Head of Operations

Scale-Up Chemical Technology Company

At Naturbeads, you are empowered to deliver results. We are an award-winning scale-up commercializing patented technology to harness the power of cellulose, creating sustainable solutions for our customers. Join us to make your own impact and grow your expertise while building these solutions.

Role Overview

We are seeking an experienced Head of Operations to lead the scale-up of our manufacturing process to full industrial scale, following the successful start-up of our commercial demonstration plant. Reporting to the CTO, you will lead the Italian Operations, Engineering and Project Management teams during a phase of accelerating growth, industrial scale-up and commercialization.

You will have the opportunity to shape the next phase of our growth: expanding our teams and developing the policies and processes that will define the future of our company.

Key Responsibilities

- Operations Leadership: You will assume overall responsibility for HSE compliance across our demonstration plant site in Surbo (LE) and future large-scale plant in Puglia; develop operational strategy for our current and future manufacturing plants; establish a culture of continuous improvement. The plant manager, responsible for day-to-day operation of the plant, will report to you.
- Project Management Leadership: You will grow and lead our project management team as we initiate several capital projects across multiple sites (€20-40M in the next 5 years); establish governance and PMO processes; develop effective risk management from project initiation to plant start-up; oversee the project for our first full-scale plant to be delivered on time and on budget.
- Engineering Leadership: You will grow our internal engineering team, including recruiting a new lead, to further mature our technology and scale up novel processes and products, in collaboration with our R&D team.
- Leadership and People Management: working with senior management, you will manage and grow our operations, project management and engineering teams, from a current base of 10, to sustain and accelerate our growth; promote and maintain the company's culture and mission in a phase of rapid growth and scale-up.

Candidate Profile

- A proven track record of scaling process technologies from pilot to commercial operations.
- Strong expertise in process safety, project delivery, operational excellence, and stakeholder management.
- Substantial experience leading multidisciplinary teams across operations, engineering and projects.
- Extensive senior experience in chemical processing, specialty chemicals, industrial biotechnology, clean technology or related sectors, ideally 15+ years.
- Strategic thinker with a hands-on leadership style and strong commercial awareness.
- Fluent in both Italian and English
- Degree in Chemical Engineering, Process Engineering or related discipline
- Experience in high-growth scale-up environments preferred.

KPIs

- HSE performance – zero accidents.
- Project delivery – on time and on budget.
- Operational efficiency and reliability – bring demo plant to nominal capacity.
- Cost management – bring down COGS to design values.
- Team development – hire and manage outstanding staff aligned with company culture.

Personal Attributes

Entrepreneurial, resilient, results-oriented, collaborative and comfortable operating in an uncertain and dynamic environment.

Salary and Benefits

- This is a full-time role at our location in Surbo (LE), Italy.
- Competitive salary based on experience and skill-set, indicative range: €85,000–€115,000.
- Participation to share options plan

Selection

Following an initial screening, shortlisted candidates will undergo online interviews with the senior management team (CEO, CTO, CCO and chairman of the Board) and meetings with operational staff. A final, in-person interview at our site in Surbo (LE) will also provide the opportunity to visit the demo plant.

Naturbeads is an equal opportunity employer, committed to the strength of a diverse workforce.

Interested or having a question about the role? Please reach out to contact@naturbeads.com, even if you do not meet all profile requirements.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Come and be part of our story, starting today!