



**Partnering with Vital Strategies to find their  
next Senior Project Manager, Cause of  
Death Assistant (CODA)**

**POSITION:** Senior Project Manager  
**DEPARTMENT:** Cause of Death Determination Assistance (CODA)  
**REPORTING TO:** Project Director, CODA  
**LOCATION:** Johannesburg, South Africa  
**START DATE:** ASAP

## **Background**

Vital Strategies, headquartered in New York City, is an international public health organization. Our programs strengthen public health systems and address the world's leading causes of illness, injury and death. We work in more than 70 countries, supporting data-driven decision-making in government, advancing evidence-based public health policies, and mounting strategic communication campaigns. Vital Strategies' priorities are driven by the greatest potential to improve and save lives. They include non-communicable disease prevention, tobacco control, road safety, food policy, environmental health, civil registration and vital statistics, and overdose prevention. Our programs are concentrated in low- and middle-income countries and cities in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific. Please visit our website at [www.vitalstrategies.org](http://www.vitalstrategies.org) to find out more about our work.

## **About the Cause of Death Assistant project (CODA)**

The Cause of Death Assistant (CODA) is a three-year initiative to design and test an AI-powered tool for cause of death assignment in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). CODA will address critical data gaps by improving the accuracy and timeliness of mortality data at both facility and community levels. The initiative is implemented by a consortium of global partners, with Vital Strategies serving as a CODA Consortium and Research Agenda Lead. Other consortium partners include an Algorithm Development Lead, an IT and Software Development Lead, and two Leads working on improved Minimally Invasive Tissue Sampling (MITS) protocols. Governance will be provided by a Governing Board and technical rigor overseen by a Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). The SAC will convene Technical Working Groups (TWGs) to respond to specific technical demands encountered in the development of CODA and will be heavily involved in building research agendas. The project will be implemented in two phases: 1. Prototyping and 2. Experimentation (with phase 3 on piloting and product release to be undertaken as part of an anticipated follow-on grant). It is anticipated that by the end of the project, CODA will be positioned for adoption by countries, supported by regional Centers of Excellence (COEs) in Africa and South Asia.

## **About the Role**

The Senior Project Manager will manage the development and operational work plans of the CODA Consortium. This role will involve supporting the co-creation of a common product development roadmap, critical path workplan, and Target Product Profile for CODA. Together with the Project Director and Principal Technical Advisor, Research, the Senior Project Manager will also be responsible for facilitating the full engagement of all consortium partners and the donor in the co-creation of these resources. Working closely with the Project Director, the role will be responsible for ensuring the timely performance of tasks and production of outputs from governance structures, and critical path product development plans across partners, including managing interdependencies and deadlines in the execution of the CODA product development cycle.

The Senior Project Manager will also support the development of the Research Agenda and implementation of research activities. Working closely with the Principal Technical Advisor, Research, the Senior Manager will ensure the timely and scientifically sound execution of field-based experiments to test and refine specific components of CODA and to test the product on a limited scale. The role will also ensure compliance with internal policies and consortium member adherence to applicable country-level regulations (e.g., navigating Institutional Review Board/Ethics approvals), and support the Principal Technical Advisor, Research, in the implementation of knowledge management activities to support the initiative. Lastly, the Senior Project Manager will support the proposal development to secure subsequent funding for CODA pilot testing and public release.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

Under the supervision and guidance of the Project Director, CODA, and working closely with the Principal Technical Advisor, Research, the Senior Project Manager will perform the following responsibilities:

#### **Consortium Management, Coordination, Compliance & Governance**

- Ensure the day-to-day management and coordination of the CODA Consortium's work plan.
- Support the development of the CODA product development roadmap, critical path workplan, and a Target Product Profile.
- Assist with the tracking and monitoring of partner deliverables, timelines, and interdependencies across the product development cycle to ensure key milestones are met on time and within scope.
- Facilitate regular partner engagement, meetings, and decision-making processes to promote transparency and alignment across consortium members.
- Assist with the establishment and operationalization of CODA Consortium governance structures, including steering committees and working groups.
- Ensure compliance with Vital Strategies' policies and monitor partner adherence to applicable regulations and donor requirements.

#### **Monitoring, Reporting & Risk Management**

- Develop and oversee a progress monitoring system, performance metrics, and reporting systems to track project advancement.
- Conduct critical path analyses to proactively identify and anticipate potential risks and mitigation strategies throughout the product development cycle.
- Prepare high-quality reports and updates for donors, partners, and internal leadership.

#### **Research Design and Implementation**

- Support the development of the Research Agenda work plan.
- Monitor implementation of CODA research activities and field-based experiments, including the coordination of ethics reviews and analysis plans.
- Monitor compliance with data governance and research integrity standards.

#### **Knowledge Management**

- Contribute to the design and support implementation of knowledge management activities for the CODA project, including oversight of the project website and Knowledge Management

Hub.

- Curate and disseminate knowledge products, reports, and learning materials for consortium partners and external audiences.

### **Partnerships & Resource Mobilization**

- Under the leadership of the Project Director, support cross-partner engagement and communication to strengthen collaboration and knowledge-sharing.
- Contribute to institutional capacity building for project management as required for Centers of Excellence (COEs) and other consortium partners.
- In collaboration with the Project Director and Vital Strategies' Partnership and Development team, support proposal development and resource mobilization efforts to secure follow-on funding for CODA pilot testing in real-world settings.
- Other duties as assigned by the Project Director.

### **Skills and Competencies**

- Ability to establish strong working relationships with consortium partners that will permit Vital Strategies to influence partners in the implementation of the common critical path workplan.
- Skilled in managing complex workflows, interdependencies, and shared deliverables across consortium members.
- Ability to facilitate productive meetings, drive consensus, and support transparent decision-making processes.
- Proficiency in developing and maintaining product roadmaps, critical path workplans, and technical profiles.
- Knowledge of governance models, including establishing and managing steering committees and working groups.
- Skilled in designing and managing monitoring frameworks, performance metrics, and reporting systems.
- Ability to synthesize complex information into clear, high-quality reports for donors, partners, and leadership.
- Experience supporting or managing the design and implementation of research studies, pilots, or field experiments.
- Ability to develop and manage knowledge-sharing platforms, including websites and knowledge management hubs.
- Ability to work with statisticians, researchers, and technical teams to ensure scientifically sound research protocols.
- Clear and effective communication skills in English (oral and written), and strategic prioritization skills.
- Proactivity, flexibility, and ability to work in collaborative environments.
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as a core element of programmatic and institutional work.

### **Experience**

- Minimum of 8 years work experience with at least 4 years of project management experience, including experience in Agile product development.
- Experience working with consortium partners, including support for decision-making, indicator development, and health action planning.

- Proven experience producing reports and strategic inputs for diverse audiences (institutional, academic, media).
- Practical knowledge of project management platforms (such as AirTable, Monday, Trello, or similar).
- Previous experience in research design and implementation.
- Experience working on knowledge management components of research and/or public health projects, including web-based content.
- Experience in collaborative, multidisciplinary, and intersectoral project environments.
- Experience working in low and middle-income countries and on projects with strong digitalization components.

### Preferred

- Participation in product development activities, from design through implementation and release.
- Experience with AI, digital health, or technology-driven public health interventions.

### Working Conditions and Physical Requirements

- This is a full-time role ideally based in Johannesburg, South Africa, with employment facilitated locally through an Employer of Record.
- We offer competitive salaries aligned with local market conditions, along with comprehensive benefits.
- Travel will be required internationally up to 5% of the time.
- The candidate must be willing to work and be flexible with colleagues across different time zones.

### Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in Public Health, Public Policy, Research, or equivalent experience in a related field is required.

### How to apply

Interested applicants should submit the following by e-mail to [vaneshree@ngorecruit.com](mailto:vaneshree@ngorecruit.com) quoting reference number: **NVS003**

- A CV in Word or PDF format (please include 3 references).
- A 1-page cover letter outlining how your skills and experience align with Vital Strategies' mission and the unique qualities you will bring to this role.

**Application Deadline: 15 January 2026**

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply ASAP. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

For more information about Vital Strategies, visit their [website](#) and social media pages: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).