

Operations and People Lead

Duration	Long-Term, Fixed-Term	Job Level	17
Location	Brisbane	Reports To	Deputy Team Leader – Program Enablement

Palladium is a global development and consulting firm, part of the GSI Consulting Group, working alongside some of the world's leading project management and engineering organisations. We partner with governments, businesses, investors and communities to design and deliver complex programs that create lasting impact. With a presence across more than 90 countries, Palladium offers the opportunity to work on meaningful challenges, alongside talented colleagues, in environments where your work can truly make a difference.

Program Overview

The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme is a signature initiative for the Australian Government that enables workers from 9 Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and Timor-Leste to work in priority sectors in Australia. The Pacific Labour Mobility Support Program (PLMSP) builds on the successes of the Pacific Labour Facility (PLF) program, with a renewed focus on the provision of tailored support to worker sending countries to address their specific needs and priorities. Palladium is contracted to deliver PLMSP on behalf of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

PLMSP's role is to provide DFAT and governments in 9 PICs and Timor-Leste with support to enable workers to access PALM scheme in inclusive ways that maximise the benefits for the workers and national economies while minimising risks from labour mobility participation. PLMSP's primary functions include capacity building for PALM scheme labour sending units; skills development and training for PALM workers; support for returning PALM workers and their families; information system management; monitoring, evaluation, research and learning; and communications.

Purpose of Position

The **Operations and People Lead** is a member of the PLMSP Senior Leadership Team and is accountable for the strategic leadership, performance, compliance and continuous improvement of the program's Operations and People portfolio. The role ensures that financial management, procurement and contracting, operational services, human resources, risk, safeguards, safety and security effectively support program and country-level delivery.

Working within the strategic direction and governance arrangements established by the Deputy Team Leader, Program Enablement, the role translates program priorities into effective functional plans, systems, controls and services. It provides timely assurance, analysis and advice to support decision-making by the Deputy Team Leader, Team Leader and Senior Leadership Team. The role provides strategic direction and performance oversight to the Operations Senior Manager, People & Culture Senior Manager and Safety and Security Manager, while these managers retain responsibility for the day-to-day leadership and delivery of their functions within agreed delegations.

Working with children

Is this position likely to come into contact with children? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Primary Responsibilities

The primary responsibilities of the **Operations and People Lead** can be broadly described as follows:

Leadership and Performance

- Act as the senior functional adviser to the Deputy Team Leader, Team Leader, Senior Leadership Team, and DFAT on matters within the Operations and People portfolio. Lead routine and technical engagement relating to the portfolio and support the Deputy Team Leader and Team Leader on strategic, sensitive, or cross-program matters.
- Provide strategic and operational leadership in a complex, multi-region program ensuring agile, adaptive management is prioritised.
- Provide management to the Operations Senior Manager, setting clear expectations, priorities and performance standards and creating accountability for leading a large, geographically dispersed operations team across Brisbane and the ten partner countries. Support the Operations Senior Manager to enhance team capability, maintain consistent and compliant service delivery, proactively address performance and operational issues, and drive continuous process improvement.
- Provide management to the People and Culture Senior Manager, setting clear expectations, priorities and performance standards and creating accountability for leading the lifecycle of people functions including talent acquisition, onboarding and performance management, business partnering, employee relations and development.
- Provide management to the Safety and Security Manager, setting clear expectations, priorities and performance standards and creating accountability for leading operational and workforce safety and security.
- Maintain effective working relationships with relevant Palladium Corporate functions, ensuring timely access to specialist advice, alignment with corporate requirements and appropriate escalation of matters requiring corporate decision or support.

Operations and Finance

- Accountable for operations functions including program finance management, annual activity budget, high-volume and high-value procurement, contracting and grants management and office operations across six locations.
- Accountable for program expenditure management and reporting, ensuring that program finances are managed in compliance with policies and procedures. Hold accountability for the accuracy, integrity and timely delivery of program budgeting and forecasting to support informed decision-making.
- Manage, audit and enhance systems and processes for the procurement of goods, services and grants are in line with Commonwealth Procurement Rules and Commonwealth Grant Rules and Principles.

Risks, Safeguards, Safety and Assurance

- Provide strategic leadership and assurance for program risk management, maintaining an integrated view of strategic, operational, financial, people and delivery risks and ensuring risks are identified,

owned, mitigated, and escalated in a timely manner. Ensure effective safeguards governance across fraud, anti-corruption and child protection risk management, reporting, and capability development.

- Provide clear, concise, timely and audience-appropriate reporting and communication to the Deputy Team Leader, Team Leader, Senior Leadership Team and DFAT, ensuring material issues, risks, trends, options, and recommended actions are clearly identified and escalated.
- Act as the functional owner for Operations and People policies, processes, and controls within PLMSP, ensuring appropriate documentation, approval, implementation, review, and alignment with Palladium and DFAT requirements.
- Regularly highlight, report and escalate operational and people risks to DTLs and TL. Provide key metrics reporting to SLT.
- Provide senior portfolio leadership during significant operational, workforce, safety, or security incidents, supporting coordinated response, decision-making, communication, escalation, and recovery in accordance with PLMSP and Palladium incident management arrangements.

System and Process Improvement

- Develop, improve and maintain operational systems and processes (procurement, risk, HR, finance) that drive efficiencies and ensure compliance with DFAT and Palladium policies and the Operations Manual.
- Lead operational excellence that supports continuous improvement to systems and processes using evidence, collaboration and cross stream input, that enables PLMSP workstreams to strengthen delivery of annual plan activities.
- Lead project planning, implementation, and review with a strong focus on contract management and fiscal management requirements.
- Act as a trusted senior adviser to DFAT and PLMSP SLT on operational performance, workforce matters and program risk, building strong partnerships, influencing decisions, and escalating material issues with clear analysis and recommended action.
- Ensure sustainable business is embedded within project design and delivery, which includes developing relationships within hard-to-reach networks (clients, supply chain, and recruitment).
- Identify ways technology might transform our projects and make suggestions on how we might change our approach to better use data and technology.

Managing and Leading People

- Set the leadership direction and performance culture for the Operations, Safety and Security and People and Culture functions, enabling managers to lead with clear delegated authority and accountability while fostering an inclusive, collaborative, and high-performing workforce across geographically dispersed teams.
- Demonstrate reflective and adaptive leadership, actively seeking and applying feedback, demonstrating effective judgement and cultural intelligence. Maintain the professional capability required to lead effectively through ambiguity, complexity, and organisational change.
- Build sustainable organisational capability and leadership depth through strategic workforce planning, succession development, feedback and clear accountability for performance, behaviour, and team effectiveness.

- Coach and develop managers, strengthening their judgement, confidence, and accountability, addressing performance issues promptly, and ensuring organisational priorities and leadership decisions are translated into clear, consistent action to teams.
- Exercise advanced judgement, negotiation and influence across government, program and organisational stakeholders, adapting leadership and communication approaches to build alignment, resolve complex people and organisational issues, and secure timely decisions in a culturally and geographically diverse environment.

Other

- Other tasks as reasonably requested by the Deputy Team Leader – Program Enablement.
- Travel locally and internationally, as required.
- Advocate for Australian development priorities.
- Foster equality, diversity and inclusion, drawing on capabilities from within the country/region wherever possible.
- Comply with, and advocate for, DFAT's policies in all aspects of implementation, including gender, disability, fraud, and anti-corruption, PSEAH, child protection and environmental and social safeguards. This includes incorporating policy principles into planning and everyday work, promoting process improvements, and reporting concerns to your Line Manager or Palladium's Integrity Hotline (details on Palladium website).
- Operate with elevated levels of integrity, consistent with the intent of DFAT's Ethics, Integrity, and Professional Standards Policy Manual.

Reporting Requirements

The role reports into the Deputy Team Leader – Program Enablement. The role has three direct reports: Operations Senior Manager, People and Culture Senior Manager, Safety and Security Manager. Reporting requirements may include but are not limited to:

- Attendance at team meetings, other requested meetings, and regional meetings (e.g. townhalls).
- Regular (minimum of monthly) one to one meetings with your line manager on the status of personal Key Result Areas (KRAs), career development discussions, and any other matters.
- Work collaboratively with other functions across the program to support delivery.
- Palladium encourages flexible work practices to enhance wellbeing, productivity, and team culture. For this role, we require that employees maintain an in-office presence for at least 50% of their working week. For example, if an employee works five days a week, they must spend at least three days physically in the office.

Qualifications and Experience Required

- Tertiary qualifications in a relevant discipline such as business administration, organisational leadership, change management, public policy, international development, program management or a related field.

- Minimum 10 years' experience in senior leadership roles within complex programs, organisations or business functions.
- Demonstrated experience leading organisational change, business improvement, governance reform, strategic risk management or organisational transformation initiatives.
- Experience operating in complex, politically sensitive or rapidly evolving environments, with the ability to adapt to changing priorities and stakeholder expectations while maintaining delivery outcomes.
- Demonstrated ability to lead through ambiguity, exercise sound judgement and make effective decisions in uncertain environments.
- Strong experience engaging and influencing senior stakeholders, including government, client or executive-level audiences. Experience working with DFAT or comparable government stakeholders is highly desirable.
- Proven people leadership capability, including mentoring senior staff, leading through change and fostering collaborative, high-performing and values-driven cultures.
- Strong interpersonal, communication and cross-cultural engagement skills, with the ability to build trusted relationships across diverse teams and stakeholder groups.
- Flexibility to undertake domestic and international travel as required.

Due to the evolving nature of our program, it is possible that the incumbent may be expected to undertake duties that fall outside the remit of their original Terms of Reference as reasonably required to ensure the ongoing success of the program.

Where this is required, the following will occur:

- The adviser has the skills and experience to fulfill the duties.
- This arrangement will be short term in nature.

Core Capabilities

Palladium's Core Capability Framework for APAC Projects outlines the standard of performance and behaviours expected at each level within the organisation. It also provides a benchmark for assessing areas of potential strength as well as the identification of potential skill gaps or areas for development and improvement.

The Capability Framework forms the basis of how we recruit, how we lead and the behaviours we exhibit, how we manage performance excellence and develop our future workforce.

Our capabilities link to a number of other processes, policies and guidelines including:

- Performance management/ performance excellence - setting and maintaining standards and helping employees excel and develop
- Career Pathways including our Career Progression Framework
- Organisational design – identifying any skills gaps, outlining job roles and responsibilities
- Development, growth, learning, and training
- Sustainable business – going beyond compliance to ensure sustainable and ethical considerations are woven throughout everything we do. This aligns equity, diversity and inclusion; safeguarding; and environmental objectives

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Palladium is committed to embedding equity, diversity and inclusion across all activities. We promote a diverse and inclusive workforce and ensure all applicants and employees are treated fairly and equally, regardless of background or personal characteristics. We encourage applications from all individuals and provide reasonable adjustments or accommodations where required.

Safeguarding

Palladium maintains a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of harm, including sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, child abuse, and human trafficking. We are committed to protecting our people, partners, and communities and ensuring safe and respectful environments. All personnel are expected to uphold safeguarding standards, with successful candidates subject to enhanced screening, including safeguarding-focused assessments and due diligence, in line with Palladium's Code of Conduct and safeguarding policies.