



An Roinn Airgeadais  
Department of Finance

E161/1/00

26 July 2000

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**Circular 21/2000: Competition for promotion to Principal (standard scale) IT posts in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources**

A Dhuine Uasail,

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to announce the holding of a confined competition, to be run by the Civil Service Commission, for promotion to Information Technology (IT) posts at Principal (standard scale) level in the following departments:

- Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development - 3 posts
- Department of the Marine and Natural Resources - 1 post

**Job descriptions**

2. Detailed job descriptions for these posts are set out in the appendices as follows:

- Appendix 1 - Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
- Appendix 2 - Department of the Marine and Natural Resources

**General requirements**

3. Detailed personal requirements for the various posts are set out in the aforementioned appendices. The following general requirements apply to all the posts:

- Proven management ability in an IT area, keen intelligence and sound judgment.
- Proven ability to lead and motivate.
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and presentational skills.
- A highly evolved knowledge and understanding of IT systems and of developments in IT.

**TO ALL DEPARTMENTS**

[For department read department/office throughout this circular.]

## **Eligibility**

4. In order to be eligible to compete, prospective candidates must,

(a) on the date they apply for the competition, be serving in an established capacity in the civil service in one of the following grades:

- Assistant Principal (standard scale).
- Assistant Principal (higher scale).
- A departmental grade listed in Appendix 3.
- Assistant Principal on secondment to the Health and Safety Authority from the civil service.
- Assistant Regional Director or Regional Director on secondment to FÁS from the civil service.

**AND**

(b) on 1 September 2000 have not less than three years' service in their existing grade or an aggregate of three years' service in eligible grades. In this context credit is given for all job-sharing service on the same basis as full-time service.

5. Officers on probation are not eligible to compete except where they would have been eligible had they remained in their previous grade and they have served continuously since satisfactorily completing a period of probation. Periods of special leave without pay should not be considered to break continuity of service for this purpose.

6. Officers on special leave with pay may apply, if otherwise eligible. Officers on special leave without pay (e.g. to serve with the EU) may be eligible; Personnel Sections should check cases not covered by Department of Finance Circular 33/91 with this department. Officers on career break may apply if the terms of their career break conform with the provisions of Department of Finance Circular 18/98 and if they are otherwise eligible.

## **Conditions of appointment**

7. Appointments will be to the grade of Principal (standard scale) and will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments. An officer whose service is not satisfactory, or who opts not to remain in the post, may, at any time up to the end of one year, be returned to his or her former department or duties. Any extra payment arising from the assignment would then cease.

## **The competition**

8. Selection will be by competitive interview conducted by the Civil Service Commission. The interview board may, having examined the applications of all candidates by reference to the nature of the duties and the general and personal requirements set out in paragraphs 2 and 3 and in the relevant appendices, decide that not all of the candidates will be invited to attend before the board for interview. In addition, the board may, at its discretion, require candidates to undergo a preliminary interview and invite only those who reach the requisite standard to attend for competitive interview to select the candidate best qualified for appointment. The interviews will be conducted by a board set up by the Civil Service Commission.

9. In placing in order of merit the candidates considered best qualified for appointment, the Civil Service Commission will give credit for proficiency in both Irish and English, in accordance with Department of Finance Circular 30/90 and Department of the Public Service Circular 43/75, and any other relevant instruction to candidates qualified for the award of such credit.

### **Applications**

10. Candidates should obtain their application forms from their own Personnel Section. The Civil Service Commission will supply application forms to Personnel Sections on request. Applications should be addressed directly to the Civil Service Commission, 1 Lower Grand Canal Street, Dublin 2, to reach there as soon as possible but not later than **5.15 p.m. on Friday 18 August 2000. This closing date must be strictly observed.** Candidates invited to interview must be prepared to make themselves available at short notice. It is expected that interviews will take place in early September 2000.

11. The Civil Service Commission will contact Personnel Sections in respect of candidates being called to competitive interview. For each such candidate the Personnel Officer will be required:

(a) to certify that the candidate

- has worked well and been satisfactory in his or her present grade,
- has been satisfactory in general conduct, and
- fulfils the conditions of eligibility set out in paragraphs 4 to 6 above;

**AND**

(b) to send to the Civil Service Commission an assessment of the candidate's suitability for promotion to Principal (standard scale) on a form to be supplied by the Commission.

12. Candidates should note that (i) eligibility for the competition, and (ii) health and the level of sick leave, are not verified by the Civil Service Commission until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment after the competitive interview stage. Admission to the competition and invitation to interview therefore, do not imply that a candidate meets the health and sick leave criteria. In considering a candidate's suitability for appointment in terms of health and sick leave the Commission will have regard to Department of the Public Service Circular 34/76, as amended by Department of Finance Circulars 32/91 and 33/99. Candidates with doubts about any aspect of their eligibility should clarify their position with their Personnel Section before applying.

### **Circulation and further information**

13. Personnel Sections should bring this circular to the notice of all eligible officers serving in their departments and associated offices without delay, including officers on maternity leave, career break and other relevant forms of leave. If candidates have any queries about the circular they should contact their Personnel Section. Subsequent enquiries about their candidature should be addressed to the Civil Service Commission.

Mise le meas,

Joe McGovern  
Assistant Secretary

APPENDIX 1**POSTS TO BE FILLED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Three posts in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (DAFRD) will be filled from this competition. All three appointees will be responsible for the management and development of certain aspects of the department's Information Systems (IS), and will report direct to the Director of IT. The context in which these posts have arisen is set out below, along with job description and personal requirements details. It should be noted that, for all three posts, the person appointed will be expected to already possess, or else have the capacity to quickly acquire, a good working knowledge of the department's wide range of activities at national and EU level.

**Job context**

The Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development has some 4,000 staff, deployed in many locations around the country. It is responsible for the expenditure of and accounting for some £2 billion annually of national and EU funds.

Information Systems play a critical role in enabling the department to achieve its business goals and deliver its services. While there has been a significant development of systems over the past decade, the department faces major challenges over the coming years in adapting and developing its Information Systems to meet its business objectives. These challenges include the changes required to implement measures under Agenda 2000, the completion of a number of major systems currently in development and the implementation of the Government's Information Society commitments.

In light of these demands, the department has revised its IS strategy using consultancy support. The revised strategy provides the framework within which the department will adapt and further develop its Information Systems over the next few years to meet requirements in relation to service delivery, accountability, information management and organisational change.

**Principal Post 1 - Consultancy Services****Job description**

The appointee will be responsible for playing a leading role in the implementation of the revised IS strategy by leading the management of the change required, with responsibility for the following functions:

- IT Strategic Planning as it continues to evolve.
- Directing IT resource planning.
- Managing the Programme Office in the department which will be responsible for planning co-ordination across all IT projects.

- Ensuring that Consultancy Services acquires and maintains the skills required to provide the IT advisory, support and development skills needed to assist in the development of systems.
- Directing the provision of support for project management and procurement.
- Management and development of appropriate training and skills planning for the department's IT staff.
- Co-ordination of the various IS elements affected by the Strategy's implementation.
- Directing the formulation of the department's e-Government policy, monitoring its implementation and representing the department on external e-Government Committees.
- Effectively deploying internet/intranet technologies throughout the department's services.
- Directing research into new and emerging technologies of relevance to the department.
- Knowledge co-ordination within the division primarily through promoting skills transfer and best practice in areas of applications architecture and data administration.

### Personal requirements

Candidates for this position must hold the following technical qualifications:

- Experience in the development of IT Strategy.
- A clearly demonstrable understanding of the issues involved in the introduction of major change to a large organisation.
- Extensive experience of leading major IT projects through full life cycle from initiation through to implementation.
- A well-developed knowledge of developments in IT and particularly in internet/intranet and e-Commerce technologies.
- A proven record of successfully managing complex project issues across numerous projects.
- A good knowledge of the issues involved in the development of an IT skills strategy.
- An understanding of the issues involved in migration to new technologies in a large-scale data centre.

### Principal Post 2 - FEOGA Payments

#### Job description

The appointee will be responsible for:

- The maintenance of current systems in the FEOGA payments area.
- The development of new systems to meet the requirements of Agenda 2000.
- Redevelopment of current systems to take account of the new technical architecture as envisaged in the new DAFRD IT Strategy.
- The introduction of a comprehensive and integrated inspection support system.
- The management of effective integration with existing and proposed corporate systems.

#### Personal requirements

Candidates for this position must have the following technical qualifications:

- Extensive experience in software development.
- A proven record of leading major IT projects through full life-cycle from initiation to implementation.

- A well-developed knowledge of changes in IT.
- A clearly demonstrable understanding of technology platforms and tool sets appropriate to systems of this scale (including GIS).
- Knowledge of planning, systems design and development of large systems.
- Good knowledge of the issues involved in the introduction of major change to a large organisation.

### **Principal Post 3 - Operations/Technical Services**

#### **Job description**

The appointee will be responsible for:

- Management and implementation of the infrastructural projects as envisaged in the DAFRD IT Strategy.
- The overall management of the department's data centre covering the Computer Operations, Technical Support, and DataBase administration functions.
- Provision and management of Helpdesk Services to both department users and business partners.
- Provision and management of Desktop Services.
- Provision of technical support to the computer development project teams.
- The overall management of the department's Wide Area Network incorporating the departments' offices and some of our business partners.
- Network planning and design.
- Contingency Planning / Disaster Recovery incorporating both data centre and network.
- Procurement of computer hardware and software.

#### **Personal requirements**

Candidates for this position must have the following technical qualifications:

- Extensive experience in the management of a large data centre covering diverse platforms.
- Experience in the design, implementation and management of a large Wide Area Network.
- A well-developed knowledge of developments in IT.
- Well-developed knowledge and experience of developments in modern systems architectures.
- Experience of computer security and computer audit issues.
- A proven record of delivery in the implementation of large computer infrastructural projects.
- A proven record in the introduction of IT to meet critical business needs.
- A proven record in the understanding of IT procurement regulations and their implementation, including dealing with a diverse range of suppliers.

APPENDIX 2**POST TO BE FILLED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE MARINE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

One post in the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources will be filled from this competition. The context in which this post has arisen is set out below, along with job description and personal requirements details.

**Job context**

The Department of the Marine and Natural Resources currently has about 400 staff (approximately 250 administrative and 150 professional/technical). Of these about 300 are based in Dublin (in four offices) and the remainder work at locations around the country.

The department had limited development of Information Systems prior to 1999. An Information Technology (IT) Strategy Plan was adopted in mid-1999, which incorporates IT and Information Systems (IS) strategies. This forms the basis for a new development and investment programme in the department over the coming years. An initial 3-year development and investment programme has been finalised to achieve the goals identified in the strategy and to transform the department's information management procedures and technology to modern, structured and efficient systems.

**Job description**

The appointee's duties will include:

- Implementation of the department's IT Strategy Plan and the first three-year IT Development and Investment Programme. The Strategy Plan and Development Programme form the basis of the redesign of existing technology systems and the development of new systems to support the department's business needs.
- Managing the department's Information Technology activities, including aligning IT strategic planning with the department's Strategy Statement and Divisional Business Plans; systems development; project planning and implementation; network and communications management and budgetary planning and control.
- Implementing the recommendations of the Information Society Action Plan including the development of strategies for the electronic delivery of the department's public services.
- Managing the department's IT Division, which will include organising developing and maintaining the necessary skills set to administer the IT function in the department, and the formulation and development of training plans for the department's IT staff.
- Advising in relation to the wider IT skills required of the department's sections and management.
- Managing and developing the department's internal and external IT relationships.
- Managing and developing the department's technical infrastructure. This will include network and hardware capacity planning and procurement.
- Maintaining and developing the IT infrastructure and facilities of the department to meet the changing business requirements of the organisation.

- Advising the Management Advisory Committee on internal and external business-related IT opportunities and initiatives.
- Business Process Re-engineering in the department.
- Participation on the department's IT Steering Group and Senior Management Forum.

**Personal requirements**

Candidates for the post should have the following qualifications:

- Experience in project appraisal and management techniques.
- An extensive knowledge of IT, including substantial management experience, in a progressive, developmental IT environment.
- Proven experience of leading project teams in successful IT development work.
- Proven experience in planning (including strategic planning), design and successful implementation of computer systems.
- Proven record of willingness to take the initiative and to adopt a proactive approach to introduction of IT solutions.
- Sound knowledge and experience of PC networks and office systems.
- Sound knowledge and experience of systems analysis and development methodologies, business and organisational analysis, CASE tools, fourth-generation environments and relational database systems in a client/server environment.
- Sound knowledge and experience of groupware and proven experience on the introduction of groupware systems.
- Knowledge of the recommendations of the development of an e-Government / e-public service strategy in response to the Information Society agenda.
- Proven management ability, keen intelligence and sound judgement.
- First rate interpersonal, communication and presentation skills.



**DEPARTMENTAL GRADES ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE**

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

Senior Auditor

Department of Foreign Affairs

First Secretary

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

Co-ordinator of Work and Training

Courts Service

Any grade at Assistant Principal level attached to the Courts

Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas

Principal Clerk

Assistant Principal Committee Clerk

Office of the Ombudsman

Investigator