Chief Economist or Senior Economist – Job Description
(Salary: Negotiable, depending upon experience)

Background to the role

NEF is currently going through an exciting period of strategic and structural change, moving towards a more collaborative, cross-cutting way of working. Our aim is to establish an innovative and dynamic organisation that works effectively as whole. An important element of this will be to strengthen our public profile and policy impact, embedding a critical understanding of economics across all aspects of NEF’s work including in our research projects and policy advocacy, our external engagement with media, decision-makers and opinion formers, training, movement building and campaigning.

The Chief Economist or Senior Economist will contribute substantially to the academic and technical competence required to achieve NEF’s strategic objectives and to the conceptualisation, design, implementation and quality assurance of all NEF’s work. The successful candidate will be a professional and play a key role in developing the public profile of NEF’s work and lead outreach to a broad range of external stakeholders.

Appointment will be made at an appropriate level in the organisation depending on the experience and expertise of the successful applicant.

Purpose of the role

The overall purpose of the role is:

1. To help provide strategic vision, delivery and leadership on economic policy and research at NEF, and to inform and shape NEF’s work with sound analysis and direction.
2. To enhance and develop NEF’s external profile, its influence and impact. This will be achieved through credible and persuasive communication of NEF’s strategic ambition to key audiences - the media, opinion-formers and policy-makers.

We are looking for a person with a strong economics background, who is a clear, creative thinker with developed influencing skills, who can build relationships with and influence key players across academia, private and public sectors and civil society.

The Chief Economist will report to the Chief Executive Officer.

In this position you will be responsible for:

- Working with NEF Programmes and individuals in helping shape and inform project proposals and project implementation with sound economic thinking
- Representing NEF in public forums, including the media, events and with policy-makers and opinion formers.
- Interacting with and building relationships with senior politicians and civil servants, opinion formers, business and civil society leaders
- Working with NEF Programmes and individuals in helping shape and inform project proposals and project implementation with sound economic thinking
- Reviewing and advising on the technical quality of economics research in NEF projects
- Interacting with and building relationships and joint initiatives with leading economists and other key players in academia
• Leading on the conceptualisation, development and funding of certain priority projects

• Interacting with and building relationships with senior politicians and civil servants, opinion formers, business and civil society leaders

• Working with NEF’s Head of External Affairs and other senior staff in enhancing NEF’s external profile, impact and influence

• Working with NEF’s Chief Operating Office and other relevant staff in developing a business plan and implementation programme for NEF’s work in establishing a centre of excellence in economic research, literacy and training

• Developing NEF’s work more broadly on economics, both in your own projects and as a contributor to work across the programme areas of NEF

• Leading and developing NEF’s cadre of economists and its activities and influence within the organisation

• Fundraising and financial management for your own project initiatives

In this position you will contribute to:

• the development of a coherent and compelling agenda for a new economics based on clear principles that are supported by a strong narrative about how economics can work more effectively and for the common good

• work with NEF’s Head of External Affairs and other senior staff in enhancing NEF’s external profile, impact and influence

• work with the CEO, the Directors’ Team, Strategic Pipeline Group and External Affairs team to develop and implement NEF-wide strategy around its three principal objectives and within the context of the Strategic Pipeline

• the development and cross-NEF integration of NEF’s economic modelling work

You will have:

• An excellent understanding of contemporary debates in economic policy, broadly understood, both in the UK and overseas

• Strong technical economics skills, specifically in relation to quantitative, statistical analysis

• Strong links with and networks in academia

• A deep understanding of both orthodox and heterodox economic theory

• Experience of macroeconomic model-building (or a demonstrable aptitude for this work)

• A relevant post-graduate qualification

• A proven track record of conceptualising and executing your own research in economics

• A proven track record of conceptualising, implementing and managing policy-oriented research, action-research and/or development projects

• Good IT skills

• A publications record

Person Specification

Essential experience

• High-level creative and critical research and analysis in the field of economics
• Record of success of effective engagement with high-level opinion formers and decision makers
• Accomplished media performer
• Excellent writer and communicator
• Strong engagement / links with academia
• Strategic planning and development

Desirable experience

• Experience of macroeconomic model-building
• Complex project management
• Managing staff
• Fundraising
• Financial management (income and expenditure)

Essential qualifications and knowledge

• A proven track record of conceptualising and delivering research in economics
• A critical understanding of both orthodox and heterodox economics, including the macroeconomics of sustainability
• Understanding of UK policy making processes
• A relevant post-graduate qualification (preferably in economics)

Essential abilities

• To analyse, articulate and present complex issues clearly and concisely
• To represent NEF in a professional and culturally sensitive manner
• To facilitate and develop good team working amongst staff
• To manage resources effectively
• To initiate, plan and prioritise own work plan
• To work under pressure with often challenging deadlines and competing priorities

Essential skills

• Strong economics skills
• Strong influencing skills
• Excellent relationship management
• Excellent written and oral communications skills
• To lead and work as part of a team
• Competence in the use of IT including word-processing, the web and spreadsheets

Commitment

• Must be in sympathy with the values and aims of NEF as it seeks to establish a sustainable economy that delivers high wellbeing