

Head of Procurement

MiAlgae applies leading advances in science and technology to improve food security and reduce the impact of humanity on the planet.

Company Profile

MiAlgae is an Edinburgh-based biotechnology company on a mission to revolutionise sustainable Omega-3 production. Founded in 2016, MiAlgae grows omega-3-rich microalgae using co-products from the whisky distillation process.

This innovative approach provides an eco-friendly alternative to fish oil for aquaculture feed, pet food, and other markets. MiAlgae's pioneering work has earned it recognition as a finalist in the 2024 Earthshot Prize, reflecting our commitment to reducing over-reliance on wild-caught fish and driving positive environmental impact.

We value diversity in our team and thinking and are an equal opportunity and family-friendly employer. We are open to considering a range of flexible working options and patterns with candidates.

Opportunity

The Head of Procurement will establish and lead MiAlgae's procurement and supply chain function at a strategic and operational level. In this senior role, you will develop and execute procurement strategies for a just-in-time manufacturing supply chain, ensuring that raw materials (such as distillery by-products and other inputs) and equipment are sourced efficiently to meet production needs. You will manage key supplier relationships and contracts, negotiate favourable terms, and oversee all purchasing activities – including handling capital expenditure (CAPEX) purchases for our expanding production facilities. Initially, you will operate as an individual contributor (with no direct reports), focusing on building processes and supplier networks; as the company grows, you will be expected to build and lead a Procurement team, hiring and mentoring staff to support MiAlgae's scale-up.

This role is part of the management team and will work closely with Operations, Finance, and R&D to support MiAlgae's growth objectives.

Key Responsibilities

- **Procurement Strategy & Policy:** Develop and implement a comprehensive procurement strategy aligned with MiAlgae's business goals and just-in-time production model. Establish procurement policies, procedures, and best practices to drive cost efficiency, quality, and sustainability in the supply chain.
- **Supplier Relationship Management:** Identify, evaluate, and manage relationships with key suppliers for raw materials (e.g. whisky co-products, nutrients) and services. Negotiate and maintain supplier contracts and framework agreements, ensuring optimal terms, reliable supply, and strong long-term partnerships. Emphasize strategic supplier development and risk management to guarantee supply continuity.
- **Contracts & Negotiations:** Lead contract negotiations with suppliers and service providers, securing competitive pricing and favourable terms while ensuring compliance with industry standards and regulations. Manage supplier performance and enforce contract SLAs, resolving any issues regarding quality, delivery, or cost promptly.
- **CAPEX and Equipment Procurement:** Oversee procurement of capital equipment and infrastructure for manufacturing scale-up. Work closely with engineering and operations teams to source and purchase bioreactors, processing equipment, and other CAPEX items, managing the end-to-end process from RFP/tender to commissioning. Ensure major capital purchases deliver the best value and support long-term operational needs.
- **Inventory & Supply Chain Management:** Develop a lean, just-in-time inventory system to minimise waste and storage costs without compromising production schedules. Coordinate closely with production planning to ensure raw materials are delivered just in time for use. Monitor inventory levels of critical materials and implement reorder strategies or buffer stocks as appropriate to prevent stock-outs.
- **Logistics & Delivery:** Optimise logistics processes for cost-effectiveness and reliability and ensure all import/export or customs requirements (if applicable) are handled correctly.

- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Work with the Operations and Production teams to forecast material requirements and adjust procurement plans accordingly. Partner with the Finance team on budgeting, cost tracking, and reporting for procurement activities (e.g. providing CAPEX and OPEX forecasts related to supply chain). Support R&D and Product Development by sourcing new materials or samples when needed for trials.
- **Team Building & Leadership:** As the company grows, recruit, develop, and lead a high-performing procurement team. Mentor junior procurement staff and instill best practices in sourcing, negotiation, and supply management. Foster a culture of continuous improvement, ethical sourcing, and collaboration within the team and with other departments.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Track key metrics (KPIs) for procurement and supply chain performance (cost savings, lead times, supplier OTIF – on-time-in-full, inventory turns, etc.). Identify opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and mitigate supply risks. Stay updated on market trends (e.g. material price fluctuations, new suppliers, supply disruptions) and proactively adjust strategies, including developing contingency plans or secondary suppliers for critical items.

This role may also take on additional responsibilities as needed in a dynamic startup environment.

Candidate Requirements (qualifications and experience)

- **Experience:** Significant experience (ideally 7+ years) in procurement and supply chain management, with a track record of senior-level responsibility. Experience in fast growth manufacturing industries is highly preferred, as it provides valuable context for our operations. Candidates should have proven ability to manage end-to-end procurement in a manufacturing or process-industry setting (from sourcing through to delivery), including handling of CAPEX projects and raw material sourcing.
- **Supplier & Contract Management:** Demonstrated expertise in managing supplier relationships and negotiating contracts of substantial value. Strong negotiation skills with the ability to deliver cost savings while building win-win partnerships. Familiarity with key suppliers and contractors relevant to biotech / food supply chains is an advantage.

- **Just-in-Time & Supply Chain Knowledge:** Solid understanding of supply chain planning, inventory management (e.g. MRP systems), and just-in-time procurement methodologies in a production environment. Able to design supply strategies that ensure materials are available exactly when needed, without excess stock.
- **Educational Background:** Bachelor's degree (or higher) in Supply Chain Management, Logistics, Business, Engineering, or a related field. A strong analytical foundation (e.g. in engineering or business) is beneficial for managing complex procurement decisions.
- **Professional Certification:** Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) certification (e.g. MCIPS) or an equivalent professional qualification is strongly preferred. Ongoing commitment to professional development in procurement/supply chain (such as keeping up with CIPS standards or similar) will be viewed favourably.
- **Leadership & Autonomy:** Self-starter with leadership qualities – able to set up a function from scratch and work independently. Proven ability to take ownership of projects and drive them to completion. Experience in building or scaling up a team or function is a plus (even if you haven't formally managed a large team before, you should demonstrate leadership in cross-functional projects or initiatives).
- **Skills:** Excellent negotiation, and communication skills, with the ability to influence and collaborate at all levels (from suppliers' reps to internal executives). Strong analytical and problem-solving abilities – comfortable with data analysis, cost modelling, and making strategic decisions based on metrics. High level of organisation and attention to detail, ensuring nothing slips through the cracks in a fast-moving supply chain.

Desirable skills and experience

- **Industry Knowledge:** Familiarity with the feed and food supply chain or related domains (e.g. pet food ingredients, agritech). Prior experience dealing with agricultural co-products or fermentation-based production inputs would be an advantage.

- **Startup/Growth Environment:** Experience working in a startup or scale-up environment where you have built processes or teams from the ground up. Comfort with the agility and hands-on approach required in a high-growth company.
- **Systems & Tools:** Experience implementing or using procurement and ERP software systems (for example, e-procurement platforms, inventory management systems, supplier databases). Ability to leverage digital tools to improve procurement workflow and data visibility.
- **Sustainability & Ethics:** A passion for sustainable and ethical sourcing. Knowledge of sustainable procurement practices or circular economy principles in supply chains will align well with MiAlgae's mission.
- **Additional Certifications:** Lean or Six Sigma experience in supply chain optimization, or project management certification (e.g. PMP/Prince2) for managing complex procurement projects, can be beneficial.

Even if you don't have all the above, we encourage candidates who are strong in the core requirements and eager to learn the rest to apply.

Details

Employment Type: Full-time.

Salary range: Negotiable.

Location: Edinburgh, UK.

Benefits

Competitive Compensation: A market-aligned salary (as noted). We reward high performance and business impact.

Holidays: 32 days holiday per year (to recharge and refresh), plus flexible working arrangements. Additional annual leave per complete year of service – up to 5 additional days.

- **Pension & Benefits:** 5% company pension contribution. We also offer a Cycle to Work scheme and free on-site parking for employees.
- **Wellness Perks:** 50% company contribution to gym membership to support your health and wellbeing. We also organize social events and team activities – we're a friendly, inclusive team that enjoys celebrating our successes together.
- **Growth & Development:** The opportunity to build a team and function from the ground up, making a real mark on the company's trajectory. We provide tailored training and development plans, and you'll be part of the MiAlgae leadership team, influencing strategy.
- **Mission & Impact:** A chance to work on a cutting-edge sustainable technology that addresses a global challenge. Your work will directly contribute to reducing environmental impact and supporting the growth of sustainable aquaculture and food systems. Being part of MiAlgae means being part of a "biotech for good" venture with purpose.

How to apply

Send your CV, cover letter and references to:
careers@mialgae.com