

**Candidate  
Information  
Booklet**

**IRC282684**

**Principal Scientific Officer**

**Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)**

**Completed Application Forms  
must be submitted to  
HRConnect no later than 12  
noon (UK time) on**

***Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022***

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

# Northern Ireland Civil Service

## 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.

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## FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in a Principal Scientific Officer post within the Northern Ireland Civil Service. There are currently three vacancies in Marine & Fisheries Division, part of the Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group (EMFG) within DAERA. The vacancies are within the Marine Monitoring and Assessment Branch, the Marine Strategy Branch and the Marine Conservation and Reporting Branch. The primary functions of the EMFG are:

- To develop policy and legislation in order to bring about effective environmental regulation and management that will protect, conserve and enhance the environment (including land, air, freshwater and marine waters);
- To develop and deliver policy and legislation to protect, manage and ensure the sustainable use of our seas and inland fishery resources;
- To develop policy and legislation in respect of climate change in order to deliver on the requirements of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and the DAERA led NI Executive Green Growth Strategy.

An important element of our work involves co-operating with other Government departments and agencies to limit adverse impacts upon human health and the environment.

The EMFG has a wide range of policy, scientific, professional and technical skills and expertise among its staff. This skills and experience base allows us to manage and protect human health, as well as our landscapes, waters and their wildlife, and to maintain a healthier environment benefiting people, nature and the economy.

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

Tracey Teague  
Deputy Secretary  
Environment Marine & Fisheries Group

## **BACKGROUND**

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs employs some 3,000 people over 230 sites across NI, utilising some £579 million Resource and £95m Capital budget per annum. It owns almost 85,000 hectares of land and has operations right across all of our landscapes, including marine, watercourses, uplands and farming lands.

DAERA has responsibility for environment, food, farming, fisheries, 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 the 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.

Through the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), the Department has responsibility for creating prosperity and wellbeing by environmental regulation. DAERA provides a Knowledge Advisory Service - 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 develops and implements agricultural, environmental, fisheries and rural development policy for Northern Ireland.

## **DAERA VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS**

### **Vision**

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

### **Strategic Outcomes**

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

### **DAERA Top Management Group comprises:-**

- Rural Affairs, Forest Service and Estate Transformation Group
- Central Services and Contingency Planning Group
- Veterinary Service Animal Health Group
- Environment Marine and Fisheries Group; and
- Food and Farming Group

### **DAERA has two Executive Agencies:**

- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Forest Service

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

The Permanent Secretary of DAERA is Katrina Godfrey.

### **Environment Marine & Fisheries Group**

The Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group is within the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The EMFG has five Divisions: Environmental Policy and EU Transition Division, Climate Change & Green Growth Policy Division, Green Growth and Climate Action Division (GGCAD), Marine and Fisheries Division (MFD) and Natural Environment Policy Division.

The main functions of the EMFG include:

- developing and delivering policy and legislation to protect, conserve and enhance the environment (including land, air, freshwaters and marine waters);
- developing and delivering policy and legislation and management to protect and ensure the sustainable use of our seas and inland fishery resources; and
- developing policy and legislation in respect of climate change in order to deliver on the requirements of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and the DAERA led NI Executive Green Growth Strategy.

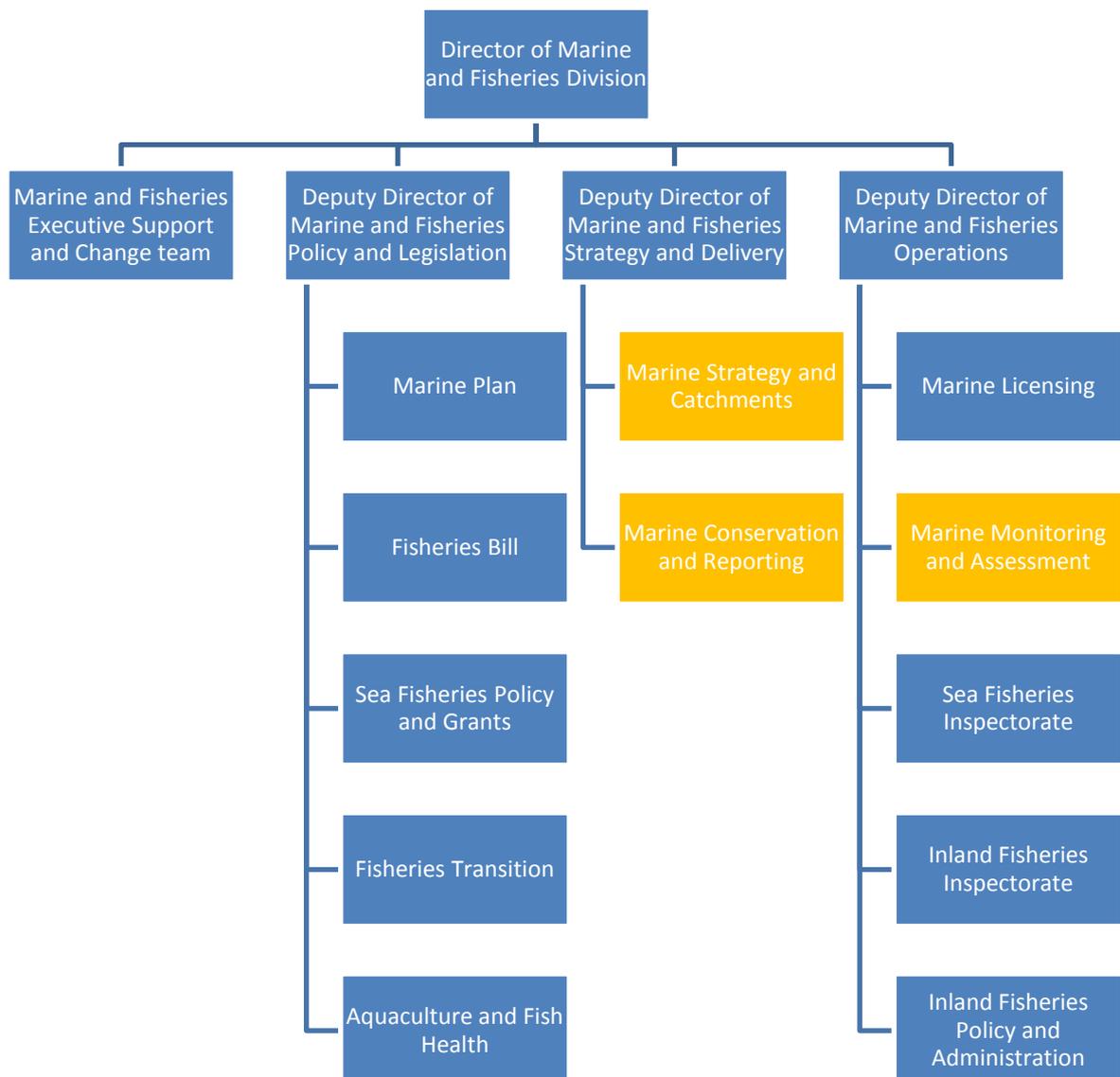
EMFG has over 300 staff, consisting of administrative, scientific and technical staff, based at Belfast (headquarters), Lisburn, Downpatrick and a number of regional locations.

## Marine and Fisheries Division

Marine and Fisheries Division provides lead policy advice to the DAERA Minister in respect of the marine environment, inland and sea fisheries, aquaculture and fish health.

It is responsible for implementing a range of international, European and national statutory obligations through the development of a regional Marine Plan and the River Basin Management Plan; delivery of regulation and enforcement regimes; issue of licences and consents; monitoring and assessment of the marine environment; 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 Maritime and Fisheries Fund and successor funds.

### Current Marine and Fisheries Division Structure



## **Marine Monitoring and Assessment**

The Marine Monitoring and Assessment Team of the Marine and Fisheries Division provides three main functions:

- Marine surveillance, operational and investigative monitoring of all NI marine surface waters through a range of annual intertidal and coastal programmes.
- Analytical services for the determination of a range of chemical and biological parameters in samples collected by DAERA marine scientists.
- Status assessments in the fulfilment of the DAERA's obligations under national legislation and international agreements such as River Basin Management Plans, UK Marine Strategy, Habitats Regulations, Nitrates Regulations, OSPAR commitments and to support aspects of the Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Programme (SDIP) such as the Living With Water Programme (LWWP).

The Monitoring and Assessment Team staff provide scientific data used by Marine and Fisheries Division staff to implement environmental strategies designed to protect and improve Northern Ireland's marine aquatic environment, and work closely with colleagues in NIEA to provide a coherent evidence base for the aquatic environment to inform integrated catchment management and water regulation.

In addition, Monitoring and Assessment staff provide and guide the scientific data, evidence and expert opinion inputs to a range of UK Marine Evidence Groups including UK Marine Monitoring and Assessment Strategy, UK Marine Strategy Policy Leads Group, Marine Assessment and Reporting Group (and a range of subsidiary evidence groups).

## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Principal Scientific Officer will report to the Deputy Director for Marine and Fisheries Operations and will be a member of the Marine and Fisheries Division Senior Management Team.

The post holder will lead a team with a broad range of scientific skills and will have leadership and people management responsibilities of a multi-disciplined team.

The key responsibilities and duties of the role include:

- Contributing to the development and implementation of UK Marine Strategy in Northern Ireland;
- Management, leadership, science and technical oversight of annual marine monitoring and assessment programmes to deliver science evidence to meet Northern Ireland, UK and international requirements;
- Technical and scientific leadership in presenting the Northern Ireland position to UK level groups, such as the Marine Science Evidence Groups;
- Providing leadership, supervision and management of a dynamic, diverse and highly technical/scientific team in a demanding operating environment;
- Management of quality assurance for field and laboratory operations and data;
- Management of health and safety for laboratory, workshop and field operations including diving;
- Promoting innovation in existing marine scientific work, such as monitoring programmes, to incorporate new and emerging technologies and practices;
- Managing the delivery of key capital and analytical expenditure to meet the annual needs of marine science and complex monitoring programmes, and preparing economic cases to secure capital to meet evolving demands; and
- Provide advice on EU Exit transition issues, Climate Change (Blue Carbon), Green Growth (Blue Economy) and input to the development of policies and strategies.
- Communicating marine science topics to a broad range of specialist and non-specialist audiences, including Ministerial briefings
- Collaborating and partnering with others to ensure best value in delivering the marine programme.

## **Marine Strategy and Catchments**

The Marine Strategy and Catchments Branch leads on the delivery of the sustainable use of our seas through the development and implementation of the UK Marine Strategy, the Water Framework (including Shellfish waters) and Bathing Water Regulations. The Branch also leads on providing marine environmental advice on pollution incidents. The post involves managing teams of scientists in the interpretation of marine science evidence and the development of programmes of measures under each area to deliver good status.

## **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Principal Scientific Officer will report to the Deputy Director for Marine and Fisheries Strategy and Delivery and will be a member of the Marine and Fisheries Division Senior Management Team.

The post holder will lead a team with a broad range of scientific skills and will have leadership and people management responsibilities of a multi-disciplined team.

The key responsibilities and duties of the role include:

- To lead on the development and implementation of Northern Ireland elements of the UK Marine Strategy, OSPAR North East Atlantic Strategy and other international agreements;
- This incorporates leading on the assessment of marine environmental status under the UK Marine Strategy and OSPAR and the development of a programme of measures to achieve good status, including those in the NI River Basin Management Plan;
- To lead on the planning and delivery of bathing water and shellfish water programme to achieve good status. This incorporates the review of action plans for improvements in areas not meeting objectives, and working with co-delivers in the Monitoring and Assessment teams and through integrated catchment management programmes.
- To lead on working with key stakeholders and co-deliverers in the achievement of good status under the above programmes;
- To lead DAERA participation within externally run environmental improvement programmes such as Living with Water, INTERREG and the Peace Plus Programme;
- To lead on communicating messages to the public and businesses on marine water quality, including bathing and shellfish waters
- To lead on marine environmental advice on response to pollution incidents locally and under the UK National Contingency Plan
- Scientific and technical advice including Ministerial briefings, as required, on all of the topics above.

## **Marine Conservation and Reporting**

The Marine Conservation and Reporting Branch is responsible for protecting marine biodiversity through the designation and management of marine protected areas, marine wildlife licensing and the provision of advice to public authorities. The Branch is also responsible for the management of marine data, and the public facing Marine Map Viewer.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Principal Scientific Officer will report to the Deputy Director for Marine and Fisheries Strategy and Delivery and will be a member of the Marine and Fisheries Division Senior Management Team.

The post holder will lead a team with a broad range of scientific skills and will have leadership and people management responsibilities of a multi-disciplined team.

The key responsibilities and duties of the role include:

- To lead on the development of the Northern Ireland marine protected area (MPA) network and bring forward evidence-based proposals for future designations that will fulfil obligations in the UK Marine Strategy, OSPAR Strategy and other international commitments.
- To lead on the development and implementation of management measures for the MPA network and maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders and delivery partners.
- To lead a programme of integrity monitoring and compliance assessment for marine protected areas and species.
- To commission science necessary to assess the condition of MPA features, evaluate the effectiveness of management measures and support future development of the MPA network.
- To lead the preparation and publication of statutory reports on MPAs.
- Management of SV Chara and FPV Salar in accordance with the DAERA Health and Safety arrangement for boat working.
- Responsible for the Portrush Coastal Zone visitor centre.
- To lead in the management and delivery of public-facing digital services for Marine and Fisheries Division
- To lead DAERA participation within externally run environmental improvement programmes and funding opportunities to further evidence base, such as the Peace Plus Programme.

**It is important to note that these responsibilities may change to meet the evolving needs of the role and the Division/Group/Department.**

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There are currently 3 permanent, full time vacancies:

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, including areas of aquatic freshwater science.

### Location

Two of the Principal Scientific Officers posts (Marine Monitoring and Assessment and Marine Strategy) will be based at the NIEA Offices, 17 Antrim Road, Lisburn BT28 3AL. The third post (Marine Conservation and Reporting) will be based in the Klondyke Building, Gasworks Business Park, Lower Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 2JA. While travel will be a key part of this post, it will be a requirement for the successful candidate to work from this location. However, some vacancies may arise during the lifetime of this competition at various locations across the DAERA estate in Northern Ireland.

It is envisaged that some element of home working and / or remote working may be possible in line with the NICS Hybrid Working policy and business need.

### Salary

Salary will be within the range **£52,026 - £55,685 (under review)** 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](http://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: 37 hours excluding meal breaks Monday to Friday. Most offices work flexi-time. The post holder in Marine Monitoring and Assessment may, from time to time, be required to work outside their normal conditioned hours to fulfil the demands of the post.

### Travel

This post will require the successful candidate to travel on official duty, which may include the driving of Departmental vehicles. The successful candidate must hold a driving licence or have access to a form of transport that will enable

them to meet the requirements of the posts 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.

### **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**

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. 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**

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may contact ColinArmstrong by telephone on 028 9056 9235 or e-mail [colin.armstrong@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:colin.armstrong@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](mailto:recruitment@hrconnect.nigov.net).

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

### Applicants must have, by the closing date for applications:

1a) A degree in a relevant scientific discipline, such as biological science, chemistry, ecology, environmental science, geography, geology, marine biology, oceanography, zoology and fisheries management.

### AND

1b) At least 5 years' post qualification\* experience in a relevant aquatic environmental management field\*\*.

### AND

1c) At least three years' post qualification experience managing multi-disciplinary teams to deliver aquatic environmental outcomes in association with a range of external/internal stakeholders

### OR

2a) A HNC/HND in a relevant scientific discipline, such as biological science, chemistry, ecology, environmental science, geography, geology, marine biology, oceanography, zoology and fisheries management.

### AND

2b) At least 7 years' post qualification\* experience in a relevant aquatic environmental management field\*\*

### AND

2c) At least 5 years' post qualification experience managing multi-disciplinary teams to deliver aquatic environmental outcomes in association with a range of external/internal stakeholders

The following clarification is provided:

\* Post qualification experience can also include relevant post graduate study or post doctorate experience.

\*\*The field of aquatic environmental management is defined as any one of the following areas:

1. **Aquatic monitoring and assessment:** development, management and delivery of monitoring and assessment programmes to meet the requirements of EU, international and national legislation.

2. **Aquatic licensing:** development, management and implementation of regulatory policy to manage the aquatic environment in accordance with national and international legislation.
3. **Aquatic conservation management:** development, management and implementation of aquatic conservation management plans to meet the needs of national and international legislation.
4. **Aquatic strategy and policy:** development, management and implementation of strategies and policies to manage the aquatic environment

**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 and evidence of equivalency 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 in the order listed:

1. The Panel will carry out an objective evaluation of the depth and breadth of information provided by candidates in response to eligibility criterion 1b or 2b.

### **Guaranteed Interview Scheme**

As part of our commitment to the employment of disabled people, we operate a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS). The GIS does not guarantee a job. However, its objective is to ensure disabled applicants, who meet the minimum essential eligibility criteria for the role they have applied for, are offered an interview. Further information on the GIS can be found at [Information for Disabled Applicants](#)

If you wish to apply under the GIS, you must declare this on your application form. Shortlisting criteria will not apply to GIS applicants.

If you do not wish to apply under the GIS, but do require us to make reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process, you should provide details on your application form. We will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments for any stage of this recruitment process. Details of any disability are only used for these purposes and do not form any part of the selection process.

If you have indicated on your application that you have a disability, are successful in the selection process and are being considered for appointment, you may be asked to outline any reasonable 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.

**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](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk)

## **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The selection process will consist of a competence based interview.

The selection panel will design questions to test the applicants' knowledge and experience in each of the following areas and award marks accordingly.

### **1. 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. At senior levels, it is about establishing a strong direction and a persuasive future vision, managing and engaging with people with honesty and integrity, and upholding the reputation of the Department and the NICS.

**Marks Available: 20**

**Minimum Standard: 12**

### **2. 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. At senior levels, it is about understanding the political context and taking account of wider impacts, including the broader legislative agenda, to develop long term implementation strategies that maximise opportunities to add value to the citizen, support economic, sustainable growth and help to deliver the Northern Ireland Executive's priorities.

**Marks Available: 20**

**Minimum Standard: 12**

### **3. Changing and Improving**

People who are effective in this area are responsive, innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. For all staff, it is about being open to change, suggesting ideas for improvements to the way things are done, and working in 'smarter', more focused ways. At senior levels, this is about creating and contributing to a culture of innovation and allowing people to consider and take managed risks. Doing this well means continuously seeking out ways to improve policy development and implementation and building a more flexible and responsive NICS. It also means making use of alternative delivery models including digital and shared service approaches where possible.

**Marks Available: 20**

#### **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. At senior levels, it is about delivering business objectives through creating an inclusive environment, encouraging collaboration which may cut across departmental, organisational and wider boundaries. It requires the ability to build constructive partnerships and effective relationships with Senior Managers and Ministers where appropriate.

**Marks Available: 20**

**Minimum Standard: 12**

#### **5. 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. At senior levels, leaders will be creating evidence-based strategies, evaluating options, impacts, risks and solutions. They will aim to maximise return while minimising risk and to balance political, legislative, social, financial, economic and environmental considerations to provide sustainable outcomes.

**Marks Available: 20**

#### **6. 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. At senior levels, it is about creating an environment to deliver operational excellence and creating the most appropriate and cost effective delivery models for public services.

**Marks Available: 20**

**Total Marks Available: 120**

**Overall Pass Mark: 72**

## **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.

## **INTERVIEWS**

It is intended that interviews for this post will be via WEBEX during week commencing 30th October 2022.

## **NICS COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK**

The selection process will assess candidates against the NICS competency framework at level 4.

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](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk)

**It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of 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](http://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 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-and-benefits-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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk).

## **Security**

### 1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this post 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](http://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](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk) in Recruitment Policy and Procedures manual.

Security Policy for AccessNI Disclosure Information is available at [www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk](http://www.nicsrecruitment.org.uk) under Useful Information.

The AccessNI code of practice can be accessed via [www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni](http://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.

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

### **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](http://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 welcomes to 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**