



Chief Portfolio Officer

Candidate Pack

 Nairobi, Kenya





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The Opportunity

Gatsby Africa is seeking an accomplished Chief Portfolio Officer (CPO) to shape the organisation's long-term strategic direction, guide the evolution of its portfolio, and maximise its contribution to economic transformation across East Africa. Working closely with the Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer and broader Senior Management Team, the CPO will ensure that Gatsby Africa's portfolio choices, strategic investments, partnerships, government engagement, evidence generation and organisational learning work together to deliver sustainable, system-wide impact. Reporting to the Executive Director, the CPO will provide executive leadership across Gatsby Africa's portfolio, programmes, partnerships, investments, impact and government engagement functions, ensuring strategic coherence, disciplined prioritisation and organisational alignment.

The role will help shape enterprise-wide strategy, guide major investment and portfolio decisions, and strengthen Gatsby Africa's position as a trusted partner influencing economic transformation and industrial development across the region. This is a purpose-driven leadership role for a systems thinker who combines intellectual rigour with a strong bias for execution. The successful candidate will lead through influence rather than hierarchy, providing strategic oversight and coaching to a high-calibre leadership team while fostering collaboration, innovation and organisational learning. Equally comfortable operating at strategic altitude and engaging with complex implementation challenges, the CPO will help translate long-term ambition into measurable outcomes, ensuring Gatsby Africa continues to evolve as a high-performing organisation capable of delivering transformative impact.

The successful candidate will bring a deep understanding of Africa's political economy, industrial development and market systems, together with the credibility to engage governments, development finance institutions, philanthropic organisations and private sector leaders at the highest levels. As Gatsby Africa strengthens its delivery discipline, expands strategic partnerships, increases the use of innovative financing approaches and embraces emerging technologies, including AI, the Chief Portfolio Officer will play a central role in shaping the organisation's next phase of growth, influence and long-term impact.





About Gatsby Africa

Gatsby Africa (GA) is a private foundation set up by Lord David Sainsbury, with a long history of engaging in East Africa across government, business and society. We are committed to building stronger inclusive economies in East Africa, supporting the region to respond to the key trends that are shaping the future.

We do this through identifying and building industries and sectors of the future - sectors that if successful will uplift many people out of poverty. This is our purpose, the reason we exist.

We currently operate across a diverse range of sectors across Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda - Commercial Forestry, Aquaculture, Textiles & Apparel, Livestock, Global Business Services, Bio-Based Construction and Soya - and we are continuing to assess new opportunities across manufacturing and services, in addition to agriculture.

Our portfolio puts us in a strong position to deliver meaningful levels of impact for millions of people in the region and strengthens our ability to generate and share our learning with others.

As an organisation we are very rooted in East Africa. Over 90% of our staff are based and from East Africa, and our value as an organisation is largely derived from our understanding, knowledge and expertise in the region. We combine deep sector expertise with an ability to understand and navigate the political and business context in East Africa.



How We Work

We adopt an ambitious, commercial and pragmatic approach to catalysing sectors. We understand that business must make sense, and the success of sectors is driven ultimately by capable firms driving growth. We also understand that sectors operate in a local context which is complex, sometimes political, and where innovating and pioneering new transformative growth means taking risks - and that moving from pioneering firms to building broader sectors takes time and deliberate focus, building sector capabilities and supporting the government to play their role effectively.

We are set up to play this role. We are pragmatists and doers, and we like to work quickly and nimbly. We have an ability to take risks ourselves, and more importantly to support pioneer firms to take risks.

Our team structures tend to be flat and dynamic. This gives us the ability to be flexible and adaptive, and we can use any tools that are appropriate, from direct investment into business to technical assistance and research. With this flexibility, we empower team members to be entrepreneurial, and to identify and drive opportunities in the sector.

We also recognise the important role governments play in enabling, and in some instances unlocking, growth. We believe it is only by working in partnership with entrepreneurs, established firms, investors and governments that lasting and meaningful change can be secured.

We are committed to learning from our own work and that of others, and to sharing these insights across GA and with governments, partners and investors to influence decisions and drive change. We are also externally focused, engaging in global and local debates on economic transformation and supporting governments and partners to adapt and apply lessons and best practices.



The Gatsby Africa Team

The Gatsby Africa team consists of 120+ employees of 8+ nationalities with 90% of our employees are based in East Africa. Most of Gatsby Africa's sector transformation staff come from the private sector, including some of the leading management consultancies and businesses in the region such as McKinsey & Company, Deloitte, PwC, Open Capital and Adam Smith International.

Purpose of the Role

The Chief Portfolio Officer (CPO) is a member of Gatsby Africa's Senior Management Team (SMT). The CPO plays a critical role in shaping Gatsby Africa's future. Working closely with the SMT, the role helps define the organisation's long-term strategic direction, ensuring Gatsby Africa remains positioned to achieve its long-term success and five-year strategic objectives in an increasingly complex and evolving environment.

The CPO ensures that Gatsby Africa's portfolio choices, programmes, strategic investments, partnerships, evidence generation and learning agenda work together to maximise sustainable impact and drive economic transformation. The role brings together strategic insight, portfolio leadership and organisational learning to identify future opportunities, guide investment decisions and continuously strengthen Gatsby Africa's contribution to systemic change.

Leading the Portfolio, Programmes, Partnerships, Investments, Impact/M&E, External Engagement and Government Engagement functions, the CPO drives coherence across Gatsby Africa's interventions while fostering a culture of learning, innovation and strategic adaptation. The role also ensures that evidence, economic analysis, government engagement and organisational learning are translated into stronger portfolio choices, more effective programmes and greater influence on economic transformation agendas across the region. The CPO also plays a key role in strengthening Gatsby Africa's external profile and thought leadership, ensuring the organisation actively contributes to national, regional and global debates on economic transformation and industrial development.

As a strategic partner to the Executive Director, the CPO helps ensure Gatsby Africa remains focused on the opportunities that will deliver the greatest long-term impact for Africa's future.



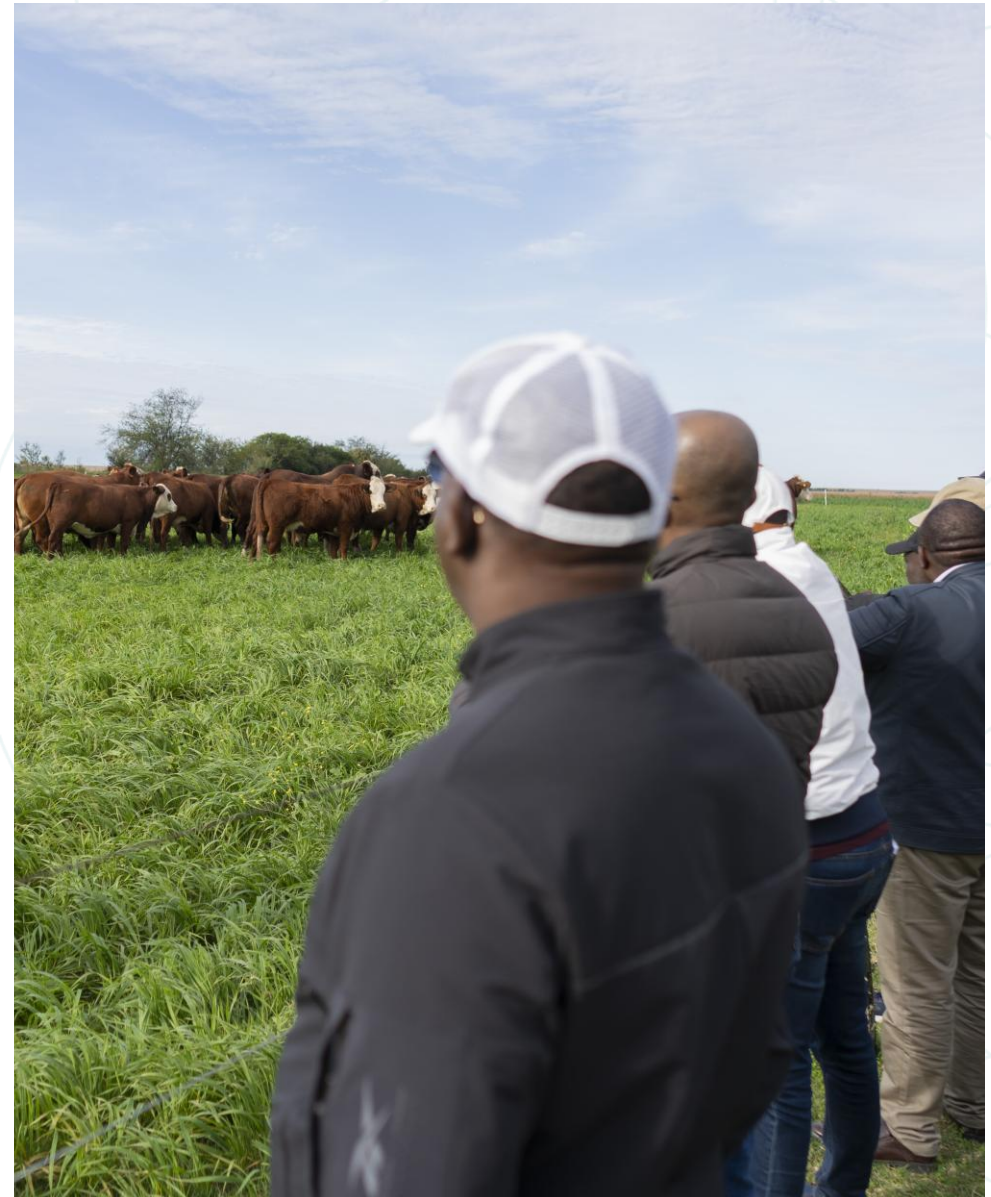
Scope of Accountability

The CPO holds executive accountability for:

- The strategic direction and evolution of Gatsby Africa's portfolio.
- Strategic oversight of Gatsby Africa's Centre of Government (CoG) work, organisational learning and external influence.
- Gatsby Africa's strategic partnerships, external influence and ecosystem engagement.
- Strategic investments, co-financing approaches and catalytic capital opportunities.
- Overall performance and delivery of GA activities.

While functional leadership rests with the respective Directors, the CPO is accountable for overall strategic oversight, performance, prioritisation, integration and alignment across the portfolio ecosystem.

The role is a critical partner to the Executive Director in shaping the long-term strategy and choices GA makes as an organisation. As such the role requires a combination of strategic thinking, relationship and partnership building alongside overseeing delivery and the creation of the right culture and capacity internally. The role entails key interfaces with the Chief Operating Officer to ensure alignment between organisational strategy, operational capability and portfolio delivery.





Job Description

Reports to	Executive Director
Direct reports	Portfolio Director, Head of Impact, Director of Government Engagement & Manufacturing, Head of Investments, Partnerships Director and Head of Insights.
Location	Nairobi

Key Accountabilities & Responsibilities

Organisational Strategy and Long-term Evolution

Accountable for strengthening enterprise-wide performance, execution discipline and organisational effectiveness across Gatsby Africa.

- Partner with SMT to define and refine Gatsby Africa's strategic direction and future positioning.
- Lead strategic thinking on the organisation's portfolio, investment priorities and long-term opportunities for impact.
- Ensure portfolio choices and resource allocation align with Gatsby Africa's North Star and five-year strategic objectives.
- Provide strategic advice to SMT and Board on portfolio performance, future opportunities and key risks.
- Champion innovation and strategic adaptation across Gatsby Africa.



Leadership and Governance

As a core member of the SMT, the CPO strengthens collective leadership, governance and organisation decision-making.

- Contribute to enterprise-wide strategy development and major organisational decisions for GA.
- Role-model Gatsby Africa's values and inclusive leadership behaviours.
- Promote a strong culture of delivery, accountability and continuous improvement across all functions.
- Maintain visibility of portfolio performance and emerging risks for the Executive Director, SMT and Executive Board.
- Advise the Executive Director, SMT and Executive Board on major partnership opportunities, investment decisions and external strategic opportunities.

Portfolio/Programme Strategy and Delivery

Accountable for the overall coherence, quality and performance of Gatsby Africa's portfolio.

- Provide strategic oversight, support and challenge to portfolio leadership.
- Ensure portfolio strategies and programme delivery remain aligned with organisational priorities.
- Support portfolio leaders in navigating challenges and foster collaboration and learning across portfolio areas.



Impact Measurement and Evaluation

Accountable for ensuring Gatsby Africa has robust systems for understanding, measuring and improving its impact.

- Provide strategic oversight to the Impact function and ensure organisational approaches to monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) remain fit for purpose
- Champion rigorous assessment of portfolio performance, contribution and impact across Gatsby Africa's programmes and investments.
- Strengthen Gatsby Africa's ability to articulate the value, influence and long-term impact of its work to Boards, funders, governments, partners and other stakeholders.
- Ensure impact measurement, evidence generation and storytelling work together to reinforce Gatsby Africa's credibility, influence and reputation in driving sector transformation.



Centres of Government Engagement

Accountable for ensuring Gatsby Africa's CoG work remains strategically focused and contributes to system-level change.

- Provide executive oversight of Gatsby Africa's CoG work supporting governments to drive economic transformation and industrial development.
- Provide strategic guidance and support to the Director of Government Engagement, ensuring Gatsby Africa's government engagement and advisory work remains aligned with organisational priorities and portfolio objectives.
- Shape and evolve Gatsby Africa's offer to governments, strengthening the organisation's contribution to economic transformation, institutional capability and delivery.
- Ensure learning and insights from government engagement are effectively captured and applied across country and sector portfolios to strengthen strategy and impact

External Engagement and Learning

Accountable for strengthening Gatsby Africa's external influence, thought leadership and organisational learning.

- Provide strategic leadership to Gatsby Africa's learning and external engagement agenda.
- Promote Gatsby Africa's reputation as a trusted partner and thought leader.
- Oversee Gatsby Africa's external insights, thought leadership and influence agenda.
- Ensure Gatsby Africa actively contributes to national, regional and global debates on economic transformation, industrial policy and sector transformation



Partnerships, Resources Mobilisation and Strategic Investments

Accountable for developing the strategic relationships, co-investment opportunities and investment approaches required to amplify Gatsby Africa's impact and long-term sustainability.

- Lead strategic thinking on how Gatsby Africa can maximise influence, leverage and additionality through partnerships and investment approaches.
- Provide oversight of Gatsby Africa's partnership strategy and key strategic relationships across government, private sector, philanthropy, development finance institutions and development partners.
- Champion opportunities for partnerships, co-financing, blended finance, catalytic capital and other innovative funding or investment approaches where appropriate.
- Oversee the development and performance of Gatsby Africa's strategic investments and investment vehicles, in alignment with organisational strategy, portfolio priorities and impact objectives.

Person Specification

Essential Experience & Capabilities

Executive Leadership and Organisational Scale

- Senior executive leadership experience within complex, multi-country organisations, with accountability for organisational performance, strategy and long-term impact.
- Track record of leading through senior leaders and enabling high-performing, multidisciplinary teams to deliver against organisational priorities.
- Experience navigating organisational complexity, ambiguity and change while maintaining strategic focus and delivery.

Strategy and Portfolio Leadership

- Proven track record of shaping organisational strategy and translating long-term ambitions into portfolio priorities, investment decisions and measurable outcomes.
- Experience providing executive oversight of diverse portfolios, programmes or strategic initiatives within complex organisations.
- Demonstrated ability to integrate evidence, performance insights and external trends into strategic decision-making and organisational planning.



Economic Transformation Expertise

- Significant experience in economic development, market systems development, sector transformation, or a related field.
- Strong understanding of economic transformation, industrial policy and broader development debates, with the ability to apply these insights to organisational strategy.
- Appreciation of how evidence, learning and innovation can be leveraged to improve development impact and organisational effectiveness.

Government and External Influence

- Significant experience engaging with senior government stakeholders, policymakers, and other influential decision-makers.
- Experience contributing to thought leadership, policy dialogue, partnership development or broader ecosystem influence.
- Strong understanding of how strategic partnerships, government engagement and external relationships can be leveraged to advance organisational objectives.

Leadership and Stakeholder Management

- Demonstrated ability to influence strategic decisions and build alignment at SMT, Board and senior stakeholder levels.
- Proven experience coaching, supporting and constructively challenging senior leaders to drive performance and organisational effectiveness.
- Substantial experience operating in African contexts, ideally within East Africa.



Leadership Behaviours

Deep alignment with Gatsby Africa's mission and commitment to African development.

- A strategic and future-focused leader who can identify opportunities for long-term transformational impact.
- Strong commitment to collaborative leadership, organisational learning and fostering an inclusive, high-performance culture.
- Leads through influence, coaching and empowerment rather than positional authority.
- Comfortable operating in ambiguity and navigating complex systems.
- Demonstrates strong judgement and intellectual curiosity.
- Builds trust, credibility and collaboration across diverse stakeholders.
- Combines strategic thinking with a strong focus on delivery and impact.
- Maintains high standards of performance, integrity and accountability.
- Demonstrates cultural awareness and inclusivity across multi-country contexts.

Desirable

- Experience in economic transformation, industrial development, market systems development, public sector reform initiatives or international development.
- Exposure to co-financing, blended finance, catalytic capital or investment approaches.
- Familiarity with emerging technologies and their implications for economic transformation and impact.



Our Values

Our set of core values serve as the foundation for the culture we strive to foster.

Ambitious

We aim high, think big and push boundaries, believing in our ability to effect long-term systemic change and catalyse economic transformation.

Innovative

We embrace new ideas, models and mechanisms and pioneer sector-led solutions; agile and brave, we take calculated risks, challenging existing structures and approaches.

Curious

We question and investigate, never accepting fixed assumptions or ways of working; always listening, we adopt a 'learn-it-all' mindset, pivoting and evolving in pursuit of continuous improvement.

Empathetic

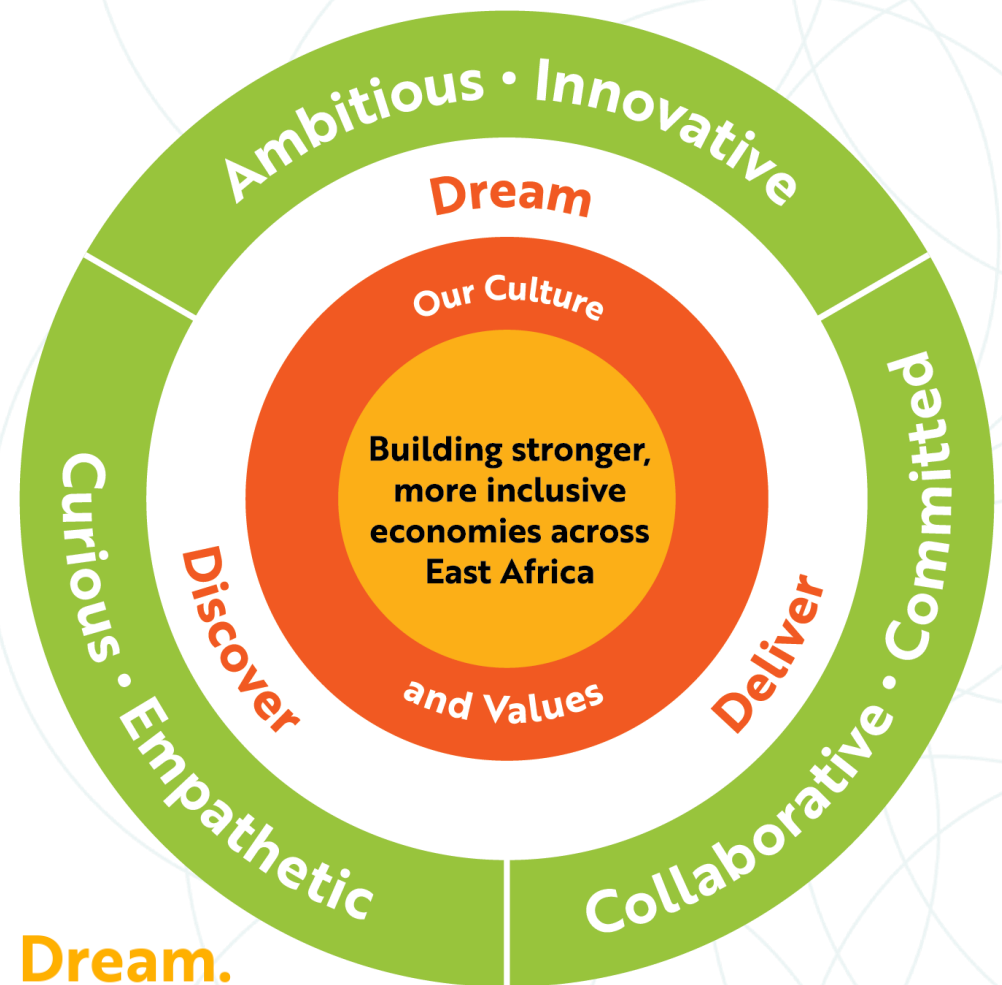
We listen deeply to others, seeking to understand their perspectives, constraints, incentives and motivations to ensure our work is targeted and informed.

Collaborative

We deliver in partnership; co-creating and convening, we work with and through others to align on shared goals, developing effective solutions together.

Committed

We are focused on delivery, combining specialist knowledge with on-the-ground experience and perseverance, with a bias for learning-by-doing to adapt and improve



Dream.
Discover.
Deliver.

Put your vision to work

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity, equity and inclusion are central to Gatsby Africa. We are committed to treating all employees and job applicants fairly, equally, and no less favourably than anyone else. We recognise, respect and value diversity and the benefits that difference can bring to our organisation.

Safeguarding

We are committed to protecting children and vulnerable adults from any harm when engaging with Gatsby Africa or its partners, and we expect all our staff to abide by our safeguarding policy.



How to apply

To apply for this opportunity, please apply through [Gatsby-Africa-Chief-Portfolio-Officer](#) by Sunday, 16th August 2026.



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