
JOB DESCRIPTION

Business & Operations Manager

Position Title	Business & Operations Manager
Company	Start-up gold trading & export company
Location	Sierra Leone (Freetown base, with travel to sourcing and mining regions)
Department	Operations / General Management
Reports To	COO
Employment Type	Full-Time
Direct Reports	Operations staff (to be built out as the business scales)

1. Company Overview

The organisation is a start-up in the gold trading, aggregation, and export sector in Sierra Leone. The company is building a compliant, transparent, and scalable gold supply chain by partnering with local miners, international buyers, and financial institutions. The required operating license is already being processed and is expected to be in place before this hire begins, allowing the post-holder to focus on building and running the business rather than securing approvals.

2. Role Purpose

This is the company's first senior hire outside the founder, and the role is deliberately broad. We are looking for a hands-on, trustworthy leader who can **wear multiple hats** — building and managing relationships, running day-to-day operations, safeguarding gold and cash, and managing risk — across the full sourcing-to-export cycle. The post-holder will work closely with the founder to translate strategy into reliable, repeatable operations, and will be trusted with significant responsibility for assets, counterparties, and the company's reputation on the ground.

3. Key Responsibilities

Relationship Building & Stakeholder Management

- Identify, onboard, and manage relationships with artisanal and small-scale miners (ASM), agents, and suppliers, building a reliable and scalable sourcing network across mining regions.
- Build and maintain trusted relationships with regulators, banking partners, local communities, and international buyers.
- Represent the company credibly in official and commercial engagements, acting as a key point of contact on the ground.
- Negotiate fair, transparent pricing aligned with international gold benchmarks.

Operations Setup & Execution

- Design and implement operational workflows for gold procurement, aggregation, processing, and export.

- Establish clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all operational activities and ensure they are followed.
- Oversee day-to-day operations, including buying, smelting, testing, weighing, and storage.
- Set up and manage operational infrastructure, including offices, aggregation points, and processing/testing arrangements.

Gold Processing & Quality Assurance

- Oversee assaying, testing, smelting, and weighing to ensure accuracy, consistency, and transparency in gold purity and weight.
- Implement controls to prevent losses, theft, shrinkage, or fraud at every step.
- Maintain detailed, auditable records of inventory and transactions.

Risk Identification & Management

- Proactively identify operational, financial, security, counterparty, and reputational risks across the business.
- Assess and prioritise risks, and design and implement practical mitigation strategies and controls.
- Maintain a simple, living risk register and escalate material risks to the founder in a timely manner.
- Design and enforce security protocols for the safe handling, storage, and transportation of gold and cash, including chain-of-custody discipline.
- Build resilience into operations — contingency planning for testing, payment, logistics, and key-person dependencies.

Compliance & Regulatory

- Ensure the company operates in full compliance with Sierra Leone mining, trading, and export regulations on an ongoing basis.
- Track licence and permit conditions and renewal dates, and manage timely renewals when required. (Initial licensing is being handled separately and is expected to be in place before start.)
- Liaise with regulatory bodies and keep all operational documentation accurate and up to date.
- Implement and uphold Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Know Your Customer (KYC) procedures for suppliers and counterparties.

Export & Logistics Management

- Manage end-to-end export processes, including documentation and customs clearance.
- Coordinate secure transportation and delivery to international buyers, ensuring timely shipment and full compliance with export regulations.

Financial Coordination

- Work with the founder, finance support, and banking partners on payments, trade finance, and foreign exchange.
- Monitor operational budgets and cost efficiency, and support financial reporting related to operations and inventory.

Team Building & Leadership

- Recruit, train, and manage operations staff as the business grows, building a high-performance team aligned with start-up goals.
- Establish performance metrics, accountability, and a culture of integrity and care with assets.

4. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Strength and reliability of supplier, buyer, banking, and regulatory relationships.
- Volume, consistency, and quality of gold sourced.
- Accuracy in gold purity and weight measurements; zero unexplained losses.
- Ongoing regulatory compliance (zero violations) and timely licence renewals.
- Effectiveness of risk controls — incidents identified early and mitigated.
- Timeliness and success of export transactions, and operational cost efficiency.
- Successful setup of operational systems within agreed timelines.

5. Qualifications & Experience

Education

- Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Finance, Accounting, Mining Engineering, Geology, or a related field.
- MBA or relevant professional certification is an advantage.

Experience

- Minimum of 5 years' experience in gold trading, mining operations, commodities, or a comparable operations/general-management role.
- Experience in a start-up or building operational systems from the ground up is highly desirable.
- Strong understanding of West African mining environments is an advantage.

6. Skills & Competencies

- High level of integrity and trustworthiness — comfortable being entrusted with valuable assets and cash.
- Strong relationship-building and negotiation skills across diverse stakeholders.
- Strong operational and project-management ability, with an entrepreneurial, build-from-scratch mindset.
- Sound risk awareness and judgement; able to anticipate problems and act decisively.
- Knowledge of gold markets and pricing, with financial and commercial acumen.
- Excellent communication skills and strong attention to detail.
- Ability to work under pressure in dynamic, sometimes remote, environments.

7. Working Conditions

- Frequent travel to remote mining and sourcing locations.

- Exposure to high-security operational environments.
- Extended working hours during critical operations or export cycles.

8. Compensation & Benefits

- Competitive salary aligned with the company's start-up structure.
- Performance-based incentives and bonuses.
- Potential equity or profit-sharing, subject to company policy.
- Accommodation and logistics support, if applicable.

9. Code of Conduct & Ethics

- Strict adherence to anti-corruption and anti-fraud policies.
- Commitment to ethical sourcing and transparency.
- Compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.