



CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

ASSISTANT SCIENTIFIC OFFICER

Temporary – 3 months (subject to funding and with a possible extension)

2 vacancies

**Closing date for applications:
1pm Friday 11th June 2021
REF: TASO/CC/21**

If you have a disability that makes reading difficult, this application form can be obtained in other formats.

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ABOUT LOUGHS AGENCY

Loughs Agency is an agency of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC), established as one of the North South Implementation Bodies under the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, constituted under the North South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and the British Irish Agreement Acts 1999 and 2002.

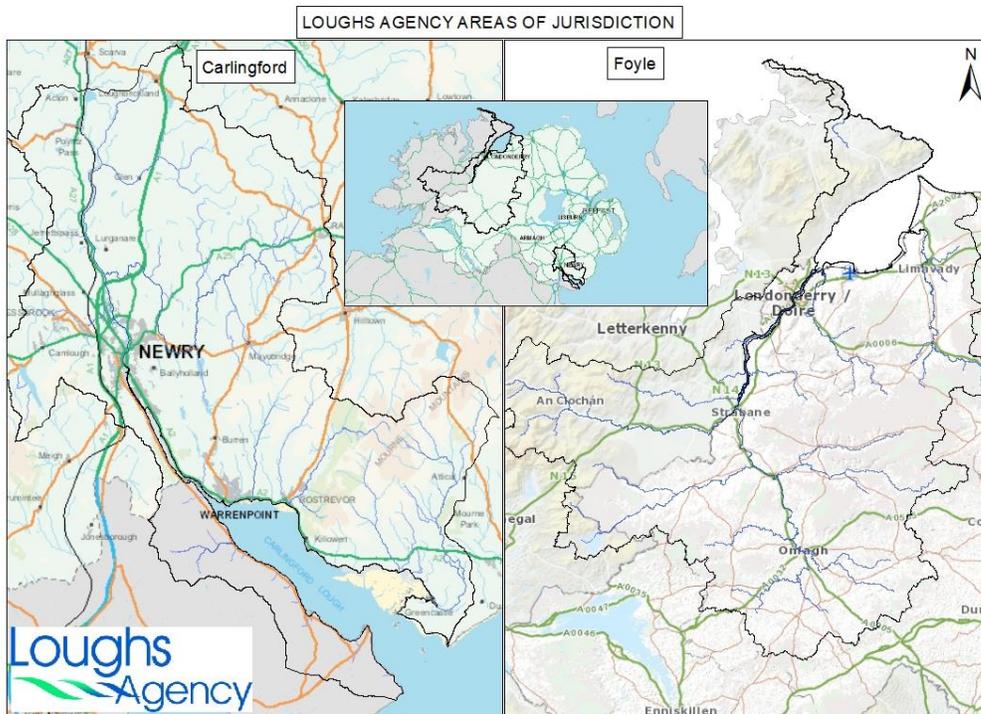
The Board of Loughs Agency reports to the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) and its government Sponsor Departments – the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in the North, and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) in the South. The Agency is funded on a 50/50 basis by DAERA in Northern Ireland and DECC in Ireland.

Our Headquarters are based in Derry~Londonderry, with a Regional Office in Carlingford, Co Louth and an operational depot in Omagh.

The Agency's Vision is *“Through partnership and science, protecting and developing our fisheries and natural resources”*.

Our mission is to *“Sustainably manage, promote and develop the fisheries and resources of the Foyle and Carlingford areas”*.

The Agency has responsibility for 4,070km² of catchment in the Foyle area and 480km² in Carlingford, with responsibility for the 2 sea loughs and an area extending 12 miles out to sea from Lough Foyle, which stretches to Downhill in Northern Ireland, and Malin Head in Donegal. Loughs Agency has been delivering transboundary fisheries management in these waters since the establishment of its' predecessor in 1952, the Foyle Fisheries Commission, with the remit of overseeing the management and protection of the Atlantic salmon and the inland fisheries of the Foyle catchment.



Loughs Agency aims to provide sustainable social, economic and environmental benefits through the effective conservation, management, promotion and development of the fisheries and marine resources of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas. The Agency’s statutory functions are as follows:

- Promotion of development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough for commercial and recreational purposes in respect of marine, fishery and aquaculture matters.
- Management, conservation, protection, improvement and development of the inland fisheries of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas.
- Development and licensing of Aquaculture and Shellfisheries.
- Development of Marine Tourism.

The high level Strategic Priorities identified in our [Strategic Direction for a New Decade 2020-30](#), enabling Loughs Agency to fulfil its statutory remit are:

- Our Remit: Raising the Standards.
- Making Connections.
- Just Transition.
- Organisational Excellence.

LOUGHS AGENCY STRUCTURE

Loughs Agency has 4 Directorates with responsibility for delivery of a wide and varied range of activities and functions.

Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Directorate has responsibility for the effective and efficient delivery of financial services, human resources, information and communication technology, fleet and asset management and all other support functions, to facilitate the achievement of strategic business goals. The Directorate ensures financial and budget management systems are implemented, appropriate controls and monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure maximum efficiency, accountability and compliance with North South Accounting Guidelines. The Directorate ensures that the Agency is compliant with governance arrangements and is responsible for the development of Strategic, Corporate and Business Plans, ensuring that resources are in place to deliver business objectives.

Conservation and Protection Directorate

The Conservation and Protection Directorate is the largest team in the Agency, with a wide and varied remit. The Directorate's primary focus is on the conservation, development, improvement and protection of the fisheries of Foyle and Carlingford. The Directorate is also responsible for the development of fisheries legislation. Regulation is delivered through the enforcement of the Foyle Fisheries Acts and a series of adaptable secondary regulations and provisions, stemming from EU Directives and Legislation on pollution and water quality. The work of the Directorate includes an annual programme of freshwater monitoring, habitat protection and river restoration developments to conserve and improve the environments essential for sustainable populations of Atlantic salmon and other native fish.

Development

The Development Directorate works across the Agency, identifying and supporting projects and opportunities to develop and promote the statutory functions of the Agency. The main focus of this Directorate includes the development of angling, marine tourism, environmental education, outreach and promotional strategies. The Directorate is also responsible for identifying external funding and collaborative working opportunities locally, nationally and internationally.

Aquaculture and Shellfisheries

The primary role of the Aquaculture and Shellfisheries Directorate is the management, development and conservation of the native Irish oyster and blue mussel populations in Lough Foyle, and the blue mussel population in Carlingford

Lough. These species are actively managed to ensure that exploitation of these species is sustainable in the long term. The Directorate also monitors the biodiversity and health status of the Loughs. The Directorate also has responsibility for the licensing of aquaculture in the marine and freshwater environments of both catchments. This responsibility is yet to be commenced, however the primary legislation required for this is in place.

CATCHMENT CARE – THE PROJECT

Preamble

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) underpins the project aims, with its requirement that all waters reach a status of GOOD by a target date. The GOOD status is assessed via various biological quality elements, such as benthic invertebrates and fish community, as well as by hydro-morphology assessments.

Project Background

The aim of Catchment CARE is to establish 3 ecosystem/water quality improvement projects in the Finn, Blackwater and Arney Catchments. It will contribute to the INTERREG V programme specific result “Percentage of cross-border fresh water bodies in cross-border river basins with good or high quality. The current baseline is 32% with the Catchment CARE project contributing to achieving the target for 2023 of 65%” through the delivery of two programme specific outputs; (1) Establish 3 water quality improvement projects; (2) Develop and implement 50 cross-border groundwater monitoring wells.

The actions selected to implement these will address ecosystem and water quality issues related to hydro-morphology, point and diffuse sources of pollution, farm nutrient management practices, characterisation and monitoring of groundwater quality, lag times in response to the implementation of measures and an economic analysis of the cost of achieving the objectives of the Water Framework Directive in the three catchments.

The consortium has been constructed so as to provide expertise on the main issues related to water body quality improvement such as hydro-morphology (IFI & Loughs Agency), water quality (AFBI), catchment management (UU); stakeholder engagement (ABC Council) and groundwater (BGS). In addition, Donegal County Council’s extensive expertise in project, financial and technical

management of EU cross-border projects (e.g. NSSHARE) ensures that the cross-border integrated management of the project and governance arrangements will deliver a robust and efficient project. The project partners have a strong track record delivering cross-border co-ordinated protection of aquatic ecosystems including projects such as the Lough Melvin Nutrient Reduction Programme, the Blackwater TRACE Project and the NSSHARE Project led by Donegal County Council. In addition, each consortium member has established strong working relationships, at both management and operational levels, with a wide range of organisations in each jurisdiction.

Each of the Finn, Blackwater and Arney catchments has a unique 'fingerprint' in terms of the stressor impact on the aquatic ecosystems. They were selected for this project as previous studies in these catchments by members of the project consortium have provided a significant body of information which address these stressors and develop and implement actions.

Catchment CARE has been developed to ensure that it compliments and brings added-value to existing programmes such as the Rural Development Programmes (RDP) 2014-2020 and the proposed programme of work for the 2nd cycles of RBMP. The consortium will coordinate the stakeholder engagement activities with NIEA Catchment Officers and LAWCO Community Water Officer in Rol.

Donegal County Council, as lead partner, has established a project Steering Committee and three sub-committees focused on Technical, Governance & Engagement and Catchment Community. The Steering Committee will play a central role in managing project risks; ensure best practice is used in all aspects of project; co-ordinate stakeholder engagement; integration of the project actions and management of the project budget and deliverables.

A Communication Plan has been developed and will be updated during the lifetime of the project to ensure that the project and its outputs are widely recognised, understood and appreciated across all relevant stakeholders and wider public.

The Catchment CARE consortium has a clear exit strategy that will enable continuity and provide a project legacy. Central to this strategy is linking the catchment, policy and community actions directly with knowledge exchange and capacity building events for local, regional and national stakeholder. The aim is to provide stakeholders with the skills and knowledge to contribute to improvements in water quality post project; establish links with regional and national initiatives and access funding.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Assistant Scientific Officer
Project Title:	CatchmentCARE
Number of Vacancies:	Two
Contract Type / Duration:	Full-Time Temporary / 3 months (subject to funding and with a possible extension)
Organisation:	Loughs Agency of Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission
Location:	Loughs Agency HQ, Prehen
Grade / Salary Scale:	ASO / £21,370 - £23,483 per annum
Responsible to:	Hydromorphologist
Hours:	The normal conditioned hours of work are full-time: 37 hours excluding meal breaks Monday to Friday

Purpose of the Role

Assistant Scientific Officers are responsible to the designated Hydromorphologist on the Catchment Care project for carrying out a range of scientific, monitoring and other duties relating to water quality, habitat, fisheries monitoring etc. The Assistant Scientific Officer may also be required to undertake other duties in other areas of responsibility within the three cross border catchments of the project; Finn, Arney and Blackwater as directed by the Hydromorphologist, Catchment Officer or Project Lead.

Duties and Responsibilities

The main areas of responsibility may include:

- a. Providing assistance to the Hydromorphologist and Catchment Officer within the fields of freshwater fisheries and environmental monitoring; to include surveys and laboratory based research.
- b. Data entry into Geographical Information System (GIS), quality checking of collected data, statistical analysis of collected data.
- c. Transport of researchers, equipment, samples to field sites and to external laboratories.
- d. Maintenance and calibration of water quality monitoring equipment.

In addition the Assistant Scientific Officers will ensure that:-

- All Agency property placed in his/her care is properly maintained, and if appropriate serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep and maintain proper records, notebooks and compile all necessary reports and submit these promptly to the Hydromorphologist and Catchment Officer.
- Keep and submit diaries of duties performed in accordance with instructions issued from time to time.
- Health and Safety legislation and rules are complied with.
- Equality legislation and rules are complied with.
- Office instructions and memoranda are complied with.
- Bring to the attention of the Chief Executive or Catchment Officer / Hydromorphologist as appropriate any matters coming to his/her attention, which may adversely affect the fisheries of the Foyle Area / Carlingford Area or the operation of the Agency.
- May be required to carry out any other duties that may from time to time reasonably be required within the general level of responsibility for the post.

Key Working Relationships

The Key relationship will be with the Assistant Scientific Officers' Hydromorphologist for their area of work. The post holder will also liaise with other scientific staff within the Agency and with contracted Agencies, laboratories and Catchment Care partners. Other relationships within the Agency will be with Fishery Officers, Head of Science, members of the Senior Management Team and the Designated Officer.

Core Competencies

Loughs Agency's recruitment and selection process is based on the [Northern Ireland Civil Service Competency Framework](#) which sets out how all Agency employees should work. It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the Competency Framework.

Seeing the Big Picture

- Gather information from a range of relevant sources inside and outside their Department to inform own work.
- Understand what is required of them in their role, and how this contributes to team and departmental priorities.
- Consider how their own job links with, and impact on, colleagues and others in partner organisations.

Changing and Improving

- Review working practices and come up with ideas to improve the way things are done.
- Learn new procedures, seek to exploit new technologies and help colleagues to do the same.
- Co-operate with and be open to the possibilities of change and consider ways to implement and adapt to change in own work role.
- Be constructive in raising issues with managers about implemented changes and the impact these are having on the service.
- Respond effectively to emergencies.

Making Effective Decisions

- Make and record effective decisions following the appropriate decision making criteria, framework or guidance.
- Ask questions when unsure what to do.
- Undertake appropriate analysis to support decisions or recommendations.

- Investigate and respond to gaps, errors and irregularities in information.
- Speak up to clarify decisions and query those constructively.
- Think through the implications of own decisions before confirming how to approach a problem/issue.

Leading and Communicating

- Put forward their own views in a clear and constructive manner, choosing an appropriate communication method e.g. email / telephone / face to face.
- Act in a fair and respectful way in dealing with others.
- Write clearly in plain, simple language and check work for spelling and grammar, learning from previous inaccuracies.
- Ask open questions to appreciate the point of view of others.

Collaborating and Partnering

- Proactively contribute to the work of the whole team.
- Get to know fellow team members/colleagues and understand their viewpoints and preferences.
- Seek help when needed in order to complete own work effectively.
- Be open to taking on different roles.
- Try to see issues from others' perspectives and check understanding.
- Listen to the views of others and show sensitivity towards others.

Building Capability for All

- Identify own skills, knowledge and behaviour gaps to inform own development plan and discuss these with the line manager.
- Recognise and take time to achieve own learning and development objectives.
- Find ways to learn and personally improve in the completion of day-to-day tasks.
- Improve own performance by taking on board feedback from colleagues from different backgrounds.
- Share learning with team and colleagues; contribute to the team's shared learning and understanding.
- React constructively to development feedback and make changes as a result.

Delivering Value for Money

- Challenge others appropriately where they see wastage.
- Be careful with all types of resource (e.g. money, time, materials, fuel, energy) that they use.

- Keep track of spend and make sure work is approved and signed off as necessary.
- Handle numbers confidently, collate information ensuring accuracy of financial and performance data.
- Maintain recognised financial procedure and practice.

Managing a Quality Service

- Communicate in a way that meets and anticipates the customer's requirement and gives a favourable impression of the NICS.
- Actively seek information from customers to understand their needs and expectations.
- Act to prevent problems, reporting issues where necessary.
- Gain the knowledge needed to follow the relevant legislation, policies, procedures and rules that apply to the job.
- Encourage customers to access relevant information or support that will help them understand and use services more effectively.
- Take ownership of issues, focus on providing the right solution and keep customers and delivery partners up to date with progress.

Delivering at Pace

- Work in an organised manner using own knowledge and expertise to deliver on time and to standard.
- Work with enthusiasm to get the job done.
- Take responsibility for the quality of own work and keep manager informed of how the work is progressing.
- Remain focused on delivery.
- Maintain consistent performance.
- Participate in quality assurance of products or services.

Achieving Outcomes through Delivery Partners

- Understand the relevant terms and conditions, including required deliverables, of relevant contracts.
- Be aware of, and comply with, departmental procurement processes and know when to access appropriate expertise.
- Check suppliers and partners re providing relevant and timely data to support claims and assist with the contract deliver.
- Learn about customers' and suppliers' needs.

PERSONAL SPECIFICATION

Essential Criteria

Applicants **must demonstrate that they possess the following criteria, by the closing date for applications:**

- 5 GCSEs (Grade A-C) or equivalent including Mathematics, English Language and one Science subject; and
- 6 months work experience to include a minimum of **two** of these areas:
 - Fisheries;
 - Laboratory;
 - Fieldwork;
 - Working in the freshwater environment; and
- Must be able to demonstrate the ability to keep and maintain records, note books and compile all necessary reports; and
- Candidates must hold a full current driving licence (with not more than 6 penalty points) held for a minimum of two years.

Desirable Criteria

Some or all of the following criteria MAY be used in the event of a large number of suitably qualified applications:

- In the first instance - A degree, or working towards a degree in Fishery Science, Environmental Science, Marine Science, Biological Sciences, Environmental Management or another related subject.
- In the second instance – 1 years' work experience to include any, or a combination, of these areas:
 - Fisheries data analysis;
 - Electrofishing survey;
 - Invasive species monitoring;
 - River habitat improvements;
 - Barriers to fish migration survey;
 - Freshwater fish survey netting;
 - Water quality Monitoring;
 - Working on monitoring / research boats in the marine environment;
 - Macroinvertebrate surveys.

Experience can be gained through work or the completion of 3rd level courses.

SHORT-LISTING INFORMATION

The technical elements related to the duties and responsibilities of this job will be scored on a competency based framework at shortlisting and interview. This means that ONLY those candidates who most closely match the requirements of the post are likely to be short-listed.

Each applicant should consider carefully if they can demonstrate the required levels of skill and experience before they spend time completing an application form. It is not enough to state that you have an 'awareness' or 'knowledge' of the areas stated, candidates must demonstrate actual skills and experience that can be checked with previous employers where necessary.

Each candidate should take care to complete their application in a way that ensures that the short-listing panel fully understands both their academic success and the skills and experience they have gained.

Please do not complete any section unless you can demonstrate actual skills and experience that can be checked with previous employers where necessary. Please confine your answers to the spaces provided.

Candidates who can demonstrate the ability to effectively operate as a member of a team may be preferred. Project work often has to take advantage of good weather conditions and as such a flexible approach to working hours is also preferred.

GUIDANCE FOR MAKING YOUR APPLICATION

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

- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- We will not accept CV's, letters, additional pages of any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms.
- Applicants must complete the application form in Arial font 12, or legible, block capitals.
- Applicants must not reformat application forms.

- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- Applications will not be examined until after the closing date.
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your employer, your branch or your job.
- Relevant or equivalent qualifications – if you believe your qualification is equivalent to 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.
- It is essential that all applicants demonstrate on their application form how and to what extent their experience and skills are relevant to this post and the extent to which they satisfy each of the essential and desirable criterion specified. If you do not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates needed to meet the 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 that you provide may be discussed 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 that the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.**
- The Loughs Agency 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.

Application Form Submission

- It is preferred that applicants use the on line link to the applications which facilitates completion and submission on line however, completed applications can be submitted by post to Human Resource Officer, Loughs Agency, 22 Victoria Road, Derry~Londonderry, BT47 2AB, emailed to careers@loughs-agency.org or hand delivered.
- **We will not accept incomplete application forms, application forms received after the closing deadline or reformatted applications.**
- We do not accept faxed applications.
- Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to the Loughs Agency to meet the required deadline.
- We will not accept any application where we are asked to pay for any shortfall in postage.
- Should you have any queries please contact, Human Resource Officer on 02871 342100

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Please note that the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is regarded as part of your application and failure to complete and return it may result in disqualification.

Order of Merit

The selection panel will assess candidates against the interview criteria. Those candidates who meet the required standard(s) and pass mark will be deemed suitable for appointment. The selection panel will then list those suitable for appointment in order of merit with the highest scoring applicant ranked first. The Agency will allocate to this vacancy (or similar grade) in the order listed. The order of merit is valid for one year. Therefore, if this post becomes available again within this year, the next suitable candidate will be offered the post without further competition.

Candidates should note that successful applications will be held on a list for a period up to 12 months to fill temporary positions, should they arise.

GUIDANCE FOR INTERVIEW

It is anticipated that interviews for this position will be held **week commencing Monday 21st June 2021** at Loughs agency HQ, however this may be subject to change.

At interview, the technical elements related to the duties and responsibilities of this job will be scored on a competency based framework. The selection panel will assess candidates against the behavioural competences, qualifications and experience required for the post.

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;
- 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 fulfil the competences required for the effective performance of this role;
- Provide specific and verifiable examples of your experience in relation to the required competence areas.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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 disclosed are used for this purpose only 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 Siobhan McCarron on 02871 342100.

Vetting Procedures

Prior to appointment with the Loughs Agency the following will be required:

- Proof of qualifications
- Copy of valid Driving Licence
- Receipt of 2 satisfactory references (references will not be sought until after the final stage of the assessment process).
- Basic level security clearance which is managed by Access NI.

Availability

The post is based in the Foyle Area, however the successful applicant may, on occasion, also be expected be required to travel within Northern Ireland, to other parts of the Republic of Ireland outside the Foyle catchment..

Any Other Duties

Appointees may be required to carry out any other duties that may (from time to time) arise and which are reasonably required within the general level of responsibility for the post.

Salary

Starting salary will normally be at the minimum of the scale. Consideration of a higher starting salary may be given to applicants with exceptional relevant experience and/or skills and only then if all 'suitable' candidates have refused the minimum salary offered.

Closing Date

Completed application forms must be returned to arrive not later than **1pm on Friday 11th June 2021**.



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