

January 2016

**Circular 03/2016: Confined competition for appointment to the post of Director of
Agriculture Appeals in the Office of Agriculture Appeals (Portlaoise)
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine**

A Dhuine Uasail

Background

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is a multi-functional organisation which provides a wide range of services directly and also through specialist state agencies operating under its aegis. The Department has a wide and diverse customer base which includes farmers, taxpayers, consumers, food processors and other commercial operators, those involved in sea fishing, forestry, bio-energy, research as well as diverse EU institutions, other State Bodies and special interest groups. The mission statement of the Department, as set out in its Statement of Strategy 2015-2017, is *"To lead the sustainable development of the agri-food, forestry and marine sector and to optimise its contribution to national economic development and the natural environment"*.

For 2016 the extensive range of programmes, services and schemes administered by the Department will involve expenditure of just under €2.6 billion. The staff of the Department are located in the six headquarter offices (Dublin, Cavan, Portlaoise, Backweston, Clonakilty and Wexford) as well as in a wide geographical spread of regional offices, laboratories and other premises.

The Agriculture Appeals Office is an independent agency established to provide an independent, accessible, fair and timely appeals service for scheme applicants who are dissatisfied with decisions of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine regarding their entitlements under designated schemes. The Agriculture Appeals Act 2001, along with the Agriculture Appeals Regulations 2002, set down the functions of the Director and the Appeals Officers, the decisions that may be appealed and the procedures to be followed in respect of agriculture appeals.

1. Job Specification

The Director of Agriculture Appeals acts as the Chief Appeals Officer responsible for all aspects of the operation of that Office.

The key challenges for this post include:

- The delivery of an appeals system which is in compliance with the Agriculture Appeals Act.
- The design and delivery of the highest standard of quality customer service to appellants in line with the Department's stated objective on customer service.
- Leadership and the development of an expert team, comprising a range of skills, capable of delivering an appeals service, which is seen to be independent, fair, efficient and readily accessible.

In particular, the Director shall be responsible for;

- The organisation and management of an independent Appeals Office
- Ensuring that an accessible appeals service is delivered in an efficient manner
- Full review, where requested, of the decisions of Appeals Officers
- Ensuring that Appeals Officers are adequately trained and staff development needs are identified and met
- Ensuring that appeals are dealt with appropriately and in a timely fashion
- Ensuring that decisions of Appeals Officers are fair and in accordance with the provisions of the Appeals Act, 2001 including in accordance with the rules of natural justice

- Dealing effectively with legal issues arising
- Preparing reports for the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine including annual reports on the operation of the Appeals Office and any other reports requested by the Minister
- Full accountability for the office including procurement and ensuring value for money in service delivery
- Ensuring effective liaison between the Appeals Office and the Department.

2. Person Specification

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- Well developed strategic and operational management skills
- An ability to critically analyse issues, reach conclusions and make sound judgements
- An appreciation of the special nature of the environment and the work involved in processing appeals, including oral hearings and the need for consistency and logic across cases over time so that the grounds upon which decisions are made can be clearly explained
- A good knowledge of the schemes and services administered by the Department, including the legislative and practical aspects of the schemes, or otherwise can demonstrate that, having a basic understanding of and appropriate experience in the operation of similar schemes, he/she quickly acquire the particular in-depth knowledge
- The ability to anticipate customer needs and maintain a top quality service to meet those needs
- Leadership and management skills, which will enable him/her to manage the Office and the team and to motivate and provide effective direction to a range of professional, technical and administrative staff
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- The capacity to perform the full range of duties at Principal Officer (Standard Scale) level in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

See **Appendix I** for Director of Agriculture Appeals core competency areas.

3. Eligibility

(a) Officers who on **11 February 2016** are serving Civil Servants and have two or more years' service, either continuously or in aggregate, in the Civil Service, **or**

(b) Serving officers who on **11 February 2016** are employed on a fixed-term contract and who have two or more years' service, either continuously or in aggregate, in the Civil Service.

(c) 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 4/2013 and if they are otherwise eligible.

(d) The eligibility of any particular grade or group for appointment under the terms of the competition applies exclusively to the post of Director in the Agriculture Appeals Office, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine as covered by the terms of the circular.

(e) PMDS: Candidates must have received a rating of "Fully Achieved Expectations" (formerly a rating of 3) or higher at their 2015 PMDS Annual Review to be considered eligible to apply for this post.

4. Principal Conditions of Service

a) General

The appointment is to an established post in the Civil Service and is subject to the Civil Service Regulations Acts 1956 to 2005, the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004 and any other Act for the time being in force relating to the Civil Service.

b) Pay

The Director of Agriculture Appeals salary scale for the position (rates effective from 1 July, 2013) is as follows:

Principal Officer Standard Salary Scale

Personal Pension Contribution Pay Scale:

€79,401, €82,587, €85,750, €88,936, €91,624, €94,410 (LS11), €97,194 (LS12)

This rate will apply where the appointee is an existing civil or public servant appointed on or after 6th April 1995 and is required to make a personal pension contribution.

Non-Personal Pension Contribution Pay Scale:

€75,647, €78,670, €81,676, €84,706, € 87,258, €89,906(LS11), €92,550(LS12)

This rate will apply where the appointee is a civil or public servant recruited before 6th April 1995 and who **is not required** to make a Personal Pension Contribution.

Long service increments may be payable after 3(LSI-1) and 6(LSI-2) years satisfactory service at the maximum of the scale.

Important Note

Entry will be at the minimum of the scale and the rate of remuneration will not be subject to negotiation and may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy. The terms of Circular 34/77 – Starting Pay on Promotion or Establishment will apply, as appropriate, to appointments under this competition.

Subject to satisfactory performance increments may be payable in line with current Government Policy. (See Haddington Road Agreement paragraph 2.19 for recent changes.)

Important Note

c) Headquarters

The Director of Agriculture Appeals acts as the Chief Appeals Officer responsible for all aspects of the operation of that Office. The post is based in Portlaoise.

d) Hours of attendance

Hours of attendance will be fixed from time to time but will amount to not less than 43 hours 15 minutes gross per week. The successful candidate will be required to work such additional hours from time to time as may be reasonable and necessary for the proper performance of his/her duties subject to the limits set down in the working time regulations. The rate of remuneration payable covers any extra attendance liability that may arise from time to time.

e) Annual Leave

The annual leave allowance for the position of Principal Officer is 30 days. This allowance is subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave in the civil service, is based on a five day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

f) Sick Leave

Pay during properly certified sick absence, provided there is no evidence of permanent disability for service, will apply on a pro-rata basis, in accordance with the provisions of the sick leave circulars.

Officers who will be paying Class A rate of PRSI will be required to sign a mandate authorising the Department of Social Protection to pay any benefits due under the Social Welfare Acts directly to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Payment during illness will be subject to the officer making the necessary claims for social insurance benefit to the Department of Social Protection within the required time limits.

g) Superannuation and Retirement

The successful candidate will be offered the appropriate superannuation terms and conditions as prevailing in the Civil Service, at the time of being offered an appointment.

5. How to Apply

Applications should be made **online** through www.publicjobs.ie All sections of the form must be fully completed.

Before applying candidates should log-on to www.publicjobs.ie and if you have not already done so you must register as a **'New User'** to create your profile (register a new account). Please do not confuse registering (creating a profile) with submitting an application. Once you have created a profile you must then access the application form, complete and submit it.

Once you have submitted your application form it is suggested that you return to your publicjobs account and ensure that it has been successfully submitted via 'My Applications'. At this point you should consider adding publicjobs.ie to your safe senders or contact list within your email account to avoid not receiving email because a publicjobs e-mail has been blocked.

Only applications fully completed and submitted online will be accepted into the campaign.

Only one application per person is permitted. Remember, you must include your PPS number when applying.

Applications will not be accepted after the closing date.

6. Closing date

Your application must be submitted on the Public jobs website not later than midnight, Thursday, 11th February 2015 If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application within 24 hours of applying, please contact: **Linda Bridger** at (01) 8587641 or email: linda.bridger@publicjobs.ie

Interviews for this post are likely to be held in February/March 2016.

You are advised to check your messageboard on a regular basis as email notifications of updates/tests/Interviews etc issued to your Messageboard may sometimes be filtered into your Junk/Spam email folders. You are also advised to check all these folders regularly.

The onus is on each applicant to ensure that she/he is in receipt of all communication from the Public Appointments Service (PAS)

The PAS accept no responsibility for communication not accessed or received by an applicant.

Candidates should make themselves available on the date(s) specified by the PAS and should make sure that the contact details specified on the application form are correct.

7. Selection Methods

The selection may include:

- shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application
- a competitive preliminary interview
- completion of online questionnaire(s)
- presentation or other exercises
- a final competitive interview
- work sample/role play/ media exercise, and any other tests or exercises that may be deemed appropriate

Shortlisting

Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing and future vacancies to the position. While a candidate may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, the Public Appointments Service may decide that a number only will be called to interview. In this respect, the Public Appointments Service provide for the employment of a short listing process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the application forms, appear to be the most suitable for the position. An expert board will examine the application forms against a pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable or incapable of undertaking the job, rather that there are some candidates, who based on their application, appear to be better qualified and/or have more relevant experience. It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/ experience on the application form.

8. Other important information

The Public Appointments Service will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.

The admission of a person to the competition, or invitation to undertake any element of the selection process is not to be taken as implying that the PAS is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements of the competition or is not disqualified by law from holding the position and does not carry a guarantee that your application will receive further consideration. It is important, therefore, for you to note that the onus is on you to ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements for the competition before attending for interview. If you do not meet these essential entry requirements but nevertheless attend for interview you will be putting yourself to unnecessary expense.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position the Public Appointments Service will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of that candidate. Until all stages of the recruitment process have been fully completed a final determination cannot be made nor can it be deemed or inferred that such a determination has been made.

Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it or if an additional vacancy arises the Board may, at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process

9. Codes of Practice

The recruitment and selection process for appointment to this position will be conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice for Appointment to Positions in the Civil and Public Service published by the Commission for Public Service Appointments.

The Code of Practice reflects the following core principles:

- Probity
- Appointments Made on Merit
- An Appointments Process in Line with Best Practice
- A Fair Appointments Process Applied with Consistency
- Appointments Made in an Open, Accountable and Transparent Manner

Candidates are advised to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Codes of Practice including, inter alia, the provisions in relation to the responsibilities placed on candidates who participate in the recruitment and selection process.

Complaints/requests for review will be considered by the Public Appointments Service in accordance with the procedures set out in the Codes of Practice.

The Codes of Practice may be accessed by visiting www.cpsa.ie or by contacting directly the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA), 18 Lower Leeson Street Dublin 2. The main switchboard for the Office is 00 353 1 639 5750.

10. Candidates' Obligations

Candidates should note that canvassing will disqualify and will result in their exclusion from the process.

Candidates must not:

knowingly or recklessly provide false information
canvass any person with or without inducements
interfere with or compromise the process in any way

A third party must not personate a candidate at any stage of the process.

Any person who contravenes the above provisions or who assists another person in contravening the above provisions is guilty of an offence. A person who is found guilty of an offence is liable to a fine/or imprisonment.

In addition, where a person found guilty of an offence was or is a candidate at a recruitment process, then: where he/she has not been appointed to a post, he/she will be disqualified as a candidate; and where he/she has been appointed subsequently to the recruitment process in question, he/she shall forfeit that appointment.

11. Circulation and Further Information

HR Sections should bring this circular to the notice of all eligible officers serving in their Departments and associated Offices without delay, including eligible fixed term workers, officers on

term time, secondment, maternity leave, career break, contract, and all other relevant forms of leave.

If candidates have any queries about this circular, they should contact their HR Section. Subsequent enquiries about their candidature should be addressed directly to the Public Appointments Service.



David Cagney
Chief Human Resources Officer
29 January 2016

Appendix 1

DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE APPEALS
Leadership & Strategic Direction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has well developed strategic and leadership skills • Leads an expert team comprising a range of skills, setting high standards, tackling any performance problems & facilitating high performance • Facilitates an open exchange of ideas and fosters an atmosphere of open communication • Contributes to the shaping of the Office of the Director of Agriculture Appeals • Develops capability and capacity across the team through effective delegation • Develops a culture of learning & development, offering coaching and constructive/ supportive feedback • Leads on preparing for and implementing change and reform • Anticipates and responds quickly to developments in the sector/ broader environment • Actively collaborates with other Departments, Agencies and relevant stakeholders
Judgement & Decision Making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and focuses on core issues when dealing with complex appeals/information/situations • Assembles facts, deals with a range of data and thinks through issues logically • Sees the relationships between issues and quickly grasp the high level implications • Identifies coherent solutions to complex issues • Takes action, making decisions in a timely manner and having the courage to see them through • Makes sound and well informed decisions, understanding their impact and implications
Management & Delivery of Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have well developed organisation and management skills which will enable them to manage the Office and the team • Initiates and takes personal responsibility for delivering results/ services in the Office • Balances strategy and operational detail to meet business needs • Manages multiple agendas and tasks and reallocates resources to manage changes in focus • Makes optimum use of resources and implements performance measures to deliver on objectives • Ensures the optimal use of ICT and new delivery models • Critically reviews projects and activities to ensure their effectiveness and that they meet the requirements of the Office • Instils the importance of efficiencies, value for money and meeting corporate governance requirements • Ensures the expert team are focused and act on Business plans priorities, even when faced with pressure
Building Relationships & Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent interpersonal and communication skills • Speaks and writes in a clear, articulate and impactful manner • Actively listens, seeking to understand the perspective and position of others • Manages and resolves conflicts / disagreements in a positive & constructive manner • Persuades others; builds consensus, gains co-operation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals • Proactively engages with colleagues at all levels of the organisation and across other Departments and builds strong professional networks • Makes opinions known when s/he feels it is right to do so • Effectively interacts with and maintains relationships with a range of stakeholders including those that are unhappy with the decisions made by the Office
Drive and Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently strives to perform at a high level • Demonstrates personal commitment to the role, maintaining determination and persistence while maintain maintains a sense of balance and perspective in relation to work issues • Contributes positively to the corporate agenda • Is personally trustworthy, honest and respectful, delivering on promises and commitments • Ensures the citizen is at the heart of all services provided • Is resilient, maintaining composure even in adverse or challenging situations • Promotes a culture that fosters the highest standards of ethics and integrity and the provision of a service that is seen to be independent, fair, efficient and readily accessible
Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good knowledge of the schemes and services administered by the Department or an understanding of and appropriate experience in the operation of similar schemes, • An appreciation of the special nature of the environment and the work involved in processing appeals, including oral hearings and the need for consistency and logic across cases over time • Develops and maintains skills and expertise across a number of areas that are relevant to the role • Keeps up to date with key policies and developments that affect the role • Maintains a strong focus on self-development, seeking feedback and opportunities for growth