

The  
**Ventures  
Lab**



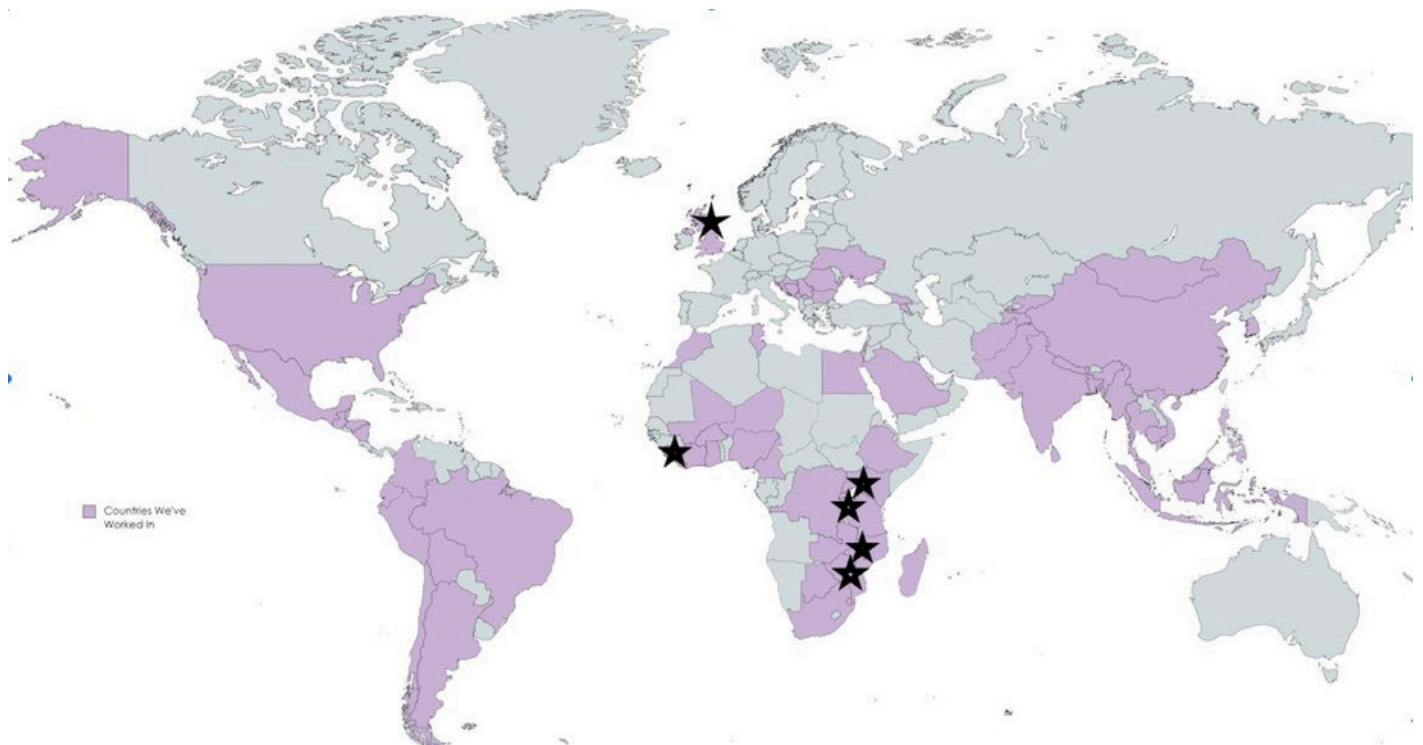
**Challenges  
Group**



# Recruitment Pack

## Director of Venture Support Services

# All about us



## **We are an international enterprise development organisation that delivers enterprising solutions to global challenges**

We operate globally and have offices in seven countries: Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, the UK, and Zambia

### **Our Approach**

We have had the privilege of partnering with enterprise ecosystem support organisations across 80 countries. Through working directly onsite with over 5,000 individual enterprises, our approach to enterprise support is rooted in tried and tested methodologies and our culture, then refined by 25 years of application. An innovative mindset underpins

everything we do at The Challenges Group. From our experience, we believe that real performance improvement is unlocked when there is an understanding of the business model and its delivery, the people, and the ecosystem. Then, to add value, The Challenges Group must bring an innovation mindset to plan and support transformation.

### **Our History**

We have been operating globally for 25 years across four continents since 1999, we have provided over 200,000 onsite consulting days, delivered £30 million in debt and equity financing, and supported more than 4,000 social businesses in 80 countries.

## Our 3 Pillars

### 1. There for the Journey

To support any enterprise with what it needs, when it needs it, we have developed and delivered a suite of tools and methods to support enterprise from idea to investment. So, rather than having a single programme model, or one-to-many service offering, we have a full-service one-to-one offering – we give enterprises the bespoke support they need at whatever stage they are.

### 2. A 3-Dimensional Understanding

To design and deliver the correct support to any enterprise, we take a holistic approach. We assess where the intervention is most needed (the enterprise itself, its people, or its ecosystem) depending on their present situation or future opportunity. The results are a multi-faceted enterprise improvement approach, with changes to all 3-dimensions reinforcing each other to ensure sustainable change.

### 3. Innovation Mindset

For us, innovation means the practical implementation of ideas that result in enterprise improvement – not invention. We help deliver incremental gains by working with enterprises to adapt ideas and models and apply them in new contexts to maximise impact. We use enterprise experts who have lived experience supporting often hundreds of individual enterprises in emerging economies, to verify the efficacy of business models, and to use adapted design thinking approaches as a launchpad for innovations for specific problems in specific contexts.

## Our Values

### WE'RE DRIVEN BY IMPACT.

We are passionate about creating sustainable impact. We want to support enterprises so that they're better able to tackle big global challenges.

### WE LOVE TO COLLABORATE

We think the best solutions arrive when we collaborate – with colleagues, with enterprises, and with partners. Collaboration brings new ideas and different perspectives, which means better solutions.

### WE FIND A WAY

We love problem solving. We interrogate an issue. We will understand the wider context and explore all possible options, and often bring solutions that weren't immediately obvious.

### WE THRIVE ON INNOVATION

For us, innovation is a state of mind, not just a tool. We are inherently curious and we challenge existing approaches; adapting ideas and models to apply them in new contexts allows us to maximise impact.





## The Ventures Lab

### Shaping the Future of Scotland's Impact-Driven Enterprises

Do you believe in the power of purpose-driven businesses to create real, lasting change? Are you passionate about ensuring social enterprises and mission-led ventures have access to the expertise they need to scale sustainably? If so, The Ventures Lab is for you.

The Ventures Lab, led by The Challenges Group, brings over 25 years of experience in supporting impact-driven enterprises across 80 countries. To help purpose-led ventures grow and thrive, we provide Pooled Services, a shared business support model that offers high-quality expertise in finance, legal, marketing, and business development, enabling early-stage ventures to scale sustainably without the burden of costly in-house teams.

#### Our Pooled Services Offering:

- Finance, legal, marketing, and business development expertise at accessible rates.
- A trusted network of advisors and professionals offering pro-bono and discounted services.
- Scalable, cost-effective solutions tailored to the needs of early-stage and growing enterprises.
- A collaborative business ecosystem connecting ventures to the right support at the right time.

Having successfully piloted this model with a select group of clients, we are now at a pivotal stage, refining and expanding The Ventures Lab into a national pooled services offering that will support enterprises across Scotland.

To lead this expansion, we are seeking a dynamic and strategic leader to shape, scale, and establish pooled services as a sector-leading offering, ensuring that purpose-led enterprises can start, grow, and scale with confidence while delivering extraordinary impact and achieving commercial success.



## Director of Venture Support Services

**Contract** Full-time, permanent.  
We're open to consider flexible arrangements

**Location** Edinburgh (hybrid)

**Salary** £45,000 - £50,000

**How to apply** Send your CV plus a cover letter to:  
[angie.lee@thechallengesgroup.com](mailto:angie.lee@thechallengesgroup.com)

### Selection Process

The Challenges Group is committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment. We welcome applications from individuals of all backgrounds and are dedicated to providing equal opportunities, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or any other characteristic. We believe that diversity strengthens our team and enhances our ability to drive meaningful impact.

### Employment Eligibility

To be considered for this role, applicants must have British nationality or the legal right to live and work in the UK.

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*If you'd like an informal chat about the role, please contact us using the email above.*

**Closing date:** Mon 31st March

# The Opportunity

The Ventures Lab is redefining how purpose-led enterprises access the expertise they need to grow and succeed. Through our pioneering Pooled Services model, we provide high-quality business support in finance, legal, marketing, and business development, allowing ventures to focus on impact without the overheads of costly in-house teams.

Following a successful pilot with a select group of clients, we are now entering a crucial growth phase scaling pooled services into a national offering that will support social enterprises across Scotland, ensuring they have the strategic and operational backing to become investment-ready and sustainable.

This is an exciting moment to shape and lead a transformative service. We are seeking an experienced, strategic leader to drive the scaling, innovation, and long-term sustainability of pooled services, positioning The Ventures Lab as the go-to platform for social enterprises seeking expert business support.

## Role Overview

The Director of Venture Support Services will drive the strategic development and growth of The Ventures Lab's pooled services. This role requires a strong balance of strategic leadership, operational oversight, and stakeholder engagement to ensure high-quality service delivery and long-term sustainability.

A key part of this role will be building and leading a team to deliver high-quality business support services. The successful candidate will be responsible for recruiting, managing, and developing a team of professionals to ensure seamless service delivery. Additionally, the Director of Venture Support Services will develop a network of professional partners across various sectors and disciplines, securing a community of trusted advisors, pro-bono experts, and service providers who are committed to supporting purpose-led businesses through volunteering, discounted services, or strategic collaboration.

### Growth Targets

In 2025, The Ventures Lab aims to recruit **20 new businesses** into the pooled services model. From there, we plan to grow by a minimum of **50% year on year**, steadily increasing our reach and impact. The Director of Venture Support Services will play a crucial role in achieving these targets by ensuring the model is scalable, effective, and financially sustainable.



# Job Description

## Strategic Leadership & Growth

- Develop and implement a scalable pooled services strategy, transitioning from pilot phase to national rollout.
- Position The Ventures Lab as Scotland's leading provider of pooled business services for social enterprises.
- Align service delivery with Scottish Government priorities on economic growth and social impact.
- Establish a roadmap towards financial sustainability, aiming for a self-funding model within three years.
- Drive business recruitment efforts, ensuring the annual growth target of 50% year on year is met.

## Team Leadership & Recruitment

- Lead the recruitment, development, and management of a team to deliver high-quality pooled services.
- Oversee staff training and performance management, ensuring a culture of excellence and innovation.
- Foster a collaborative environment that supports both internal team members and external associates.

## Network & Partner Development

- Build and maintain a network of professional partners, including legal, financial, marketing, and business development experts.
- Engage professionals and industry leaders to support purpose-led businesses through pro-bono services, volunteering, or favoured rates.
- Develop and manage relationships with key stakeholders to expand the reach and impact of pooled services.
- Create structured partnership agreements that align with The Ventures Lab's mission and ensure mutual benefit.

## Operational Management

- Oversee the scaling of pooled services from a contained model to a national hub-and-spoke approach.
- Develop a phased implementation plan, ensuring controlled and sustainable growth.
- Leverage technology and digital solutions to enhance service delivery, streamline operations, and improve client experience.
- Build robust systems for service quality monitoring, client satisfaction, and performance tracking.
- Implement a quality assurance framework for internal teams and external associates.

# Job Description cont.

## Risk & Compliance Management

- Identify and mitigate risks related to scaling, including service consistency, reputation, and operational capacity.
- Ensure compliance with financial, legal, and governance requirements.
- Develop contingency plans to address potential challenges.
- Stakeholder Engagement & Partnerships
- Strengthen relationships with government agencies, universities, investors, and industry leaders.
- Secure strategic buy-in from key public and private sector partners to enhance long-term sustainability.
- Oversee the recruitment and onboarding of expert associates and delivery partners.

## Financial Oversight & Sustainability

- Develop and manage budgets to ensure financial viability and growth.
- Establish a tiered pricing model that balances revenue generation with accessibility for social enterprises.
- Align funding strategies with government priorities and potential investment opportunities.

## Key Skills & Experience

### Essential:

- Degree-level education or equivalent experience in business administration, enterprise development, social entrepreneurship, economics, or a related field.
- Proven leadership experience in business support services, enterprise development, or professional services.
- Experience in recruiting, managing, and developing teams to deliver high-quality services.
- Strong understanding of social enterprise models and impact-driven business.
- Proven ability to develop and maintain professional networks across multiple sectors.
- Ability to navigate complex stakeholder environments and secure partnerships.
- Strong financial acumen, including budgeting, pricing strategy, and forecasting.
- Knowledge of risk management frameworks and quality assurance systems, ensuring compliance with legal, financial, and governance requirements.



## Person Spec. Cont.

### Desirable:

- Postgraduate qualification (MBA, MSc, or equivalent) in business, social impact, or economic development.
- Experience working with Scottish Government-funded initiatives or economic development programmes.
- Experience in Change Management & Organisational Scaling.
- Experience in scaling services or programmes from pilot to national implementation.
- Knowledge of pooled service models and their operational challenges.
- Familiarity with risk management frameworks and quality assurance systems.

### A Transformational Opportunity

*The Director of Venture Support Services will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of The Ventures Lab, leading the growth of our pooled services to become Scotland's foremost provider of shared business support for purpose-led enterprises. This is a unique opportunity for an experienced leader to drive strategic expansion, establish high-performing teams, and foster a collaborative network of expert partners to support the sustainability and scalability of social ventures.*

*With a strong foundation already in place, we are looking for a dynamic individual who brings vision, expertise, and a commitment to impact-driven business. The successful candidate will be instrumental in achieving our ambitious growth targets, ensuring our model remains financially sustainable while delivering high-quality support that empowers social enterprises to thrive.*

*As we move into an exciting new phase of development, this role offers the chance to shape an innovative service that will contribute to Scotland's economic and social landscape. If you are passionate about enterprise development, strategic leadership, and creating a lasting impact, we invite you to join us on this transformative journey.*

# WHY, WHAT, HOW?

## OUR PURPOSE

We exist to maximise enterprises' potential, so they can deliver extraordinary impact.

## OUR VISION

A world whose biggest challenges are being tackled by enterprises creating extraordinary impact.

## THE PROBLEM WE'RE TACKLING

Many enterprises do not perform at their fullest potential and may lack the capacity to operate better, thereby limiting their impact on global challenges.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to help deliver better solutions to global challenges by improving the performance of enterprises.

# Benefits



## Holiday entitlement

The holiday entitlement for full-time staff is 28 working days per year, inclusive of 8 public holidays. Staff receive an additional 4 days leave during the December festive break. Part-time staff receive a pro-rated entitlement.



## Flexible working

Staff generally work office hours – most staff adopt 'hybrid' working, but we encourage at least one day per week in the office. This role will allow you to tailor your schedule to fit personal commitments while contributing to our team's success.



## Cycle to Work scheme

Challenges offers a cycle to work scheme that enables a discount towards any bicycle you purchase for the purpose of getting to work.



## Other benefits

Also available to staff is a pension scheme, and professional development courses through the Chartered Management Institute (CMI).

## Contact us



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