

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Head of Finance & Administration

ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat in Brussels

Job title: Head of Finance & Administration

Department: Finance and Administration

Reports to: Director of the Secretariat

Line management: Finance, administration and support staff (currently three officers)

Location: ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat, Brussels

Updated on: 4 August 2026

Purpose of the position

The Head of Finance & Administration leads all support functions of the Secretariat composed of a team of 15 employees: finance, administration, human resources, information technology, logistics and procurement. They are accountable for the systems, controls and capacity that allow the Secretariat to deliver its mandate safely, lawfully and sustainably.

The Secretariat directly implement activities and acts as coordinator of the consortia it represents. The Head of Finance & Administration is accountable for the financial dimension of that role: consolidation of members' financial reporting for submission to donors, coordination of members' payment requests, guidance to members on eligibility under each donor's rules, and financial monitoring of members and grantees, including Secretariat-led activities. Consortium multi-annual budgets currently under coordination exceed €30 million across four donor contracts.

The Head of Finance and Administration is expected to take an organisation-wide view of how support services are structured, staffed and resourced, and to identify where current arrangements can be improved. The post-holder is expected to bring leadership with hands-on management.

As a member of the Leadership Team, the Head of Finance & Administration works closely with the Head of Programmes & Partnerships to support the Director in the overall management of the Secretariat, and provides the Director and the Board with the financial and operational analysis required for sound governance.



Key responsibilities

- 1) Financial management, control and donor compliance
 - Provide the Director and the Board with clear, timely and accurate financial reporting, analysis, forecasting and trend information, together with recommendations on matters requiring decision.
 - Lead the implementation, development where needed and periodic revision of the Secretariat's financial policies, guidelines, procedures and the Finance Manual, and steward compliance with them.
 - Coordinate the annual budget and annual accounts in collaboration with the Director, the Head of Programmes & Partnerships and senior programme staff, and lead budget implementation and monitoring.
 - Ensure accurate and timely financial reporting to institutional donors and external auditors, and lead the preparation and management of audits.
 - Oversee secure, traceable and timely transfer of funds between the Secretariat and grantees, including in high-risk operating contexts.
 - Ensure treasury, cash-flow planning, banking relationships, and currency exposure.
 - Maintain relationships with external auditors, accountants, payroll provider, bank and other financial service providers.
- 2) Consortium Financial coordination and monitoring
 - Responsible for the consolidation cycle end to end: timetable, templates, instructions to members, consistency and eligibility checks, and the internal deadlines that make donor deadlines achievable.
 - Coordinate members' payment requests and the consolidated submission.
 - Coordinate audit with members, and set the backward-planned internal calendar for consolidated reports and audits
 - Manage risk-based financial monitoring and verification of consortium members
- 3) Human resources
 - Lead the human resources employment cycle: recruitment, contracting, onboarding, performance, development and exit.
 - Ensure the Secretariat's employment framework is compliant with Belgian law, including working time, leave, and remuneration.
 - Ensure effective and updated HR policies are in place, including a transparent function classification and remuneration framework
 - Oversee payroll and HR administration in liaison with the social secretariat.
 - Review the use of consultancy, fellowship and other non-employment engagements and ensure that each is correctly characterised and contracted.



- Support the Director in maintaining a working environment consistent with the Secretariat's values, including psychosocial risk prevention and the statutory well-being framework.
- 4) Administration, logistics, procurement and IT
- Oversee the administrative functioning of the Secretariat, including office premises, insurance, supplier contracts and general services.
 - Ensure sound management and tracking of assets and equipment.
 - Establish and maintain a procurement framework proportionate to the organisation's size and to institutional donor rules, including supplier selection, contracting and record-keeping.
 - Ensure capacity building of programme staff to lead on events, missions and travel organisations.
 - Own the Secretariat's information systems: in coordination with the Director, define requirements, manage external IT providers, and ensure systems are fit for purpose, documented and affordable.
 - Lead on information security and data protection, in coordination with the consortium members, recognising that the Secretariat processes highly sensitive information concerning human rights defenders at risk; ensure that security practice, access controls, retention and incident response are defined, implemented and periodically tested.
- 5) Risk, compliance and governance
- Responsible to ensure existence and regular updates of the Secretariat's policy framework (finance, procurement, HR, IT and information security, and safeguarding) and to maintain the Manual of Procedures.
 - Maintain the Secretariat's risk register and lead the periodic review of organisational risk with the Director and the board.
 - Ensure compliance with the statutory obligations under Belgian law, including the filing of annual accounts and the maintenance of statutory registers.
 - Ensure that anti-fraud, conflict of interest, safeguarding and whistle-blowing arrangements are in place, understood and applied.
- 6) Team leadership
- Lead, supervise and develop the finance and administration team, currently consisting of three officers, and ensure clear roles, responsibilities and delegation within it.
 - Develop and implement the team work plan, and establish routines for planning, review and internal communication.
 - Ensure effective and timely collaboration between the support functions and the programme teams, in particular on budgeting, eligibility rules, procurements procedures and financial reporting.



Reporting lines and key relationships

- Reports to the Director of the Secretariat.
- Peer relationship with the Head of Programmes & Partnerships within the Leadership Team.
- Direct line management of the finance and administration team.
- Act as the standing counterpart relationship with the finance leads of consortium members.
- Act as the main interlocutor to donors financial counterparts
- Regular reporting to, and interaction with, the Board on financial and administration matters.
- External: auditors, accountants, payroll provider, bank, insurers, IT and other service providers

Qualifications and experience

Essential

- Advanced degree in finance, accounting, business administration, management or a related field; or an equivalent professional qualification combined with substantial relevant experience.
- At least eight years of professional experience in financial and operational management, of which at least three in a senior position with organisation-wide responsibility.
- Demonstrated experience of managing support functions beyond finance — such as human resources, administration, IT, procurement or logistics — in a small or medium-sized organisation.
- Demonstrated experience of designing and implementing systems, procedures or organisational change, rather than only operating established ones.
- Experience of financial management within the lead entity of a multi-partner consortium, including consolidation of partner financial reporting and partner verification.
- Experience of managing EU funding, including budgeting, eligibility rules, financial reporting and audit.
- Experience of line management and team development.
- Excellent written and spoken English.
- Right to live and work in Belgium at the time of application.

Desirable

- Working knowledge of Belgian labour law, social security and non-profit statutory obligations.
- Experience in the human rights, humanitarian or international civil society sector.



- Experience of managing financial transfers to partners or grantees in complex or high-risk environments.
- Experience of other than EU institutional funding.
- Knowledge of French, Spanish and/or Dutch.
- Familiarity with information security practice in organisations handling sensitive data.

Skills and competencies

- Strong analytical skills, with the ability to translate financial information into clear recommendations for non-specialists.
- Ability to diagnose organisational problems and design proportionate, practical solutions.
- Sound judgement and integrity, and the confidence to raise difficult issues with the Director.
- Collaborative leadership style, with the ability to build trust across a small team and to manage change with care.
- Ability to prioritise and to work across a wide range of subject matter simultaneously.
- Commitment to human rights and to the values and mission of ProtectDefenders.eu.

Terms and conditions

- Contract: full-time, one-year fixed-term contract under Belgian law, with the intention of moving to an open-ended contract subject to performance and funding.
- Joint committee: 329.02a.
- Location: Brussels, with occasional international travel
- **Gross monthly salary: Range 6.000 - 6.500 EUR (full time), depending on experience.**
- Benefits: health insurance, pension scheme contribution, transportation allowance, home-working allowance, meal vouchers, eco-vouchers and 13th month salary.
- Leave: 20 statutory days plus 6 extra-legal days, pro rata.

Eligibility, equal opportunity and right to work

ProtectDefenders.eu is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applications from individuals of all backgrounds and experiences. We are committed to fostering an inclusive, diverse and respectful working environment. Selection is made solely on the basis of the criteria set out in these Terms of Reference.



Applicants must hold a valid right to live and work in Belgium at the time of application. The Secretariat is not in a position to sponsor work or residence permits for this position. Applications that do not meet this requirement cannot be considered.

Application process

Deadline for applications: 25 August 2026

Applications should consist of a curriculum vitae and a covering letter of no more than two pages setting out how the candidate meets the essential requirements and what they would prioritise in the first twelve months.

Applications should be submitted using the following link:

**[https://join.com/companies/protectdefenderseu/16546520?
utm_medium=social_sharing&utm_source=copy_link](https://join.com/companies/protectdefenderseu/16546520?utm_medium=social_sharing&utm_source=copy_link)**

The selection process will comprise an initial review of applications against the published criteria, a shortlisting stage and interviews with a panel. References will be taken up for the preferred candidate before any offer is made. All candidates who submit an application will be informed in writing of the outcome.

Protection of personal data

Personal data submitted as part of an application is processed by the ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat for the sole purpose of this recruitment procedure, on the basis of steps taken at the request of the candidate prior to entering into a contract. Data is accessible only to those involved in the selection and is retained for one year following the closure of the procedure, after which it is deleted, unless the candidate agrees to be kept on file for future opportunities. Candidates may at any time request access to, rectification or erasure of their data by contacting the Secretariat. No decision on an application is taken solely on the basis of automated processing.

