

**Candidate
Information
Booklet**

IRC270906

**Scientific Officer – Aquatic & Terrestrial Ecology
Northern Ireland Environment Agency and
Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group**

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

**Completed Application Forms
must be submitted to
HRConnect no later than 12
noon (UK time) on
*Friday 17th December 2021***

**Please retain a copy of this
booklet for your reference
throughout the selection
process.**

***Department of Agriculture,
Environment & Rural Affairs***

**Sustainability at the heart of 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, including junk mail folder, 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
Key Responsibilities	11
Terms and Conditions	13
Eligibility Criteria	16
Assessment Process	19
Guidance for Applicants	21

FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in the Scientific Officer Post – Aquatic & Terrestrial Ecology with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group (EMFG). NIEA and EMFG contribute to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' vision of "Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone".

An important element of our work involves engaging and co-operating with other stakeholders and the public to limit adverse impacts upon and improve the environment.

The Agency and EMFG have a wide range of scientific and professional skills and expertise among its staff. This skills and experience base allows us to manage and protect our waters, countryside and landscapes and their wildlife and to maintain a healthier environment and facilitate public appreciation of them.

If you believe you have the skills and experience to tackle this post, I would be delighted if you would take the next step and complete and submit the application form.

Paul Donnelly
Chief Executive
Northern Ireland Environment Agency

BACKGROUND

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has responsibility for food, farming, environment, drinking water quality, 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 is responsible to 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 has responsibility for environment, the Green Growth agenda and climate change, food, farming, fisheries, marine, forestry, rural development and sustainability policy. The Department supports the development of thriving rural communities; the conservation and enhancement of the environment; the sustainable development of a £5 billion agri-food industry, having regard for the needs of the consumers, the protection of human, animal and plant health and the welfare of animals; the development of the fisheries sector; and the development of our forested land. Given the importance of the EU exit agenda to these sectors and activities, DAERA is at the centre of the transition arrangements.

Vision

“Sustainability at the heart of a living working, active landscape valued by everyone”.

Strategic Outcomes

1. Natural Environment - To protect and enhance our natural environment now and for future generations whilst advocating its value to and wellbeing for all.
2. Economic Growth - To enhance our food, forestry, fishery and farming sectors using efficient and environmentally sustainable models which support economic growth.
3. Rural Communities - To champion thriving rural communities that contribute to prosperity and wellbeing.

4. Exemplar Organisation - To be an exemplar, people focused organisation, committed to making a difference for the citizens we serve.

DAERA Top Management Group comprises:

- Central Services and Contingency Planning
- 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 six Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) including:

Executive NDPBs

- Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
- Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC)
- Northern Ireland Fisheries Harbour Authority (NIFHA)
- Agricultural Wages Board for Northern Ireland (AWB)

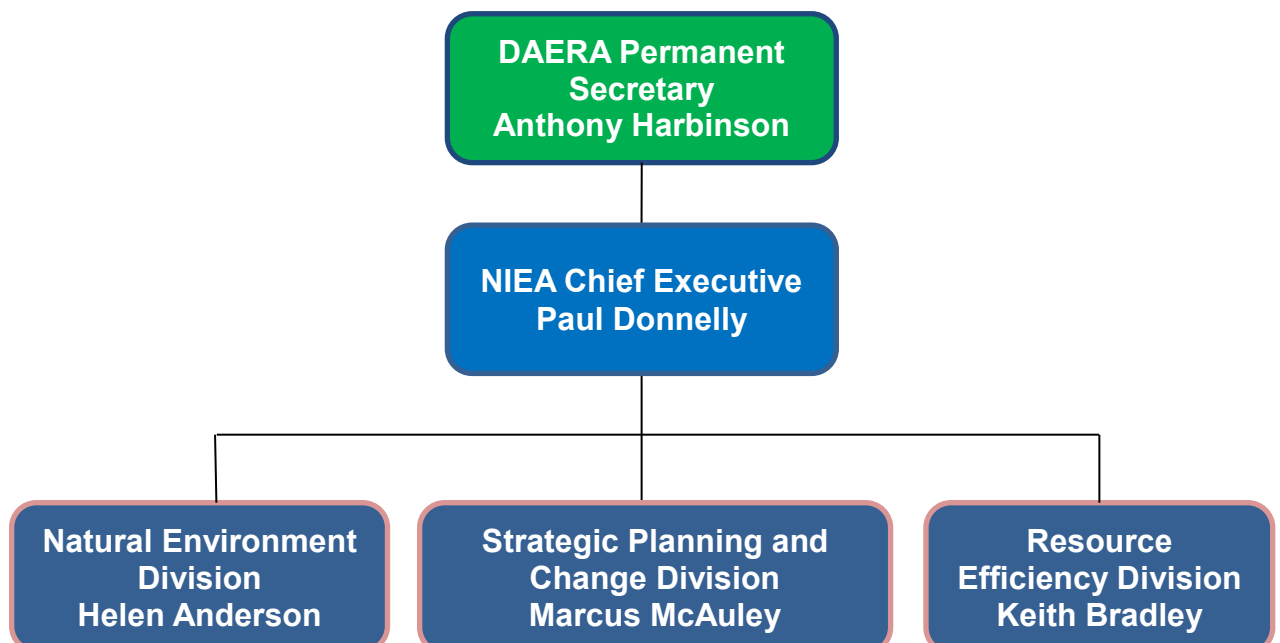
Advisory NDPB

- Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC)

North South Body

- The Loughs Agency of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission.

The Interim Permanent Secretary of DAERA is Anthony Harbinson.



NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is an Executive Agency within DAERA. The NIEA has three Divisions; namely Natural Environment Division; Resource Efficiency Division; and Strategic Planning and Change.

NIEA's primary purpose is to protect and enhance Northern Ireland's environment, and in doing so, to deliver health and well-being benefits and support economic growth.

One of DAERA's four strategic outcomes is, "a clean, healthy environment, benefitting people, nature and the economy", which underpins the draft Programme for Government (PfG) Outcome 2, "we live and work sustainably – protecting the environment". In line with NIEA's overall purpose, the Agency has a pivotal role in delivering these outcomes through its own five key priorities:

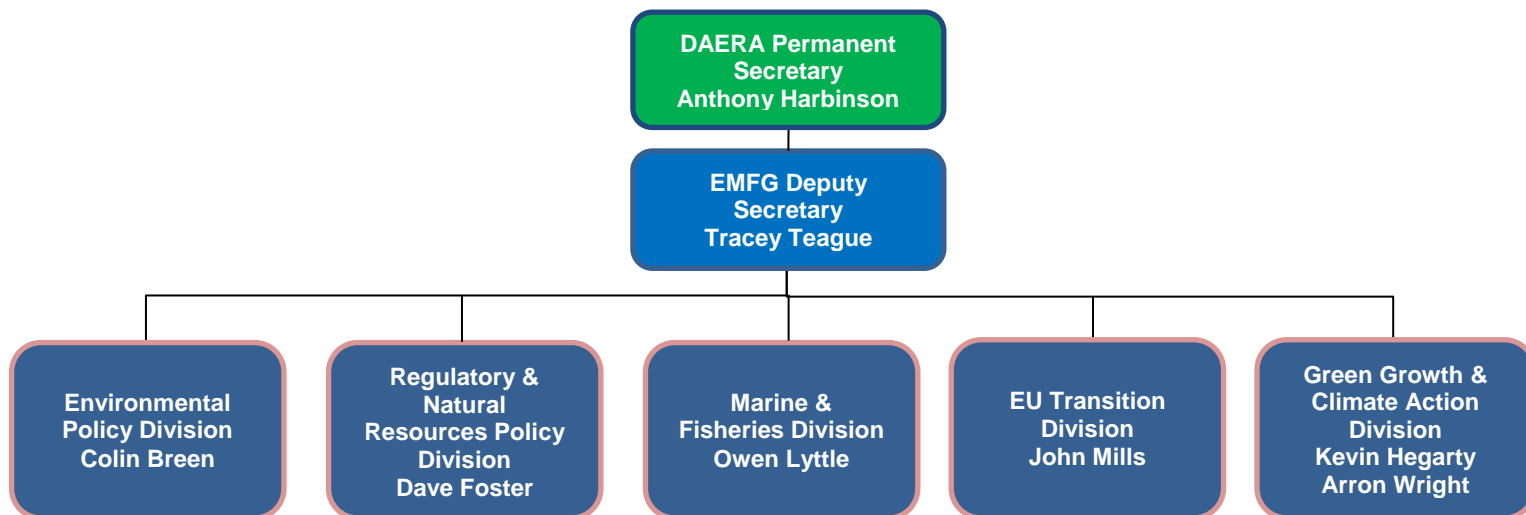
- Good habitat and landscape quality with species abundance and Diversity;
- Promotion of environmentally sustainable development and infrastructure;
- Freshwater and marine environment at "good status";
- A fully compliant regulated industry; and
- A compliant crime free waste sector.

The Agency also plays an important role in supporting policy development within DAERA's Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group as well as contributing to wider policy development across DAERA on key issues such as waste, biodiversity, animal disease control, environmental farming schemes and future agri-environment policies.

The role of NIEA 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;
- protect public health through regulation of drinking water quality;

- 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.



ENVIRONMENT MARINE AND FISHERIES GROUP (EMFG)

Marine and Fisheries Group is responsible for the development of a Climate Change Bill and a dynamic policy agenda to protect, conserve and enhance the environment (including land, air, freshwater and marine waters), along with an effective regulation regime. By developing our natural assets, the Group supports the health and social well-being of the population and the development of a sustainable and dynamic economy. It also develops and delivers policy and legislation to protect, manage and ensure the sustainable use of our seas and inland fishery resources.

Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group incorporates 5 Divisions:

- Environmental Policy Division
- Regulatory and Natural Resource Policy Division
- Marine and Fisheries Division
- Environment EU Transition Division
- Green Growth & Climate Action Division

NIEA and EMFG combined has over 730 staff, who are located in offices throughout Northern Ireland. There are two major office sites: one in Belfast

and one in Lisburn, with the NIEA's headquarters located in the Klondyke Building, Belfast. Other sites include Dundonald House, Belfast, Downpatrick, Ballykelly and other regional sites (mainly country parks) across Northern Ireland.

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

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

<http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/niea-business-plan-2020-21>

Further information about NIEA can be obtained on the Internet at www.daera-ni.gov.uk/northern-ireland-environment-agency

These Scientific Officer Aquatic & Terrestrial Ecology posts are mainly in the following Divisions:

- NIEA: Natural Environment Division;
- EMFG: Marine and Fisheries Division;
- NIEA: Resource Efficiency Division; and
- NIEA: Strategic Planning & Change Division

However, other Aquatic & Terrestrial Ecology vacancies at this grade may arise during the lifetime of this competition within the other Divisions and Directorates across DAERA.

**Helen Anderson (G5)
Director**

**Mark Hammond (G6)
Head
of Natural Environment Operations**

**Sara McGuckin (G6)
Head
of Natural Science**

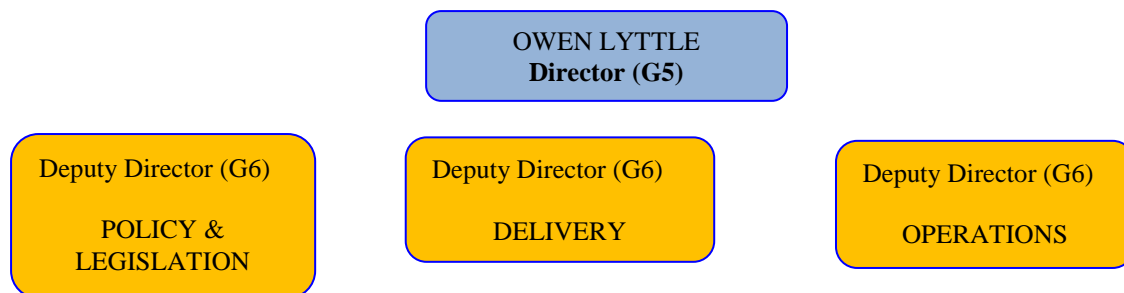
Natural Environment Division

Northern Ireland has a rich and varied landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity that is almost unparalleled. Natural Environment Division, is responsible for protecting, conserving and enhancing these assets which it does through a variety of statutory and non-statutory means.

This includes: the protection and management of species, designated sites and other natural heritage areas; promoting and supporting geodiversity, landscape and biodiversity conservation, environmental farming and public access to and enjoyment of the natural environment; generating, gathering evaluating and interpreting scientific information and evidence to underpin the work on conserving natural heritage and to increase our knowledge and understanding of the environment; conservation of natural heritage through direct action and

development of management measures to reduce adverse impacts such as those from emissions and invasive species; implementation of legislation; provision of advice to other departments, agencies, other public bodies and stakeholders; and management of NIEA Country Parks and Nature Reserves and to facilitate their enjoyment by the visiting public.

It is structured around 10 work areas – Biodiversity and Wildlife; Conservation Science; Conservation, Designation and Protection; Countryside Coast and Landscapes; Planning Response; Regional Operations; Air Quality and Biodiversity; Land Management; Brexit and Operational Change; Funding and Partnerships.



Marine and 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 national and international 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 grant aid.

The Division acts as the Department's policy sponsor of the NI Fisheries Harbour Authority and the North-South Body, the Loughs Agency.

It is structured around work areas including – Conservation & Reporting; Marine Planning; Monitoring & Assessment; Strategy & Licensing; Inland Fisheries; Sea Fisheries Inspectorate; Sea Fisheries Policy & Grants; Aquaculture and Fish Health Policy.

Resource Efficiency Division

The Resource Efficiency Division is responsible for a diverse range of activities and seeks to safeguard the quality of the environment through effective regulation of activities that have the potential to impact on air, water and land. This involves engagement with businesses and the public to provide information and advice; monitoring, recording, reporting and setting standards for compliance; issuing consents, licences, permits and authorisations and enforcing legislation.

The Division is structured around 5 work areas – Water Management Unit; Regulatory Unit; Enforcement Unit; Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate Unit; and NIEA EU Transition Operational Unit.

Most ecologists within this division are in Water Management Unit Water Assessment Data and Evidence Group which is responsible for protecting and improving Northern Ireland's aquatic environment through monitoring the biological water quality of rivers and lakes across Northern Ireland, associated data analysis and reporting, and commissioning relevant research. The group also carries out investigations and surveys in support of the river basin management plan and associated catchment management activities.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Scientific Officer – Aquatic and Terrestrial Ecology.

This role will primarily focus on the Natural Environment Division, Resource Efficiency Division and Marine and Fisheries Division's sphere of responsibility. However a limited number of Ecology posts do exist in the other Divisions across NIEA, EMFG and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

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/assents, 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 natural environment.

- 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 NDPBs, trade bodies, NGOs 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.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There is currently a number of full time permanent vacancies. The successful candidates will be direct employees of the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

Further appointments may be made from this competition should NICS positions become vacant which require the same eligibility criteria and have similar duties and responsibilities.

Location

The vacant posts will mainly be in the two headquarter buildings at the following locations:

- Klondyke Building, Cromac Avenue, Lower Ormeau Road, Belfast. BT7 2JA;
- Water Management Unit, 17 Antrim Road, 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.

Salary

Salary will be within the range £28,706 - £29,307 within which pay progression will be performance related.

Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale. If the successful candidate is an existing civil servant, normal pay on promotion/re-grading arrangements will apply.

Pensions

The NICS offers all employees an attractive pension package. Further details can be found on the Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme (Northern Ireland) website at www.finance-ni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni

Holidays

In addition to public and privilege holidays, currently 12 days, the annual leave allowance will be 25 days, rising to 30 days after 5 years' service.

Hours of Work

The normal conditioned hours of work are full-time: 42 hours per week which includes a 1 hour meal break (37 hours net) Monday to Friday. Most offices work flexi-time.

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 and 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.

Vetting

An appointment will be dependent on the individual satisfying the vetting requirements for the post. The level of vetting required for this post is basic.

Medical

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.

Following interview, successful candidates who have been allocated to these specific posts will be required to attend an appointment provided by the Department for a satisfactory MCA Sea Farers Medical Report (ML5) or an ENG1 as appropriate prior to them being appointed.

Should candidates not obtain a satisfactory MCA Sea Farers report, they will be placed in an alternative role.

Probation

Confirmation of appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 1 year. If performance, conduct or attendance during this period is not satisfactory the appointment may be terminated.

Career Development

The NICS is committed to career development and offers attractive career prospects across a wide variety of roles and professions. Career development is an integral part of the performance management system. Personal Development Plans identify learning and development needs with a view to enhancing skills and capabilities. 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.

NI Civil Servants have access to a wide range of internal job opportunities, including secondments with external organisations and are encouraged and supported in proactively managing their career.

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

If you have any questions about the competition process, want to learn more about the post before deciding to apply or require any documentation in an alternative format, you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 330 or email: recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications:

1. A minimum of 4 GCSEs (or equivalent) at Grade C or above including English, Maths and a Science.

AND

2. A minimum of 2 years' experience*, gained within the last 8 years, where the primary purpose of the position is associated with the conservation or assessment of our natural terrestrial, aquatic or marine heritage, or a combination of the following:
 - Ecosystems
 - Habitats
 - Species
 - Earth Science
 - Landscapes
 - Ecological Assessments
 - Ecological Surveys (including mapping, recording and monitoring of scientific data)
 - Conservation Management (including access to the natural environment)

* experience can be gained in a paid, voluntary or academic capacity

AND

3. A full driving licence, valid for Northern Ireland, that will enable the candidate to carry out the duties of the post in full

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.

You will be required to provide documentary evidence of your qualifications at interview so please ensure you have these readily available.

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 in the order listed:

1. Have an A Level or HND or (equivalent/higher qualification) in a relevant** scientific discipline.
2. A degree qualification or (equivalent/higher qualification) result in a relevant** scientific discipline.

Should further shortlisting be required the following shortlisting criteria will be used:

3. Candidates should state how they have at least 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.

**Relevant scientific discipline: are those that major in the fields of environmental, biological, ecological, geographical or zoological sciences - give the subject of the 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.

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.**
- **The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be explored 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.**
- **State clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. State "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.

- **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. Please do not include your name in the employment history or eligibility criteria sections.
- The NICS competency framework can be accessed via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The selection process will consist of a competence based interview.

COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEWS

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

No notes or personal documentation may be brought into the interview room.

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. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities which will meet Departmental and Programme for Government goals and deliver the greatest value.

Marks available: 30

Minimum standard: 18

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: 30

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. For all staff, 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

Minimum standard: 18

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. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions.

Marks available: 30

5. Delivering at Pace

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. For all staff, it is about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way.

Marks available: 30

Total Marks Available: 150

Overall Pass Mark: 90

INTERVIEWS

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place via video conferencing facilities during February 2022.

NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 2.

Scientific Officer is analogous to Executive Officer 1 in the NICS.

The NICS 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 3 should be demonstrating levels 1 and 2 as a matter of course.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service competency framework can be accessed via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of the selection process. Should you require assistance in accessing the competency framework please contact HRConnect.

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

APPLICATION FORM

You can apply online at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk.

Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before making your application and retain a copy for your reference. 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. **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.

Please note:

- 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.
- All applications must be submitted by the advertised closing date and time.
- 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. State for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.
- Only the employment history, eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel.
- 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.
- The session timeout for the online application is 40 minutes, if you do not save or change a page within this time you will automatically be logged out and any unsaved work will be lost.
- You must click SUBMIT once you have finished your online application. You will receive an acknowledgement email. Please contact HRConnect if you do not receive an acknowledgment email within 24 hrs.

Help with making your application

You can get advice or assistance with making an application from your local Jobs and Benefits Office - contact details are available on NIDirect: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-benefits-offices-jobcentres-and-social-security-offices>

You can also get advice or assistance from local disability employment organisations. To find out more about local disability employment organisations contact Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE), an umbrella group for individuals and organisations promoting opportunities for people with disabilities to access and maintain employment, email

info@niuse.org.uk, tel. 0044 (0)28 71 377709, text phone 0044 (0) 28 71 372077

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

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 to demonstrate the range of behaviours associated with the competences being assessed. 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.

For professional and technical posts, questions may be framed in the context of professional elements of the post.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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.

NICSHR Privacy Notice

NICSHR are committed to protecting your privacy. HRConnect manage job applications on behalf of NICSHR, in line with the NICSHR privacy notice available via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk

Offers of Employment

Candidates will only receive one offer of appointment which, if not accepted, will generally result in withdrawal from the competition.

Changes in personal circumstances and contact details

Please ensure HRConnect are informed immediately of any changes in personal circumstances. It is important that HRConnect have up to date contact details.

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.

Merit List

HRConnect will allocate a candidate (or candidates) to a vacancy (or vacancies) in the order listed. It is presently intended that the merit list for this competition should remain extant for a period of one year. However you should be aware 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.

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.

Documentation

Identification documents to satisfy the Nationality and Security requirements of the post will be required. Further details regarding acceptable documentation will be issued with an invitation to attend for assessment.

You should ensure that the required documents are readily available. Failure to provide the appropriate documentation when requested will result in your application being rejected.

Right to Work and Nationality Requirements

HRConnect must ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom and satisfy the Nationality requirements for appointment to the NICS. Please note **ALL** applicants for external recruitment will be subject to a Nationality validation check.

Applicants must be either:

- (i) UK national; or
- (ii) National of a Commonwealth country; or
- (iii) National of the Republic of Ireland; or
- (iv) EEA nationals with settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme; or
- (v) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service; or
- (vi) Relevant EEA or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service; or
- (vii) Certain family members of the relevant EEA & Turkish nationals.

For candidates applying under categories iv – vii you are required to provide the following information in the Right to Work and Nationality Requirements response box in Part 1 of your application form. Failure to provide the requested information **WILL** result in your application being rejected.

Category iv – Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your '[share code](#)' here.

Category v - Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your '[share code](#)' here. You are also required to provide your payroll number in the nationality response box to demonstrate that you are working in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Category vi - Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your '[share code](#)' here. Alternatively please provide confirmation in the nationality response box that you hold indefinite or limited leave to remain in the UK and that this was granted prior to 31st December 2020.

Category vii - Please provide your 'Share code' in the 'Share code' field which will be used to validate your right to work in the UK. You can find further detail on obtaining your '[share code](#)' here. In addition, please provide evidence in the nationality response box to support your application for applying as a family member of a relevant EEA and Turkish nation. Further documentary evidence may be request from HRConnect to support this.

'Family member of the relevant EEA or Turkish nationals' 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

Where a candidate has a right to work status which has a time limitation, ongoing checks will be in place to ensure the right to work is maintained.

Further guidance on Nationality requirements is available via www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk.

Security

1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For these 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) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

Further information regarding the Baseline Personnel Security Standard, including other acceptable documents is available via www.gov.uk.

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. Further information regarding policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders and the vetting process is available at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk in Recruitment Policy and Procedures manual.

Security Policy for AccessNI Disclosure Information is available at www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk under Useful Information.

The AccessNI code of practice can be accessed via www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni

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.

Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form

Please note the Equal Opportunities monitoring section of the application form is mandatory in order to submit an application.

For guidance on completing the Monitoring Form and to read the NICS Equal Opportunities Policy Statement please refer to the DoF website www.finance-ni.gov.uk.

Applications from Protestants, young people (people under the age of 35), people with a disability and people from minority ethnic communities are particularly welcomed for this post.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

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

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**