



## **Candidate Information Booklet**

# **Researcher Land Use Systems – 18 Months Fixed Term Contract**

**IRC292197**

Completed Application Forms must be submitted no later than 12 noon on  
Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023

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### Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue competition communications electronically. Please ensure you check your email account regularly, to make sure that you don't miss any important communications.

Please update us with any changes to your email address and home address to ensure you are fully informed at all times.

### Equal opportunities

Agri-Food and BioSciences Institute (AFBI) is an equal opportunities employer and has been awarded the Bronze Charter Mark in recognition for our commitment towards Gender Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace. All appointments will be made strictly on the basis of merit. If you have any queries with regard to this recruitment process or require any documentation in an alternative format, please contact HRConnect via email [Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net](mailto:Recruitment@HRConnect.nigov.net) or call 0800 1 300 330.

**We would particularly welcome applications from females and those from a Roman Catholic background.**

Feedback - AFBI is committed to providing feedback to assist the development of current and future applications.

## Recruitment overview

Thank you for your interest in our organisation. At AFBI you will find a fantastic team spirit and a commitment to the development of both you and your skills so that you can choose to have a long-term career with us.

This Candidate Information Booklet offers specific information to applicants.

Please read this document carefully in advance of submitting your application and retain it for reference throughout the recruitment process.

At AFBI, we take great pride in the work we undertake. All AFBI employees are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition.

**We wish you every success in your application!**

Important dates - It is intended that interviews for this post will take place in AFBI Hillsborough during week commencing Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023.

Compulsory documentation - It is compulsory that all candidates invited to attend an assessment and/or interview, bring sufficient identification. Your attendance may not be permitted in instances where identification cannot be shown.

# You want to change the world. So do we.

[Agri-Food and BioSciences Institute \(AFBI\)](#) is a leading provider of scientific research and services to government, non-governmental organisations and commercial organisations. We are sponsored by our key stakeholder, the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

Our customers include a range of local, national and international commercial companies, Northern Ireland and UK Departments, Agencies and associated bodies in the European Union.

As a leading institute of research, we tackle the complex challenges of our industry through purpose-driven science. We are a community with a common goal: to leave the world better than we found it. Are we ambitious? Definitely. Are our ambitions achievable? Absolutely. AFBI has been defying scientific boundaries to create measurable, scalable and enduring solutions to agri-food and marine science complexities in Northern Ireland - and beyond - since 2006.

We are delighted that you are considering joining us.

Of all the many factors that come together to make AFBI what it is, nothing is more important than our employees. Every area of our service delivery is underpinned by a number of dedicated teams working in synchrony to ensure the provision of scientific excellence. Across our four divisions, every team member, from those on the scientific front to those working behind the scenes in one of our offices, plays an essential role in delivering our long tradition of excellence, whilst helping to propel future discoveries.

Together we are better.

Our People Vision is to:

Attract, empower and grow purpose-driven staff with the passion and capability to pursue excellence, embrace technology and cultivate innovation and change.

This is how we do great science.

Great people. Great science.

# Environment and Marine Sciences Division

Environment and Marine Sciences Division (EMSD) is a new science division, which has been established following a review of AFBI's organizational structure. The decision to establish this new division reflects the increasing importance and amount of scientific work undertaken by AFBI in the agri-environment, marine and aquatic ecosystems areas. This division will focus on evidence based science, which is key to addressing significant environmental challenges whilst ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources and the future prosperity of the agri-food sector.

A key priority of this division is to deliver on a high impact and quality integrated programme of research spanning from 'the soil to the sea'.

## EMSD Branches

**Agri-Environment Branch** interfaces between intensive livestock production, and environmental management and regulation. This includes investigating the impacts of agricultural land use practices on soil, water and air, and identifying ways of optimizing land-based livestock production.

**Fisheries and Aquatic Ecosystems Branch** conducts research and development, monitoring and technology transfer in the area of marine fisheries stock assessment, coastal zone science, biological oceanography, marine ecosystem health, and freshwater fisheries stock assessment.

This job role sits within the Agri-Environment Branch.

## About the Agri-Environment Branch

Agri-Environment Branch (AEB) is one of seven Branches within the Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division in AFBI, meeting the global challenges of food security and sustainable intensification. The aims of the Branch are to develop and sustain an integrated research effort with national and international recognition on nutrient management within agricultural systems, focusing particularly on the needs of Northern Ireland, thereby:

- developing sustainable practices within a competitive industry
- providing a scientific basis for government policy and
- enhancing the quality of the environment.

Environmental research in the Branch addresses land and nutrient management issues to make appropriate and efficient use of resources, while protecting the environment. The integrated research effort covers the impact of agriculture on air, soil and water quality. The outputs of this research have provided much of the scientific basis for the development of the Action Plan for Northern Ireland to comply with the Nitrates Directive and Derogation, Phosphorus Regulations and Water Framework Directive. The Branch undertakes basic, strategic and applied research for DAERA and other government departments and agencies, as well as commercial organisations.

Research programmes are in place within the Branch to address the issues of nitrogen efficiency, phosphorus losses, water quality, soil quality, nutrient management planning, climate change and greenhouse gas emissions and aquatic ecology.

## Job Information and Employee Benefits

There is currently one fixed term (18 month) full time Higher Scientific Officer (HSO) position to be filled. The successful candidate will work on the EU H2020 "AGROMIX" project, in which AFBI are leading a work package on the development of guidelines for climate resilient land management, to refine the LULUCF in Europe in terms of the impact of mixed farming and agroforestry systems. The post holder will report to the Senior Scientific Officer in charge of the project.

Current members of AFBI (permanent or fixed term) are not eligible to apply for this competition. A reserve list will exist and be held for a period of 12 months from the date of interview, to cover any further vacancies which may arise.

### **Salary**

Currently the salary for the post will be within the range £32,328 - £33,459 within which pay increases will be on an incremental basis provided staff performance reports are satisfactory.

Starting salary will be at the minimum of the scale.

### **Working Hours**

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

### **Location**

The successful candidate will be based at AFBI Newforge, 18a Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9 5PX, however, they may, on occasion, also be expected to work at other sites in Northern Ireland as required.

Hybrid working can also be considered.

### **Travel**

The post may entail travel across AFBI sites and for this reason the successful applicant will require a full current driving licence or access to a form of transport which will permit them to meet the requirements of the post in full. National and international travel may be required on occasion.

### **Pre-employment checks**

Pre-employment checks consist of a qualification check and an AccessNI check. The security check required for this post is basic level. HRConnect will provide your details to Experian who will undertake this check. This is a two-part process during which all communications will be issued to you electronically.

## **Annual Leave**

In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 25 days.

## **Probationary Period**

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

## **Professional Development**

We believe in our employees and understand the importance of investing in ongoing development. Support for professional development will always be considered.

## **Employee Benefits**

AFBI offers employees an unrivalled benefits package. For further information please click [here](#).

## **Further Information**

Further Information about the post may be obtained from Emma Horner, Workforce Planning Advisor on 02890 255333.

For information on how the recruitment process will be managed and for further recruitment and selection resources, please click [here](#).

For information on our equal opportunities, please click [here](#).

# Job Background

Main duties of the post will be as follows:

## **Lead and manage scientific research on the AGROMIX project**

- Evaluate the impact of land use practices arising from different mixed farming and agroforestry systems across Europe, in terms of climate resilience of agro-ecosystems in Europe, climate change mitigation and indicators for evaluating climate smart farming systems using biophysical and spatial data from carbon, biodiversity and GHG emission analysis, with a view to refining the LULUCF inventory.
- Model biophysical parameters in mixed farming and agroforestry systems using a mechanistic computer model (Hi-SAFe) that explores tree-crop interactions, in conjunction with INRAe in France.
- Ensure that relevant research activities comply with appropriate formal quality standards (ISO9001). This includes ensuring equipment is maintained, and that SOPs, COSHH, Health & Safety Risk Assessments are complete and up to date.

## **Research & Development**

- Interpretation and publication of research results in high impact scientific journals, R&D project report writing, knowledge transfer activities and press articles.
- Collaborate with others involved in related areas of research in the areas of land use including forestry and silviculture, land use change, and biophysical and spatial changes associated with these both nationally and internationally in order to increase the benefits from the AGROMIX project.
- Attend and present findings at national and international conferences and seminars to deliver the outputs from the AGROMIX project.

## **Manage staff resources and budgets**

- Work closely with other staff within AEB, to effectively deliver the work of the project.
- Assist the principal investigators on the AGROMIX to manage the financial and administrative requirements of the project, maintaining high standards of corporate governance, budget planning and control, staff management, and responding to the Principal Investigator (PI) queries and direction.
- Co-supervise/lead the other staff and students on the AGROMIX project.

## **Undertake continuous professional development**

- To maintain an up to date knowledge of scientific literature in relevant areas and demonstrate personal development in all relevant areas of managing work programmes, staff and resources.

**This list is not exhaustive, and the successful candidate will be required to carry out other duties as allocated by management.**

## Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications provide evidence in their application form that they meet the following eligibility criteria.

- 1a. A PhD in agriculture, forestry or relevant scientific discipline, either awarded or submitted for external examination by closing date.

**OR**

- 1b. A degree (or equivalent) in agriculture, forestry or relevant scientific discipline; plus 1 years' relevant experience in criteria 2 and 3.

**AND**

2. Demonstrable experience in conducting scientific studies on geographical information systems.
3. Demonstrable experience in statistical analysis and interpretation of scientific data.
4. Be a contributing author in at least 1 paper relevant to the position, published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal;
5. A full driving licence that is valid in the issuing country. If this is a foreign licence requiring exchange and/or a driving test for continued use in Northern Ireland, the successful candidate will be required to do so once appointed. AFBI will not reimburse any costs associated with this\*\*\*.

**\*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.

\*\*\*Information on validity and exchange of driving licences can be found on: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/exchanging-your-foreign-driving-licence> and <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/advice-foreign-driving-licences-northern-ireland>.

## Shortlisting Criteria

In addition, applicants should be aware that should it be necessary to shortlist candidates further to go forward to interview, the Panel will carry out an objective evaluation of the breadth and depth of information provided by candidates in response to eligibility criterion 2 - 4. This will be completed on a scored basis. Only the highest scoring applicants will proceed to interview.

## Person Specification

This position is analogous to Staff Officer Level 3 in the NICS.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate the skills and competencies set out in the Essential Criteria. In addition, they will also be required to demonstrate competency in Professional Knowledge & Skills pertaining to this post together with the skills and competencies set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) competency framework at Level 3 for the purpose of personal and professional development.

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

**You should refer to the behaviours listed under level 3 of the relevant competence areas.**

To view the NICS Competency Framework, please click [here](#).

## Interview Criteria

In addition to satisfying the eligibility criteria and shortlisting criteria (if applicable) applicants will also be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview-

### **1. Professional skills and Knowledge**

**Marks available: 40      Minimum Standard: 24**

### **2. Leading and Communicating**

**Marks available: 10**

### **3. Collaborating and Partnering**

**Marks available: 10**

### **4. Delivering at Pace**

**Marks available: 10**

### **5. Making Effective Decisions**

**Marks available: 10**

**Total marks available: 100**

**Overall pass mark: 60 (60%)**