

E109/125/02

31 May 2002

Circular 21/2002: Confined competition for appointment to the position of Corporate Services Manager in the State Laboratory, at Assistant Principal (standard scale) level

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 State Laboratory, for appointment on a four-year basis to the post of Corporate Services Manager in the State Laboratory, at Assistant Principal (standard scale) level.

Background

2. The State Laboratory is the Government's principal analytical chemistry laboratory which provides an advisory and analytical service to Government Departments. It has a staff of approximately 90 who are mainly professional and technical staff. The administrative staff comprises one Assistant Principal, three Higher Executive Officers, one Staff Officer and nine Clerical Officers. The Laboratory is currently located in Abbotstown, near Blanchardstown in west Dublin, and it is scheduled to move to new premises at Backweston (between Lucan and Celbridge) within three years. Further details about the State Laboratory can be found on its website <http://www.statelab.ie>

3. The Corporate Services Manager will be expected to play a major role in the development of an effective and up-to-date human resource management strategy that will result in a staff complement with the capacity to respond to an ever-changing environment and facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the Office.

Nature of Duties

4. The appointee, who will report directly to the Head of Administration, will be responsible for managing the Corporate Services function in the Office. This will require the preparation of progressive HRM policies, implementation of the Management Information Framework, leading with the management of the IR function, and implementation of civil service wide initiatives such as PMDS and Partnership.

TO ALL DEPARTMENTS

[For Department, read Department/Office throughout this Circular]

5. The main tasks, as currently required are set out hereunder and they will in the normal course, be subject to change in response to varying demands:

- Ensuring full range of Corporate Services including accommodation and support services are available as a back-up to the State Laboratory's core functions
- Implementation of HR aims set out in the SMI and particularly in the business plan of the State Laboratory
- Preparing Official Side position on Industrial Relations matters and leading negotiations as appropriate
- Ongoing negotiations with Department of Finance on resource and personnel matters
- Responsibility for Administrative Budget and Estimates process
- Implementation of the Management Information Framework (MIF)
- Development of recruitment and retention policies and campaigns
- Ensuring appropriate systems of financial control are in place
- Introduction of new software for personnel management systems
- Assisting and advising on the development of PMDS for professional, technical and administrative staff
- Ensuring routine personnel administration systems are in place for the staff of the State Laboratory
- Assisting in the Partnership process.

Relevant Extracts from the Current PMDS Role Profile Form are attached at Appendix I to this circular.

Personal Requirements

6. The successful candidate will possess the following essential requirements:
- Ability to lead and work as part of a team
 - Substantial Corporate Services experience, involving a significant level of personal responsibility for personnel or finance related issues
 - Proven ability to work on his/her own initiative
 - Good interpersonal, communications and presentation skills
 - Proven people management skills and sound judgement

- Ability to contribute to the wider development of the organisation and the on-going achievement of the organisation's objectives.

7. A relevant qualification in Human Resource or financial management is desirable, but not essential.

Eligibility

8. 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)
- A departmental grade listed in Appendix II to this circular

or

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

- Higher Executive Officer (including HEO/Systems Analyst)
- Administrative Officer
- A departmental grade listed in Appendix III to this circular

and

(ii) on **1 June 2002** must have not less than three years' service in their existing grade or an aggregate of three years' service in an eligible grade. Officers on probation are ineligible unless they would have been eligible had they remained in their previous grade and they have served continuously since satisfactorily completing a probation period: special leave without pay does not break continuity of service for this purpose.

9. 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 their career break conforms with the terms of Department of Finance Circular 18/98 and if they are otherwise eligible.

Conditions of appointment

10. A successful candidate who is not already serving as an Assistant Principal Officer will be offered appointment to that grade. Such appointment will be in an acting capacity for at least one year and will be subject to the usual conditions governing such appointments. The appointee will be on loan to the State Laboratory for a period of **four** years. The period of loan may be extended by agreement between the officer, the parent Department and the State Laboratory. On expiry of the loan period, the officer will return to fill a normal vacancy at Assistant Principal level in the parent Department. If there is no suitable vacancy at that time, the return will be deferred until one arises. The officer's return to the parent Department will be offset against

the next liability that Department would have under the interdepartmental scheme of promotion to Assistant Principal level posts.

11. In the event of an officer's service with the State Laboratory not being satisfactory, the officer will be returned to his or her parent Department and/or duties in the former grade; any extra payment arising from the assignment would then cease. In the event of an officer failing to remain with the State Laboratory for the duration of the four-year loan period, the next eligible officer on the panel may be offered an appointment.

The competition

12. Selection will be by means of a competitive interview conducted by the State Laboratory. The State Laboratory may, at its discretion, request the interview board to examine the applications of all candidates by reference to the nature of the duties and personal requirements as detailed in paragraphs 4 to 7 above. The State Laboratory, having considered the report of the Board, may decide that only a number of candidates will be invited to attend for interview. In addition, in order to select the candidate best qualified for appointment, the State Laboratory may require candidates to undergo a preliminary interview and invite only those who reach the requisite standard to attend for competitive interview.

13. In placing in order of merit the candidates considered best qualified for appointment, the State Laboratory 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

14. Candidates should obtain their application forms from their own Personnel Sections. The State Laboratory will supply application forms to Personnel Sections on request. Applications should be addressed **directly** to the **Assistant Principal, Corporate Services, State Laboratory, Abbotstown, Dublin 15**, or via **email** to **ddenny@statelab.ie** to arrive not later than **5.00 p.m. on Tuesday 18 June, 2002. This date must be strictly observed.** Candidates should use only one means of application i.e. hardcopy or e-mail. Interviews are expected to take place between 25 and 27 June 2002. The onus is on candidates to make themselves available for interview at short notice.

15. The State Laboratory will contact Personnel Sections in respect of candidates being called to competitive interview. For each candidate called for competitive interview the Head of Department will be required to :

a certify that s/he

- has worked well and been satisfactory in his/her present grade
- has been satisfactory in general conduct
- fulfils the conditions of **eligibility** set out in paragraphs 8 and 9 above

and

- b send to the State Laboratory an assessment of the candidate's suitability for
- appointment to the post applied for, and
 - promotion (if appropriate),
- on a form to be supplied by the State Laboratory.

16. Candidates should note that (i) eligibility for the competition, and (ii) health and the level of sick leave, are not verified by the State Laboratory until a candidate comes under consideration for appointment after the competitive interview stage. Admission to the competition, therefore, does 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 State Laboratory 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, are advised to clarify their position with their Personnel Section before proceeding with the application.

Circulation

17. Please bring this Circular to the notice of all eligible officers serving in your Department and associated Offices without delay. Special care should be taken to ensure that eligible officers on maternity leave, career break or any other relevant forms of leave are notified of the competition.

18. If candidates have any queries about this Circular, they should contact their Personnel Section. Subsequent enquiries about their candidature should be addressed directly to the State Laboratory

Mise le meas,

Joe McGovern
Assistant Secretary

APPENDIX I

EXTRACT FROM CURRENT ROLE PROFILE FORM

Job Title: Corporate Services Manager, State Laboratory

Main Purpose of Job

The job holder is responsible for the general management of the Corporate Services function within the Laboratory, the development of modern human resource strategies designed to meet the objectives of the Laboratory, the operation of proper financial systems in the Laboratory and the provision of appropriate advice on human resource issues to management at all levels.

Functions/Responsibilities

- Implementation of HR aims set out in the SMI and particularly in the business plan of the State Laboratory.
- Ensure the implementation and operation of effective human resource services and systems.
- Preparing Official Side position on Industrial Relations matters and leading negotiations as appropriate.
- Ongoing negotiations with Dept of Finance on resource and personnel matters.
- Responsibility for Administrative Budget and Estimates process.
- Implementation of the Management Information Framework (MIF)
- Development of recruitment and retention policies and campaigns.
- Ensuring appropriate systems of financial control are in place.
- Assisting and advising on the development of PMDS for professional, technical and administrative staff.

- Introduction of new software for personnel management systems.
- Assisting in the Partnership process.
- Ensuring the provision of accommodation and support services.
- Monitoring expenditure patterns and reporting to MAC.

Key Deliverables for the year

- Smooth operation of administrative support functions for State Laboratory.
- Development of range of Human Resources policies in accordance with Business Plan.
- Good quality advice and support to MAC on Industrial Relations issues.
- Maintenance of good relations with Dept of Finance, ensuring an understanding of State Laboratory issues and priorities.
- Progress developing the MIF (including Cost Centres) within the State Laboratory.
- Significant progress towards introduction of Human Resource Management System.
- Effective partnership process in operation.

Key Performance Indicators

- Smooth and effective operation of HR systems.
- Significant progress on development of HR policies.
- Orderly conduct of IR business at Departmental Council and bilaterally.
- Ensuring an understanding of State Laboratory issues and priorities.
- Dynamics accounts software developed to strengthen financial management.
- RFT for new HR package to be available.
- Serviced partnership process with regular meetings, good participation.

Identification of Competencies for the job

- **Leadership** – You will be expected to make choices & decisions which take the organisation forward
- **Communications** - Good interpersonal and presentation skills – an ability to deal effectively with all staff members in relation to the day-to-day personnel issues that arise. Also a facility to present clear concise reports and recommendations to MAC and other groupings, as required.
- **Networking and Influencing** – Display an ability to develop and maintain a range of contacts and to build behind-the-scenes support for proposals.
- **Initiative** – as Corporate Services Manager you will be required to have the proven ability to work on your own initiative.
- **Managing and Developing People** – an ability to organise work, delegate as appropriate and adopt a positive developmental role within the Laboratory.
- **Customer Service** – an appreciation of the importance of quality service to staff and management on Corporate Services issues and an ability to organise the delivery of such a service in the State Laboratory.

Knowledge and Skills

- Knowledge of Human Resources policies and developments.
- Knowledge of Financial Management practices.
- Staff management skills.

Appendix II

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 Education

Courts Service

Any grade at Assistant Principal (standard level) in the Courts Service

Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas

Assistant Principal Committee Clerk

Office of the Ombudsman and Information Commissioner

Investigator

Health and Safety Authority

Assistant Principal on secondment from the Civil Service

FÁS

Assistant Regional Director or Regional Director on secondment from the Civil Service

Appendix III

GRADES ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

Auditor

Department of Foreign Affairs

Third Secretary

Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas

Senior Clerk

Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs

Social Welfare Officer

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform

Systems Analyst in the IT and Telecommunications Division at Garda Headquarters