the Director needs to maintain a close and productive relationship with all elements of the media to ensure the Society's activities receive high profile attention and deliver real impact.

The Director plays the leading role in ensuring the Society's financial sustainability by preparing a fundraising strategy, maintaining relations with key funders, and overseeing the budget process and management. They are also responsible for ensuring the Society complies with all the necessary regulatory requirements for a charity.

Personal qualities and qualifications

The Royal African Society is an equal opportunities employer and does not discriminate in any way on the basis of gender, religion, ethnicity or origin. The right to live and work in the UK is, however, necessary for the job.

The successful candidate should preferably be able to demonstrate most or all of the following attributes:

- Experience of Africa, preferably having lived in or worked with a wide range of countries or regions on the continent.
- Senior management experience, including running a fairly autonomous organisation, taking financial responsibility, and managing diverse personnel and relations with a wide range of senior and varied external stakeholders.
- An extensive network of contacts at a senior level in the UK and on the continent in government, business, civil society, the arts and the media.
- A track record in the delivery of projects, programmes and events, particularly under time pressure, with limited resources, and in partnership with other organisations.
- Experience of fundraising and familiarity with budget management.
- A good grasp of core business skills.

We will particularly be looking for candidates with the following personal qualities:

- Energy
- Strategic vision
- Inspirational leadership skills
- Excellent people skills
- Attention to detail
- Prudent financial management skills
- Understanding of how to leverage technology
- Ability to write clearly and concisely, both for internal and external consumption
- Public presentation skills, on social media, online and in in-person meetings.

Application process

Applications are invited in the form of an up-to-date CV and a covering letter explaining your motivation and qualifications for the post. These should be submitted by **27th March 2023**, to ras@teamecap.com