

Candidate Information Booklet

Chief Operating Officer

The National Biodiversity Data Centre is committed to a policy of equal opportunity.

Closing Date for Applications

17: 00 19th of March 2023

(Late Applications will not be considered)

THE POSITION

Background

The National Biodiversity Data Centre was established in 2006 as a programme of the Heritage Council with the purpose of collecting and managing data on Ireland's biodiversity. In this way, the NBDC functions as an important State resource, supporting ongoing monitoring of our natural environment and its changes over time. The programme addresses the need for data on Ireland's biodiversity to be collected, recorded, and made fully accessible to the public. It is funded jointly by the Heritage Council and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

The National Biodiversity Data Centre has been very successful and it continues to be an important resource – providing data and information to Government Departments, agencies, academia and the public for the purposes of building understanding of and capacity to protect biodiversity. The National Biodiversity Data Centre has grown in scope and delivers scientific projects including building maps, tracking invasive species, supporting pollinator programmes and engaging the population in citizen-science initiatives. Its current annual funding is approximately €1.4million.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre is currently entering a new corporate chapter as it transforms into a stand-alone State-owned company limited by guarantee (CLG), under the supervision of the Heritage Council. This CLG will have as its initial mission the seamless continuation of the delivery of the National Biodiversity Data Centre's mission, while also smoothly establishing the new entity independent of its previous governance arrangements by means of transfers of staff, assets and culture to the new company.

The new National Biodiversity Data Centre CLG arrangement will represent a step change for the State's approach to and resources for understanding and communicating about the country's biodiversity. Building on the excellence and legacy of the previously established National Biodiversity Data Centre, the organisation will be required to implement a professional organisational structure and culture which will continuously improve into the future.

The Chief Operating Officer will work closely with the Chief Executive Officer of the National Biodiversity Data Centre, liaising with the Heritage Council, contracted and contracting organisations and external funding organisations. The Chief Operating Officer will be responsible for ensuring best practice in corporate governance across the organisation. In leading the corporate services responsibilities, the Chief Operating Officer will support the identification and development of opportunities for the growth of the organisation and oversee a robust and forward-looking approach to financial management. As a primary task, the Chief Operating Officer will be responsible for

ensuring financial controls and safeguards are in place to ensure that the new company operates to the highest standards of probity and responsibility with its use of public funding, including in relation to procurement.

For details of the role and work of the National Biodiversity Data Centre view the website

<https://biodiversityireland.ie/>.

The Role

The Chief Operating Officer will be a key member of the senior leadership of the organisation, with operational responsibility for ensuring the day-to-day operations of the CLG operate efficiently, productively and effectively according to standard operating procedures to be adopted. The Chief Operating Officer will be required to ensure the CLG meets its day-to-day corporate obligations while also preparing the National Biodiversity Data Centre to meet its future and ongoing obligations in respect of compliance, reporting and financial management. The Chief Operating Officer will also ensure the smooth functioning of all corporate services including Human Resources, Finance and ICT services. In addition, the Chief Operating Officer will be expected to play a lead role in supporting the Chairperson in ensuring the efficient and effective operation of the Board.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

The primary duties of the role will include:

- Supporting the Board and the Chief Executive Officer in the development of business strategies and procedures and playing a lead role in their implementation, ensuring the short- and long-term success of the National Biodiversity Data Centre.
- To act as Secretary to the Board and work with company secretarial service provider to ensure the adherence to best practice in Board administration.
- Working with the Chief Executive Officer and other managers to ensure adequate design and delivery of all corporate services, including Human Resources, Finance and ICT.
- Working with the Chief Executive Officer and other managers to lead the budget setting process for the organisation.
- Establishing and maintaining financial controls and reporting of all expenditure to the Board, Chief Executive Officer and funders.
- Preparing management reports and forecasts to monitor performance against projections, Key Performance Indicators and budget.

- Preparing internal financial analysis for various projects that the organisation is planning and executing.
- Building and maintaining relationships of trust with funders, partners and stakeholders.
- Ensuring compliance with requirements of all external funders, regulators and collaborators, particularly in respect of the Operating Agreement with the Heritage Council and all Service Level Agreements.
- Liaising with internal and external auditors.
- Working with the Chief Executive Officer to ensure rigorous compliance with corporate governance best practice, including in relation to risk management and procurement.
- Working with the Chief Executive Officer to support the Chairperson in ensuring the effective and efficient operation of the Board.

Essential Criteria for the role

Candidates must demonstrate in their cover letter and Curriculum Vitae that they meet all the below essential criteria.

Each candidate must, on the latest date for receipt of completed application forms, have;

- A recognised professional accounting qualification (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Associate Chartered Accountant, Certified Public Accountant, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants).
- Minimum of five years' experience in executive leadership and five years' post qualification experience in a role that encompasses responsibility for the finance function.
- Experience of working in corporate services in a senior management capacity, demonstrating the associated leadership and motivational skills.
- Excellent strategic thinking, analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Evidence of continued professional development.
- Ability to work independently and in a team environment with strong organisation and time-management skills.
- Adaptable and flexible, with an ability to embrace change, quickly learn new skills and take on additional responsibilities as part of a newly developing organisation.
- A commitment to respect and dignity for all, together with the ability to work positively with colleagues, collaborators and trainees from a diverse range of backgrounds.

- A commitment to and understanding of the importance of robust governance in the functioning of successful organisations.
- Excellent motivational, communication and interpersonal skills.
- Full rights to work in Ireland.

It is also desirable, but not essential, that candidates will have:

- Knowledge of working in a scientific or scientific research sector similar to the National Biodiversity Data Centre.
- An additional accredited qualification in Corporate Governance, Risk Management, or Compliance.

As the National Biodiversity Data Centre is in its initial establishment phase as a CLG, the working environment will be dynamic and evolving, requiring all staff to embrace and manage change and take on new responsibilities as needs arise. Consequently, the responsibilities outlined in this job description should not be regarded as comprehensive in scope and may be added to or altered as required, in line with the requirements of the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

Reporting

The Chief Operating Officer will report to the Chief Executive Officer.

Competencies for the Role

The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate that they possess the requisite competencies required for this position. The required competencies are set out in appendix 1.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Tenure

The post is whole-time and permanent.

Salary

The salary scale for the post of Chief Operating Officer is: €67,000 – €68,500 – €70,000 – €71,500 – €73,000 – €74,000 – €75,000 – €76,500, with increments being awarded annually, subject to satisfactory performance in the role. After 3 years on the maximum, a Long Service Increment to

€79,500 will be available, with an additional Long Service Increment to €81,500 being available after a further 3 years, both of which will again be subject to satisfactory performance in the role.

Annual Leave

25 days annual level entitlement.

Place of work

The place of work will be the National Biodiversity Data Centre Headquarters, Beechfield House, South-East Technological University, West Campus, Carriganore, Co. Waterford, X91 PE03.

Please note the National Biodiversity Data Centre currently operates a hybrid working policy, which is subject to change to suit the needs of the business. Currently, the policy requires staff to work from the office at Carriganore at least two days each week.

Hours of Attendance

The standard working week is 37.5 hours, 09.00 – 17.30 Monday to Friday.

The successful candidate will be required to work 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. Overtime rates will not apply to additional hours worked outside of normal hours.

Retirement / Superannuation:

Then National Biodiversity Data Centre will provide a 5% pension contribution to the Chief Operating Officer's Personal Retirement Savings Account.

Probation

There shall be a period after appointment takes effect during which the appointed person shall hold their employment on probation. Such period shall be six months, but the Chief Executive may, at his discretion, extend such period. A person may cease to hold such employment at the end of this period at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

The above represents the principal conditions of employment and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment which will be set out in a detailed employment contract to be agreed with the successful candidate.

Application Process

Selection Methods

The selection process may include any or all the following:

- Shortlisting of candidates. The number of candidates to be invited for interview shall be determined by the National Biodiversity Data Centre. The shortlisting will be carried out on behalf of the National Biodiversity Data Centre by Excel Recruitment against criteria specified for the position and only on the basis of the information contained in the candidate's Cover Letter and CV. 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, Excel Recruitment may decide that a smaller number will be called to the next stage of the selection process. In this respect, Excel Recruitment provide for the employment of a shortlisting process to select a group who, based on an examination of the CV and Cover Letter, appear to be the most suitable for 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. The shortlisting criteria may include both the essential and desirable criteria specified for the position. It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/experience in your Cover Letter and CV.
- An interview.
- A second interview which may include a presentation or other exercise.
- The National Biodiversity Data Centre may create a panel from which future vacancies at the specified grade may be filled.

It is the intention to hold interviews during the week commencing 12th of April 2023 at the offices of the National Biodiversity Data Centre, Beechfield House, South-East Technological University, West Campus, Carriganore, Co. Waterford X91 PE03. Remote Interviews may be accommodated but only in exceptional and unavoidable cases. It is the responsibility of the interviewee to ensure that he/she has access to adequate facilities to enable them to participate in online interviews.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre will not be responsible for any expense a candidate may incur in attending for interview.

References

It would be useful if you would begin to consider names of people who would be suitable referees that we might consult (2 names and contact details). The referees do not have to include your current employer but should be in a position to provide a reference for you; at least one of these should be a person to whom you have had a direct reporting relationship. The referees should be able to provide relatively recent information on your performance and behaviour in a work context. You may wish to select referees that can provide such information from different perspectives or in different work contexts. Please be assured that we will only contact referees should you come under consideration after the interview stage. Please note, should you be successful at interview, we will require a reference from your current employer prior to recommendation for appointment.

How to Apply

To apply, please email a cover letter (no more than three pages) to Ciara Connolly at ciara@excelrecruitment.com, with the role title in the subject line, outlining why you are interested in the opportunity and where you believe your skills, knowledge and experience meet the requirements of the role. Additionally, please attach a comprehensive curriculum vitae (C.V.) clearly showing the relevant achievements and experience in your career to date.

Candidates with Disabilities

The National Biodiversity Data Centre is committed to equal opportunities for all candidates. If you have a disability or require reasonable accommodations during the recruitment process, we encourage you to let us know to ensure that you receive the support that you need. Requiring adjustments or reasonable accommodation will not have any impact on the selection process and all information disclosed will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Deeming of Candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not attend for interview when and where required by the National Biodiversity Data Centre, or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the National Biodiversity Data Centre requires regarding any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

Period of Acceptance

The National Biodiversity Data Centre will require the person to whom appointment is offered to take up the appointment within a period of not more than three months and if he/she fails to take up the

appointment within such period or such longer period as the National Biodiversity Data Centre in its absolute discretion may determine, the National Biodiversity Data Centre shall not appoint her/him.

Canvassing

Any attempt by a candidate, or by any person(s) acting at the candidate's instigation, directly or indirectly, by means of written communication or otherwise to influence in the candidate's favour, any member of the staff of the National Biodiversity Data Centre or person nominated by the National Biodiversity Data Centre to interview or examine applicants, will automatically disqualify the candidate from the position being sought.

Garda Vetting

Garda vetting may be sought in respect of individuals who come under consideration for appointment. The candidate will be required to complete and return a Garda Vetting form should they come under consideration for appointment. This form will be forwarded to the Garda Síochána for security checks on all addresses at which the candidate has resided.

Health

Candidates shall be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service. For the purpose of satisfying the requirement as to health it may be necessary for the successful candidate, before they are appointed, to undergo a medical examination by a qualified medical practitioner to be nominated by the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

Enquiries/Further Information

If you require additional information or to arrange a confidential discussion in relation to the opportunity, please email ciara@excelrecruitment.com.

General Information

Legal Compliance

The National Biodiversity Data Centre is committed to complying with all relevant legislation over the course of this recruitment campaign, including the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018, the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018, and the Freedom of Information Acts 1997, 2003 and 2014.

GDPR Compliance

The National Biodiversity Data Centre collects, processes, and stores personal data, as provided by applicants when applying for the role available. The data provided by applicants is collected, recorded, stored, retained, and destroyed in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018.

Use of Recording Devices

The use of recording equipment is prohibited during the application and interview process.

Candidate Obligations

Candidates must not knowingly provide false or misleading information. Candidates must not interfere or compromise the competition process in any way.

Request for Feedback

Feedback will be provided at the end of the selection process. Should further feedback be required this can be requested by emailing ciara@excelrecruitment.com

Appendix 1

Key Competencies for this position

Leadership	Actively contributes to the development of the strategies and policies of the Organisation
	Brings a focus and drive to building and sustaining high levels of performance, addressing any performance issues as they arise
	Leads and maximises the contribution of the team as a whole
	Considers the effectiveness of outcomes in terms wider than own immediate area
	Clearly defines objectives/goals & delegates effectively, encouraging ownership and responsibility for tasks
	Develops capability of others through feedback, coaching & creating opportunities for skills development
	Identifies and takes opportunities to exploit new and innovative service delivery channels

Analysis & Decision Making	Researches issues thoroughly, consulting appropriately to gather all information needed on an issue
	Understands complex issues quickly, accurately absorbing and evaluating data (including numerical data)
	Integrates diverse strands of information, identifying inter-relationships and linkages
	Makes clear, timely and well-grounded decisions on important issues
	Considers the wider implications of decisions on a range of stakeholders
	Takes a firm position on issues s/he considers important

Management & Delivery of Results	Takes responsibility for challenging tasks and delivers on time and to a high standard
	Plans and prioritises work in terms of importance, timescales and other resource constraints, re-prioritising in light of changing circumstances
	Ensures quality and efficient customer service is central to the work of the organisation
	Looks critically at issues to see how things can be done better
	Is open to new ideas initiatives and creative solutions to problems
	Ensures controls and performance measures are in place to deliver efficient and high value services
	Effectively manages multiple projects

Interpersonal & Communication Skills	Presents information in a confident, logical and convincing manner, verbally and in writing
	Encourages open and constructive discussions around work issues
	Promotes teamwork within the section, but also works effectively on projects across the organisation
	Maintains poise and control when working to influence others
	Instills a strong focus on Customer Service in his/her area
	Develops and maintains a network of contacts to facilitate problem solving or information sharing
	Engages effectively with a range of stakeholders, including policymakers, funders, the citizen scientist community and the public more generally

Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development	Has a clear understanding of the roles objectives and targets of self and the team and how they fit into the work of the organisation
	Has a breadth and depth of knowledge of organisational issues and is sensitive to wider policy and organisational priorities
	Is considered an expert by stakeholders in own field/area
	Is focused on self-development, seeking feedback and opportunities for growth to help carry out the specific requirements of the role

Drive and Commitment to the Common Good	Is self-motivated and shows a desire to continuously perform at a high level
	Is personally honest and trustworthy and can be relied upon
	Ensures the citizen is at the heart of all services provided
	Through leading by example, fosters the highest standards of ethics and integrity