

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

IRC233222

**Scientific Officer – Ecology,
Environment Marine and Fisheries
Group**

**Department of Agriculture,
Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA)**

**Completed Application Forms
must be returned to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 2nd November 2018***

Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs

A living, working, active landscape valued by
everyone

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

Contents

	Page
Foreword	3
Background	4
Job Description	8
Person Specification	15
Selection Process	19
General Information	24
Annex A Nationality	32
Annex B Civil Service Commissioners	33

FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in the Scientific Officer Posts – Ecology with the Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group (EMFG) of Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

The Group's strategic objective is to create prosperity and well-being through effective environmental management and regulation. An important element of our work involves co-operating with other Government departments and agencies to limit adverse impacts upon the environment.

The Group has a wide range of scientific, professional skills and expertise among its staff. This skills and experience base allows us to manage and protect our landscapes and their wildlife, and to maintain a healthier environment.

David Small
Deputy Secretary
Environment Marine and Fisheries Group

BACKGROUND

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has responsibility for food, farming, environmental, fisheries, forestry and sustainability policy and the development of the rural sector in Northern Ireland. The Department assists the sustainable development of the agri-food, environmental, fishing and forestry sectors of the Northern Ireland economy, having regard for the needs of the consumers, the protection of human, animal and plant health, the welfare of animals and the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

DAERA provides a business development service for farmers and growers and a veterinary service for administration of animal health and welfare. The Department's College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) delivers training and further and higher education courses in the agri-food sector. DAERA works closely with the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in Great Britain for the administration of schemes affecting the whole of the United Kingdom. The Department also oversees the application of European Union agricultural, environmental, fisheries and rural development policy to Northern Ireland.

DAERA VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

Vision

"A living, working, active landscape valued by everyone"

Strategic Outcomes

1. Sustainable agri-food, fisheries, forestry and industrial sectors.
2. A clean, healthy environment, benefiting people, nature and the economy.
3. A thriving rural economy, contributing to prosperity and wellbeing.
4. A well led, high performing organisation focused on outcomes.

DAERA Top Management Group comprises:

Corporate Services Group
Veterinary Service Animal Health Group
Environment Marine and Fisheries Group
Food and Farming Group
Rural Affairs, Forest service and Estates Transformation

DAERA has two Executive Agencies:

Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
Forest Service

The Department also sponsors a number of NDPBs including the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI).

The Permanent Secretary of DAERA is Denis McMahon.

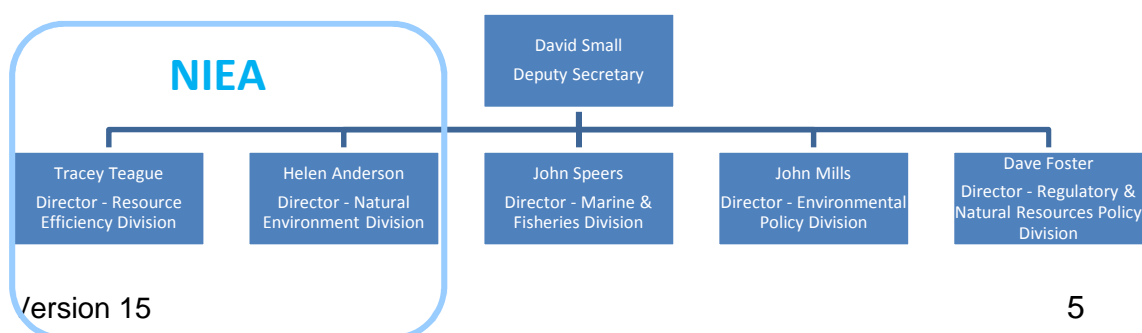
ENVIRONMENT MARINE AND FISHERIES GROUP

EMFG is made up of five Divisions – Resource Efficiency Division, Natural Environment Division (the two divisions which make up the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, NIEA), Marine and Fisheries Division, Environmental Policy Division and the Regulation of Natural Resources Division

The role of EMFG is to:

- Promote both public awareness of environmental issues and action To deal with them;
- Regulate adverse human impacts upon the environment;
- Work in partnership with others to protect the environment;
- Provide fisheries (inland and marine) expertise and regulation;
- Protection of public health through regulation of drinking water quality;
- Provide environmental policy support and guidance;
- Provide financial support to others to encourage action to protect the environment;
- Manage our properties to promote public access to, and understanding Of, the environment; and
- Advise government and other key sectors on environmental issues.

EMFG has over 730 staff, the greater percentage being scientific and technical, based at Belfast (headquarters), Lisburn, Downpatrick and a number of regional locations.



These posts are mainly in the following Directorates:

- Natural Environment Division;
- Marine and Fisheries Division;

however other Ecology vacancies at this grade may arise during the lifetime of this competition within the other Directorates across EMFG.

Natural Environment Division

Northern Ireland has a rich and varied biodiversity and geodiversity that is almost unparalleled. The outstanding landscapes that result play a major role in defining the region's tourism product. NIEA, through its Natural Environment Division, is responsible for protecting, conserving and enhancing these assets which it does through a variety of statutory and non-statutory means. These include the protection and management of designated sites and other earth heritage areas/sites, promoting geodiversity and biodiversity conservation and public access in the wider countryside, gathering the evidence and/or commissioning research to increase our knowledge and understanding of the natural environment. The Natural Environment Division is comprised of 7 business units:

- **Countryside Coast and Landscapes** contributes to sustainable development through influencing the planning and management of development, conserves Northern Ireland's finest landscapes, supports others to protect and enhance natural heritage through grant aid, promotes and supports access to and enjoyment of the countryside and provides advice on landscape issues pertaining to strategic development plans and development management plans.
- **Conservation Designation and Protection** whose main functions are the designation of sites and areas for nature conservation purposes and providing for their protection and management to safeguard the special features for which the sites were designated. This is carried out by the protection of habitats/species and earth science through the designation of nationally and internationally protected areas, providing a grant aid programme to support appropriate management of sensitive sites where other funding streams are unavailable and ensuring the appropriate management of protected sites through the consenting and assenting of activities and the provision of appropriate advice and by ensuring compliance on designated sites is in place through the implementation of environmental legislation and regulations.
- **Biodiversity and Conservation Science** which generates, gathers, evaluates, interprets, and makes available the scientific information required to underpin the work of conserving natural heritage. The conservation of biodiversity through direct action, implementation of legislation and through advice and influence within other departments, agencies, other public bodies and stakeholders. This work includes the

protection of wildlife through various regulations and orders, the provision of advice regarding Invasive Alien Species, planning and conducting biological and earth science surveys, trials, recording and monitoring and then analysing and evaluating the results and also overseeing measure to protect, conserve and enhance local biodiversity.

- **Planning Response Team** which provides a single point of contact for environmental advice on planning matters to councils, developers and the public, ensure that the Department meets its statutory duties to respond to planning consultations as required under planning legislation and coordinate environmental advice across EMFG to provide timely, consistent, integrated responses to facilitate planning.
- **Regional Operations** is tasked to manage and maintain NIEA Country Parks and Nature Reserves effectively from a range of office locations across Northern Ireland, to facilitate their safe enjoyment and access by the visiting public and where appropriate to deliver local services to other units within EMFG. This work includes supporting the delivery of the establishment and monitoring of protected sites, including any associated landowner liaison and supporting the recording of scientific data regarding species surveys and census on protected sites.
- **Operational Ammonia Team** considers and assesses the current approaches to the management and regulation of Nitrogen deposition with specific regard to the protection of designated sites and compliance with environmental legislation. The team also work to provide guidance and support to other teams and stakeholders in relation to the impacts and regulation of Nitrogen deposition and to source specific scientific and legal expertise for NIEA and the Department in this area.
- **Operational Brexit Team** which was set up to identify and co-ordinate delivery of all NED actions required to ensure service delivery on day 1 of the UK exit from the EU and provide the NED operational input into SI amendment; UK Frameworks and DEFRA/DAERA Brexit Environmental Workstream strands. Also the team will engage with counterparts and act as lead NED contact point to co-ordinate NED inputs for UK / DAERA / EMFG / NIEA initiatives relating to future/new policy proposals.

Marine & Fisheries Division

Marine and Fisheries Division is responsible for the promotion, protection, enhancement and sustainable use of all fish stocks inland and at sea (including aquaculture and fish health), and the marine environment, through legislation, planning, licensing, monitoring and conservation activities.

It provides lead policy advice to the DAERA Minister in respect of the Marine environment, inland and sea fisheries, aquaculture and fish health as well as providing a science evidence service to support regulatory and statutory roles.

It is responsible for implementing a range of European and national statutory obligations through the development of a regional Marine Plan; delivery of regulation and enforcement regimes; issue of licences and consents; designation and management of marine conservation sites; the conservation, protection, development and promotion of salmon and inland fisheries; and the provision of financial support through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and Coastal Communities Fund.

The Division acts as the Department's sponsor of the NI Fisheries Harbour Authority and co-sponsors the North-South Body, the Lough's Agency

It is structured around 8 work areas – Conservation & Reporting, Marine Planning, Monitoring & Assessment, Strategy & Licensing, Inland Fisheries, Sea Fisheries Inspectorate, Sea Fisheries Policy & Grants, and Aquaculture, Fish Health & Sponsorship of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (The Loughs Agency).

Further information about EMFG and a detailed explanation of the work of the NIEA and the Marine and Fisheries Division can be obtained on the internet at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/niea-business-plan-2016-17>

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/daera-business-plans>

JOB DESCRIPTION

This is a recruitment competition for permanent full-time posts in Ecology at the Scientific Officer grade in the Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group, within the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs. A reserve list will exist and be held for a period of 1 year from the date of the interviews to cover any further similar vacancies which may arise in this time frame.

Location

These posts are mainly in the following locations:

- Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Klondyke Building, Cromac Avenue, Lower Ormeau Road, Belfast. BT7 2JA;
- Marine and Fisheries Division Units , 17 Antrim Road, Tonagh, Lisburn BT28 3AL;

however other vacancies at this grade may arise during the lifetime of this competition at various locations across the whole DAERA estate, including Ballykelly, in Northern Ireland.

Travel

As these posts may require the successful candidate to travel on official duty, which may also include the driving of Departmental vehicles, the successful candidates must hold a driving licence or have access to a form of transport that allows the officer to fulfil the duties of the post in full. Travel will be across Northern Ireland and also nationally and internationally as required.

Medical Requirements

As some posts to be filled are fully operational and require staff to spend considerable time on Departmental vessels, there are health and safety requirements pertinent to these particular posts. Candidates for these specific posts will be required to obtain a satisfactory MCA Seafarers Medical Report (ML5) or an ENG 1 as appropriate prior to them being appointed.

Annual Leave

In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days, rising to 30 days after five years' service.

Salary

The salary for the post will be within the range £26,962 to £27,819 (under review) per annum. The successful candidate can expect to be placed at the minimum point of the pay scale.

If the successful candidate is an existing NICS employee, normal pay on promotion/re-grading arrangements will apply.

Working Hours

The successful candidate will normally be required to work 5 days each week, totalling 37 hours. On occasions the duties may include some evening and weekend working. DAERA operates a flexi working system.

Probationary Period

The post holder will serve 12 months' probation in the new post. This will commence from the date of appointment. At the end of the probation period a formal review will be conducted to determine if the posting will be made permanent.

Vetting

The successful candidate will normally require Baseline Personnel Security Standard, however some posts will require full Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) level clearance before the post can be taken up; applications for which will be organised via NICS_HR. This is further clarified in the Vetting Procedure section.

Training

We recognise that the skills of our people are our greatest asset and we will continually seek to train and develop them in line with our business goals.

Conflict of Interest

It is a basic requirement of all Civil Servants that their private activities should not bring them in to conflict with their official duties. Conflict of Interest is not limited to the individual's own private, financial or other interests, as family, friends and associates may also have dealings which affect the Department's business directly or indirectly. Therefore to avoid any conflict or potential conflict and to demonstrate impartiality to the public at all times, an officer must not, without prior approval, engage in any activity which could be considered to be in conflict with official business. As such, to protect employees and the Department from public criticism, it will be mandatory for the successful candidate to complete a Conflict of Interest declaration on appointment.

Further Information

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may contact Ben McComb on telephone 028 9056 9256 or email Ben.McComb@daera-ni.gov.uk

If you have any questions about the competition process, you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330 or email: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Scientific Officer – Ecology.

This role will primarily focus on the Natural Environment and Marine and Fisheries Division's sphere of responsibility however a limited number of Ecology posts do exist in the other Divisions across the Environment Marine and Fisheries Group.

The post holder will be a member of a team with a broad range of natural science skills and may have people management responsibilities. They will normally report to a Higher Scientific Officer. The post holder's main responsibilities will be dependent on the work area they are assigned to and may include some of the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring the provision of appropriate evidence based scientific advice and guidance to colleagues, customers and stakeholders and to provide briefing for external and internal correspondence in the field of ecology and the natural environment including habitats, species, earth science and landscapes.
- The preparation of scientific reports/surveys/casework in the field of ecology and/or the natural environment which will enable appropriate courses of action or activity to be undertaken to support good environmental outcomes. This may include the development of management plans, technical reviews, assessments of impacts and determination of applications for licences, permits, consents/asents, permissions or other registrations.
- Designing and implementing routine scientific surveys and fieldwork as part of larger monitoring programmes including the mapping, recording and monitoring work of habitats and species in the terrestrial, marine or freshwater environments and/or earth science and/or landscape features.
- Identifying sites qualifying for nature conservation and / or landscape designation under international treaties and domestic legislation, preparing designation criterion citations, bringing forward and consulting on designation proposals, including liaison with landowners.
- Managing, advising on and facilitating through support to others the effective management for natural heritage conservation of ecosystems, sites, habitats, species, earth science and landscapes.
- Promoting awareness of the natural heritage of Northern Ireland, its importance in delivering ecosystem services and health and well-being and promoting its conservation and enjoyment through facilitating public access to the countryside.
- Implementation of the requirements of environmental legislation applicable to Northern Ireland and conducting a broad range of

regulatory activity including where necessary, the investigation on non-compliance and the taking of appropriate enforcement action in order to protect the environment, which may include the provision of witness and scientific ecological evidence to tribunals, planning & water appeals commissions and in the courts.

- Developing close working relationships and networks with a range of stakeholders including, but not limited to colleagues within EMFG and the wider department, other government departments and agencies in NI and GB, statutory advisory bodies and other Non-Departmental Public Bodies, trade bodies, Non-Government Organisations and local communities.
- Actively contributing to planning, allocating and conducting work to meet the objectives of their division's business plan and unit level objectives, ensuring work meets required deadlines as well as ensuring the quality of work produced.
- Actively contributing to a health and safety culture by reviewing and maintaining awareness of the business area's risk assessments to ensure personal adherence to safe working practices and compliance with prevailing policies and standards.
- Assisting colleagues in ensuring that the range of outputs and outcomes of your team's work adheres to legislative and other regulatory requirements, satisfies customer demands and meets operational and technical quality and reporting standards within the confines of budgetary and other resource allocations.
- Conducting fieldwork which may include working over arduous terrain, within industrial sites, along watercourses, boat work and intertidal survey work depending on the nature of the post undertaken.
- Utilisation and management of scientific data and records on several IT platforms, development of metadata for submission to EU and UK data portals databases, GIS and bespoke mapping systems.

The above list is not comprehensive but gives a good indication of the main duties of the post. The emphasis on particular duties will vary over time according to business needs.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must have, by the closing date for applications:

- 1) 4 GCE/GCSE 'O' Levels, grades A-C, in separate subjects which must include English, Mathematics and one Science subject.

AND

- 2) 2 years' experience gained within the last 8 years in a paid, voluntary or academic capacity associated with the conservation or assessment of our natural terrestrial, aquatic or marine heritage (ecosystems, habitats, species, earth science or landscapes), such as in one or a combination of the following:
 - Conducting ecological assessments;
 - Conducting ecological surveys (including mapping, recording and monitoring of scientific data and any follow up laboratory analysis);
 - Conservation management.

Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated.

* **Relevant** or **equivalent** qualifications: give the type of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body). If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied etc so that a well-informed decision can be made.

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

In addition, applicants should be aware that after an eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, the following shortlisting criteria will be used:

- 1) A HND (or equivalent/higher qualification) in a relevant* scientific discipline.
- 2) A Degree (or equivalent/higher qualification) in a relevant* scientific discipline.
- 3) 1 years' post degree qualification experience** gained within the last 8 years in a paid, voluntary or academic capacity associated with the conservation or assessment of our natural terrestrial, aquatic or marine environment (ecosystems, habitats, species, earth science or landscapes), such as in one or a combination of the following:
 - Conducting ecological assessments;
 - Conducting ecological surveys (including mapping, recording and monitoring of scientific data and any follow up laboratory analysis);
 - Conservation management.

The following clarification is provided:

Relevant** scientific discipline: give the subject of qualification and date awarded (the date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body). If you believe your qualification is relevant to the role in question, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied and project work undertaken etc so that a well-informed decision can be made. *Post degree qualification experience** can also include relevant post graduate study or post doctorate experience.

Please note:

- **You should ensure that you provide evidence of your experience in your application form, giving length of experience, examples and dates as required.**
- **It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities.**
- **The selection panel will not make assumptions from the title of the applicant's post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.**
- **If you do not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates needed to meet the eligibility criteria, the selection panel will reject your application.**
- **ONLY the details provided by you in your application form (the employment history and eligibility criteria) will be provided to the selection panel for the purpose of determining your eligibility for the post.**
- **Further information on the Core Competences for this grade can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk**

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the eligibility criteria *and shortlisting criteria (if applicable)*. In addition, they will also be required to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework at Level 3 for the purposes of personal and professional development.

Scientific Officer – Ecology is analogous to Executive Officer I in the NICS.

What is the NICS competency framework?

The competency framework sets out how all NICS employees should work. It puts the Civil Service values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality at the heart of everything they do and it aligns to the three high-level leadership behaviours that every civil servant needs to model as appropriate to their role and level of responsibility: Set Direction; Engage People and Deliver Results.

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance. The framework outlines ten competencies, which are grouped into three clusters. The competencies are intended to be discrete and cumulative, with each level building on the levels below i.e. a person demonstrating a competency at level 2 should be demonstrating level 1 as a matter of course.

How does the NICS framework look?

The Northern Ireland Civil Service competency framework can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk

It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of the assessment /interview criteria as outlined below.

INTERVIEW CRITERIA

Applicants will be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview:

1. Seeing the Big Picture

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with, and supports, organisational objectives and the wider public needs. It is about focusing contribution on the activities which will meet Departmental and Programme for Government goals and deliver the greatest value.

Marks Available: 30

2. Leading and Communicating

At all levels, effectiveness in this area is about leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm. It is about supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of citizens.

Marks Available: 20

3. Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. It means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well-reasoned, justifiable decisions.

Marks Available: 30

4. Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the NICS, to help to achieve business objectives and goals. It requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

Marks Available: 20

5. Managing a Quality Service

Effectiveness in this area is about being organised to deliver service objectives and striving to improve the quality of service, taking account of diverse customer needs and requirements. People who are effective plan, organise and manage their time and activities to deliver a high quality and efficient service, applying programme and project management approaches appropriately and effectively to support service delivery.

Marks Available: 30

Total Marks Available: 130

Overall Pass Mark: 78

COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEWS

Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's experience in each of the above areas and award marks accordingly.

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in Belfast during week commencing Monday 3rd December 2018.

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind that it does not require you to:

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish;
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience; or
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the competence the question is designed to test.

A competence-based interview does however require you to:

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfill the competences required for effective performance in the role; and
- Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the required competence areas.

In preparation for the interview you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:

- Situation – briefly outline the situation;
- Task – what was your objective, what were you trying to achieve;
- Action – what did you actually do, what was your unique contribution;
- Result – what happened, what was the outcome, what did you learn.

The panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the competences. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail a range of examples which best illustrate your skills and abilities in each competence area. You may draw examples from any area of your work / life experiences.

SELECTION PROCESS

The Merit Principle

In accordance with the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code, appointments to the NICS are made under the 'merit principle', where the best person for any given post is selected in fair and open competition.

Further information on the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at www.nicscommissioners.org.

Making your application:

The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the eligibility/shortlisting criteria.

Guidance for Applicants

- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms, unless it is specifically requested in the application form and candidate information booklet, eg an organisational chart.
- Should an organisational chart be required this must be submitted to HRConnect by the closing date for applications.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either typescript font size 12, or legible, block capitals using black ink.
- Applicants must not reformat application forms.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- HRConnect will not examine applications until after the closing deadline;
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write "I" statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the panel will be interested in.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be checked out at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your *unique* role the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.

Application Form Submission

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before completing an application.
- **All** parts of the application form **must** be completed by the applicant before this application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date. Late applications or applications received by fax or by email will not be accepted. Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to HRConnect. HRConnect will not accept any application where they are asked to pay any shortfall in postage.
- Only the employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, all requests for hard copy application packs are welcomed and all applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online.
- When completing the online application, your information is saved as you move through the pages. You may leave the application at any time, providing you have clicked on the 'Save & Continue' button. Once your application has been submitted the option to edit will no longer be available.
- Please note - the session timeout for the online application is 40 minutes, if you do not save or change page within this time you will automatically be logged out and any unsaved work will be lost.
- Please do not attempt to reformat application forms as this will result in disqualification.

Changes in personal circumstances

Please ensure HRConnect are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances.

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

Transgender Requirements

Should you currently be going through a phase of transition in respect of gender and wish this to be taken into consideration in confidence to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process please contact HRConnect. Details of this will only be used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process.

Further appointments from this competition

Where a further position in the NICS is identified which is considered broadly similar to that outlined in this candidate information booklet, consideration will be given to filling the position from this competition. The merit list resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to one year.

Merit List Extensions

It is presently intended that the merit list for this competition should remain extant for a period of one year. However the Department would wish to alert candidates to the possibility, however remote, that circumstances may arise in the future where it will be necessary to extend the currency of the merit list for a further period. The merit list will only be extended where cogent practical reasons for doing so arise in the future.

Disability Requirements

We will ask on the application form if you require any reasonable adjustments, due to disability, to enable you to attend any part of the assessment process. Details of any disability are only used for this purpose and do not form any part of the selection process. If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability and are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be required to outline any adjustments you consider necessary in order for you to take up an appointment. If you wish to discuss your disability requirements further, please contact HRConnect.

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form

Please note, this form is regarded as part of your application and failure to complete and return it will result in disqualification.

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement please refer to page 26.

As women are currently known to be under represented in this occupation across Northern Ireland, applications from women would be particularly welcome.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit

Assessment Information

It is HRConnect policy that all candidates invited to attend for assessment bring sufficient documentation to satisfy the eligibility / shortlisting criteria and the Nationality and Vetting requirements. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for assessment.

You should ensure that these documents are readily available.

Nationality Requirements

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom. The Scientific Officer – Ecology posts are classified as Non-Public Service, therefore certain nationality requirements apply. Applicants must be either:

- (i) A UK national; or
- (ii) A Commonwealth citizen; or
- (iii) A British Protected Person; or
- (iv) An EEA national; or
- (v) A Swiss National; or
- (vi) A person who is not an EEA or Swiss national, but is a family member of an EEA national who has moved to the UK from another EEA Member State for an approved purpose.

For further guidance on Nationality requirements please see Annex A.

Advice on Nationality for (i), (ii) and (iii) above may be obtained from the Home Office website, www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Vetting Procedures

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For Scientific Officer – Ecology posts in the NICS the level of vetting is a Baseline Standard. For this check you will be required to provide the following:

- a) Your passport OR
- b) A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) AND your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version).
- c) Other acceptable documents are listed on www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
- d) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

We will organise a Criminal Record Check on all applicants to be carried out by AccessNI. The category of AccessNI check required for this post is;

Basic Disclosure Certificate

You should not put off applying for a post because you have a conviction. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner, and information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made.

For more information, the address of the AccessNI website is: <http://www.accessni.gov.uk/>. Those applicants who are being considered for appointment will be contacted by HRConnect, normally after interview/test, and will be asked to complete the AccessNI application form. Please note that a request to complete this form should not be seen as a guarantee of an offer of appointment. Failure to complete the application form and return it within the specified time will be regarded as 'no longer interested in the position' and your application will be withdrawn.

Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

Order of Merit

The selection panel will assess candidates against the interview criteria. Those candidates who meet the required standard(s) and pass mark will be deemed suitable for appointment. The selection panel will then list those suitable for appointment in order of merit with the highest scoring applicant ranked first. HRConnect will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed. The order of merit is valid for one year.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Pensions:

The NICS offers all new employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at:

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni/index/new-members.htm>

or

if you are unable to access the website please contact Civil Service Pensions as follows:

Civil Service Pensions
Waterside House
75 Duke Street
Londonderry
BT47 6FP
Tel: 02871 319000
Email: cspensions.cpg@finance-ni.gov.uk

Feedback

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is committed to ensuring that the processes used to recruit and select staff are fair and in accordance with the principles of the Civil Service Commissioners Code. We are consequently committed to providing feedback in respect of decisions taken in determining eligibility/shortlisting as well as at interview. Feedback in respect of eligibility/shortlisting will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria. All requests for feedback are welcome.

THIS INFORMATION PACK DOES NOT FORM PART OF
CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Completed application forms should be sent to the HRConnect Recruitment Team:

HRConnect
PO Box 1089
2nd Floor
The Metro Building
6-9 Donegall Square South
Belfast
BT1 9EW

NOTE: Late applications or applications received by fax or by email will not be accepted.

Contact Details:

If you have any queries regarding the competition process please contact HRConnect at the address above or by:

Email: Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net
Tel: 0800 1 300 330
Fax: 028 9024 1665

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Policy Statement

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy statement is set out below.

“The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) has a strong and clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. It is our policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and advancement in the NICS on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work. Everyone has a right to equality of opportunity and to a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere where they are treated with dignity and respect. We aim to provide opportunities for all sections of the community and continue to strive to create an inclusive working environment in which difference is recognised and valued. Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and giving each person the opportunity to contribute their skills and experience will help us to respond more effectively to the needs of the people we serve”.

We all want to work in an harmonious workplace where we feel valued, respected and included, irrespective of gender, including gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, race/ethnic origin, religious belief or political opinion, disability, having or not having dependants, sexual orientation and age.

In order to provide a high quality service to the people of Northern Ireland the NICS needs to attract, recruit, develop and retain the very best people at all levels. Our approach is based on three key principles:-

Equality – we promote equality of opportunity by seeking to remove barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups of people.

Diversity – we accept each person as an individual. Our success is built on our ability to embrace diversity – and we believe that everyone should feel valued for their contributions. By working together we will deliver the best possible service for our staff, customers and stakeholders.

Inclusion – we create a working culture where differences are not merely accepted, but valued; where everyone has the opportunity to develop in a way that is consistent with, and adheres to NICS values of impartiality, honesty, integrity and objectivity. Our aim is to be an organisation where people feel involved, respected and connected to our success.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of and to apply this policy. Both Management and Trade Union Side are fully committed to the policy and will endeavour to ensure its full implementation.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Equality monitoring is the process of collecting, storing and analysing information that is relevant to and necessary for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity between different categories of persons. This section sets out what information is collected, the reasons for doing so and what it is used for.

You should note that the Monitoring Form is regarded as part of your application and failure to fully complete and return it will result in disqualification. The Monitoring Form will be processed separately and neither the form nor the details contained in it will be available to those considering your application.

Monitoring equality and diversity in the workforce enables the NICS to examine how our employment policies and processes are working and to identify areas where these appear to be impacting disproportionately on certain groups of staff.

Legislative Context

This section explains the reasons for gathering this information by setting out the legislative background.

Gender

The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended) makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of his or her sex. Information on gender is also provided in the annual statutory monitoring the, as required by the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between men and women generally.

Age

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006 make it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on grounds of age. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different ages and age groups.

Community Background

The Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 outlaws discrimination on the basis of religious belief or political opinion. The Order also requires the NICS to submit an annual monitoring return to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. This takes the form of a statistical return, providing information on the gender and community background composition of all people working in the NICS at the 1st January each year.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief and political opinion. Following guidance issued in July 2007 by the Equality

Commission for NI the NICS has decided to use “community background” information as a proxy for political opinion.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (the DDA) provides protection for disabled persons against discrimination on the grounds of disability.

The DDA defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

This definition is interpreted as follows:-

Physical Impairment: this includes, for instance, a weakening of part of the body (eyes, ears, limbs, internal organs etc) caused through illness by accident or from birth. Examples would be blindness, deafness, paralysis of a leg or heart disease.

Mental Impairment: this includes mental ill health and what is commonly known as learning disability, and social functioning.

Substantial: put simply, this means the effect of the physical or mental impairment on ability to carryout normal day to day activities is more than minor or trivial. It does not have to be a severe effect.

Long-term adverse effect: the effect has to have lasted or be likely to last overall for at least 12 months and the effect must be a detrimental one. A person with a life expectancy of less than 12 months is of course covered if the effect is likely to last for the whole of that time.

A normal day to day activity: this is something which is carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis such as washing, eating, catching a bus or turning on a television. It does not mean something so individual as playing a musical instrument to a professional standard or doing everything involved in a particular job.

What sort of effect must there be?

The person must be affected in at least one of the respects listed in the DDA: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects; speech; hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; ability to take part in normal social interaction and form social relationships; or perception of risk of physical danger.

What happens if the effects are reduced by medication or other treatment?

Broadly speaking, the effects that matter are those that would be present if there was no medication or treatment taking place. The exception is people who wear spectacles or contact lenses when what matters is the effect that remain while the spectacles or contact lenses are being used.

Are there any types of condition covered by special provisions in the DDA?

Yes, because some people with particular conditions might not otherwise be counted as disabled. These are provisions covering:

Recurring or fluctuating conditions such as arthritis, where the effects can sometimes be less than substantial, which are treated as continuing to have a substantial adverse effect so long as that effect is likely to recur;

Conditions which progressively deteriorate, such as motor neuron disease, which count as having a substantial effect from the first time they have any effect at all on ability to carry out normal day to day activities even if it is not substantial, so long as there is eventually likely to be a substantial adverse effect; and

People with cancer, HIV, or multiple sclerosis are deemed to be disabled people from the point of diagnosis, regardless of whether or not they have any symptoms.

Are any conditions not covered?

Yes, the following conditions specifically do not count as impairments:

Addiction to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine or any other substance (unless resulting from the substance being medically prescribed);

Seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g. hay fever) unless it aggravates the effect of another condition;

Tendency to set fires, or steal, or physically or sexually abuse other persons;

Exhibitionism and voyeurism;

Severe disfigurements consisting of tattoos, non-medical body piercing or attachments to such piercing are not treated as having substantial adverse effects.

What if someone has recovered from a disability?

Much of the DDA also applies to people who have had a disability in the past (for example, someone who was disabled by mental ill health) but have now fully recovered. People who were registered disabled under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act (NI) 1945 both on 12 January 1995 and 2 December 1996 will be regarded as having had a disability in the past if they do not in any case fall within the definition of the DDA.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with a disability and persons without.

Race

The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 makes it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial group(s).

Sexual Orientation

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) Order 2003 makes it unlawful for employers and others to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation. In order to monitor the effectiveness of NICS policies

information is gathered on sexual orientation. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different sexual orientation.

Marital Status

The Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended), makes it unlawful to discriminate against married persons and civil partners in employment. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities in carrying out their functions in NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different marital status.

Dependants Status

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions in NI, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons with dependants and persons without.

Confidentiality of Monitoring Information

The following general principles will be applied to all individual monitoring information:-

- individual monitoring information will be afforded a high degree of confidentiality;
- misuse of monitoring information will be viewed as a disciplinary offence; and
- individual monitoring information will only be disclosed to members of staff or officials of a trade union, members of which are employed in the NICS, if it is necessary to do so for the appropriate discharge of their duties and responsibilities.

In addition to the above internal safeguards on the protection of equality monitoring information generally, the confidentiality of community background monitoring information is protected through Regulations made under the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (FETO). These make it a criminal offence, subject to specific exceptions, for an employer or employee to disclose information on the community background of an individual which has been obtained, or is used, for the purpose of monitoring under FETO.

As with other forms of personal data, the obtaining, use, storage and disclosure of monitoring information is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). Monitoring information is held on computer and is protected by a high level of security. Access to this data is restricted to those NICS staff, employees of HRConnect and Trade Union officials whose duties make it necessary for them to have it. Misuse of monitoring information is viewed as a disciplinary offence.

ANNEX A

Nationality

(i) 'UK National' means a person who is a British citizen (including persons from the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man), a British subject under Part IV of the British Nationality Act 1981 having the right of abode in the UK or a British Dependent Territories citizen acquiring his/her citizenship from connection with Gibraltar.

(ii) 'Commonwealth Citizen' means any person who has the status of a Commonwealth citizen under the British Nationality Act 1981, not covered by the 'UK Nationality' definition above. This includes British Dependent Territories citizens (other than Gibraltarians), British Overseas citizens, and from 1986 those persons in the category British National (Overseas).

(iii) 'British Protected Person' means a member of any class of persons declared to be British Protected Persons by Order in Council under the British Nationality Act 1981, or by virtue of the Solomon Islands Act 1978.

(iv) 'EEA National' means a national of one of the following countries:

Austria	Finland	Latvia	Portugal
Belgium	France	Liechtenstein	Romania
Bulgaria	Germany	Lithuania	Slovakia
**Croatia	Greece	Luxembourg	Slovenia
Cyprus	Hungary	Malta	Spain
Czech Republic	Iceland	Netherlands	Sweden
Denmark	Ireland	Norway	United Kingdom
Estonia	Italy	Poland	

N.B. nationals from Switzerland also have the same free movement and employment rights.

'Family member of an EEA or swiss national' means:

- (i) That national's spouse*; or
- (ii) A direct descendant (child, grandchild etc.) of that national or his/her spouse who is under 21 years of age or is their dependent; or
- (iii) A dependent relative in the ascending line (parent, grandparent etc) of the EEA national or his/her spouse.

*Note: 'Spouse' does not include a party to a marriage of convenience and in the case of EEA national vocational students; family members are restricted to spouses and dependent children only.

**Croatian nationals who want to work in the UK must obtain authorisation prior to commencing employment. They require a certificate of sponsorship and must also apply for an accession worker card before they can commence employment. There are no provisions for Croatian nationals to take up low-skilled work.

Further guidance on nationality can be obtained at www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk

ANNEX B

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

CSC NI

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

AN INTRODUCTION

Ensuring appointment on merit
And safeguarding ethics

WHO ARE WE?

Deirdre Toner
Sinead Burns
James Scholes

LOCATION

Our Office is in Stormont House.
The full address is:

Stormont House
Room 105
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SH

OPENING HOURS

The Office is open from 9.00am to 5.00pm,
Monday to Friday, except Public and Bank Holidays.

How to contact us

- write to us at the address at the top of the page
- telephone us on **028 9052 3599**
- visit us at www.nicscommissioners.org

Annex B CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONERS

WHAT ARE WE HERE TO DO?

Civil Service Commissioners are appointed by the Crown to uphold the principle that selection for appointment to posts in the Civil Service should be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

WHERE DO WE GET OUR AUTHORITY FROM?

Commissioners derived their responsibilities from prerogative Orders made by the Secretary of State. Our authority currently derives from the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

We do it by:

- making General Regulations.
- publishing and maintaining a Recruitment Code setting out the essential principles and procedures on which recruitment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service must be based. Departments and Agencies must follow this Code. A copy is available online at: www.nicscommissioners.org
- it is inevitable that occasions will arise when special circumstances lead to Departments needing to depart from the Merit Principle. The Commissioners have set out the circumstances in which they are prepared to look at requests to depart from the Merit Principle. These 'exceptions' must be notified to, and in some instances approved by, the Commissioners before an appointment can be made.
- auditing recruitment policies and practices followed by Departments and Agencies in making appointment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Each year, the Commissioners decide on a particular aspect of recruitment to examine in detail (an audit) and request management consultants to carry out independent investigations on their behalf. The results of these audits are published in the Commissioners' Annual Report.
- requiring Departments and Agencies to publish information about their recruitment activity.
- approving procedures for appointment, through open competition, to the Senior Civil Service in Northern Ireland.

- **hearing and determining appeals under the Northern Ireland Civil Service Code of Ethics. Under the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999, we have been assigned the role of providing an independent appeals mechanism for Northern Ireland civil servants. The Code of Ethics sets out the constitutional framework within which civil servants work and the values they are expected to uphold. Details of the number and nature of the appeals received by the Commissioners are published each year in our Annual Report.**

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

If you have ever applied for a post in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, you can be assured that, whether or not you were successful, the Department or Agency was obliged to make that appointment in accordance with directions for good practice set out by the Commissioners.

We are concerned that civil servants are not fully aware of the appeals mechanism under the Code of Ethics. We would strongly encourage any civil servant who believes that he or she has been asked to act in a way which

- **is illegal, improper or unethical;**
- **is in breach of constitutional convention or a professional code;**
- **may involve a possible maladministration; or**
- **is otherwise inconsistent with the Code**

to report the matter in accordance with procedures laid down in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pay and Conditions Code or Departmental guidance.

Where the matter has been reported in the appropriate manner and a civil servant believes the response does not represent a reasonable response to his or her concerns, s/he may report the matter in writing to the Civil Service Commissioners.