

JOB DESCRIPTION

Chief, Digital Backbone Product Line

NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA)

To strengthen the Alliance through connecting its forces, the NCIA delivers secure, coherent, cost effective and interoperable communications and information systems in support of consultation, command & control and enabling intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, for NATO, where and when required. It includes IT support to the Alliances' business processes (to include provision of IT shared services) to the NATO HQ, the Command Structure and NATO Agencies.

The Chief Product Line is a senior management role responsible for the strategy, performance, and lifecycle of a portfolio of products within a defined product line. The Chief Product Line will shape the product vision, define the roadmap, and prioritise investments to maximise value for our customers and the wider NATO enterprise.

Working across the full product lifecycle – from early concept and demand shaping through proposal development and contract award – the Chief Product Line will align stakeholders, drive outcomes, and ensure products are positioned for success.

As part of the Product Leadership team, this role will play a key role in driving innovation, strengthening product excellence, and delivering impactful, customer-focused solutions.

The Chief, Digital Backbone Product Line is accountable for the lifecycle of the Agency portfolio of products and services in the Digital Backbone Product line, focused on the core digital foundations of the NATO enterprise including infrastructure, integrated mission, connectivity and compute, platform/application enablement and cyber.

Duties:

Under the direction and reporting to Chief Product Strategy Officer, the incumbent will perform duties such as the following:

Leadership

- Embody and role model the NCIA culture principles of Customer First, Together and Impact.
- Ensure optimal utilization of available resources, prioritizing speed, agility and decisiveness, to meet the commitments of the Agency in the conduct of its work.
- Lead with the customer at the centre of every decision, build bridges across organizational pillars and drive delivery with the ownership and pace the mission demands.
- Provide strategic and actionable direction in support of NCIA strategic and operational initiatives.

- Build, maintain and strengthen relations with internal and external stakeholders, modelling collaborative, customer-first behaviours, to optimally mobilise resources and commitments in support of relevant NCIA strategic priorities.
- Build and lead a cohesive, multicultural and multidisciplinary team, promoting excellence, the highest professional standards and create psychologically safe work environments that enable managers and staff to develop their full potential.
- Establish and maintain high-level working relationships with leadership across the NCIA and the NATO Enterprise to efficiently deliver and cooperate on corporate initiatives through trust and alignment.
- Lead, motivate and contribute to the professional development and performance management of Agency staff, holding oneself and others accountable for delivery and high-quality work within set deadlines, efficient working methods and a constructive working atmosphere.
- Represent the NCIA, as required, in Agency Governance Bodies, committees, meetings and conferences to promote NCIA interests, strategic goals.

Product Leadership and Lifecycle management

- Accountable for the lifecycle of the Agency portfolio of products and customer outcomes in the area of Digital Backbone product line
- Acts as Product Executive for assigned products in their area, accountable for product value, delivery outcomes, and value realization through delivery and operation.
- Accountable for balancing value, risk, cost, operational sustainability and strategic priorities of product portfolio
- Represents customer and operational needs through product lifecycle decisions, ensuring product delivery measurably impacts business and user outcomes
- Makes prioritization and investment decisions balancing customer value, operational sustainability, technical constraints, resource availability, and Agency priorities
- Drives alignment across Product, Capability Delivery, Service Operations, Chief Information Office, and Chief Data Office functions to achieve product outcomes
- Achieves outcomes through influence, alignment, and effective decision-making across organizational boundaries
- Identifies and removes barriers to product value realization while driving simplification, reuse and standardization across the product lifecycle.
- Optimizes Agency outcomes ahead of local functional interests when making prioritization decisions.
- Leads adoption of product-oriented ways of working and supports transition from legacy operating practices toward outcome-focused product management.

Experience and Education:

- A Master's degree at a nationally recognised/certified University in Business Management or a relevant related discipline and 10 years post-related experience. Alternatively, a Bachelor's degree with 15 years post related experience;
- Extensive experience, at the executive management level, involving leading and managing change in a dynamic technical organisation. Such experience should encompass:
 - Minimum 5 years' experience acting as a "manager of managers," building high-performing product teams and embedding product-centric ways of working.

- Proven experience leading teams through significant organizational transformation and complex product portfolios.
- Demonstrated experience managing products end-to-end, from concept and discovery through development, launch and ongoing optimization.
- Proven track record of working with cross-functional teams (engineering, operations, etc) and aligning diverse stakeholders around clear priorities.
- Demonstrable experience gathering and translating customer needs, user insights, and industry trends into actionable product requirements and features.
- Proven ability to define product vision, set strategic direction and maintain a clear, value-driven product roadmap.
- Strong understanding of system design, integrations and dependencies
- Ability to engage meaningfully with architects and engineers on technical requirements and trade-offs.
- Understanding of diverse technical domains, to include Cloud, Cybersecurity, APIs and integrations, AI, data privacy, etc.
- Experience utilizing data, metrics and KPIs to guide product decision and measure success.
- Strong knowledge of product management frameworks (e.g. Agile at scale/SAFE alongside project and service management methods.)
- Knowledge of State-of-the-art project and programme management processes, procedures and tools, including risk management, benefits realisation, stakeholder management.
- Proven ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing, with exceptional briefing skills.
- Experience with product management and strategy related to communications, networks, infrastructure, cloud, or cybersecurity systems.
- Proven experience in managing large, diverse and multidisciplinary teams, successfully employing modern, inspirational leadership practices.
- Demonstrated success embedding a performance-driven culture through aligned goal setting and shared accountability across teams and direct reports.

Desirable Experience and Education:

- Demonstrates a foundational understanding of how AI agents can be applied to enhance and streamline administrative functions.
- Knowledge and experience involving the development, management, acquisition and/ or implementation of major communications, computer, command and control, or intelligence (C4I) systems and/ or programmes.
- Prior experience of working in an international environment comprising both military and civilian elements.
- Knowledge of NATO responsibilities and organization, including Allied Command Operations (ACO) and Allied Command Transformation (ACT).

Language Proficiency:

A thorough knowledge of one of the two NATO languages, both written and spoken, is essential and some knowledge of the other is desirable.

NOTE: Most of the work of the NCIA is conducted in the English language.

Competencies or Personal Attributes:

Leading and Managing: Provides others with a clear direction; motivates and empowers others; attracts and develops staff of a high calibre; provides staff with development opportunities and coaching; sets appropriate standards of behaviour.

Deciding and Initiating Action: Takes responsibility for actions, projects and people; takes initiative and works under own direction; initiates and generates activity and introduces changes into work processes; makes quick, clear decisions which may include tough choices or considered risks.

Entrepreneurial Thinking: Keeps up to date with best practice and industry trends; identifies business opportunities for the organization; maintains awareness of developments both internally and externally; demonstrates financial awareness; controls costs and thinks in terms of gains, losses and added value.

Adhering to principles & values: Upholds ethics and values; demonstrates integrity; promotes and defends equal opportunities, builds diverse teams; encourages organizational and individual responsibility towards the community and the environment.

Relating & Networking: Easily establishes good relationships with customers and staff; relates well to people at all levels; builds wide and effective networks of contacts; uses humour appropriately to bring warmth to relationships with others

Adapting & responding to change: Adapts to changing circumstances; thrives in conditions of ambiguity; accepts new ideas and change initiatives; adapts interpersonal style to suit different people or situations; shows an interest in new experiences.

Formulating strategies & concepts: Works strategically to realise organizational goals; sets and develops strategies; identifies, develops positive and compelling visions of the organization's future; takes account of a wide range of issues across, and related to, the organization.