

Candidate Information Booklet

Please read carefully



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) intends to hold an open recruitment competition for the purpose of recommending suitably qualified persons for the position of:

Competition Name: Scientific Officer II (Level 4) Freshwater Ecologist

Post Number: 000437

Location: Posts may arise in the EPA Regional Inspectorates in Castlebar, Cork, Dublin or Monaghan

Closing Date: 4.00pm on Friday 8th November 2024

The Environmental Protection Agency is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to principles of good recruiting practice.



Employing Authority:	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Position Title:	Scientific Officer II (Level 4) Freshwater Ecologist
Post Number:	000437
Salary Scale:	€57,122 to €71,939 (PPC Rate) per annum includes provision for two Long Service Increments after three and six years respectively on the maximum of the scale for permanent staff. (A modified scale may apply to existing public/civil servants)
Annual Leave:	29 days rising to 30 days after 5 years' service
Location:	EPA Regional Inspectorates in Castlebar, Cork, Dublin or Monaghan
Panel Information:	A panel will be formed from which future Scientific Officer II (Level 4) – Freshwater Ecologist vacancies may be filled.

Our Organisation

Who We Are:

The EPA is an independent regulatory body established in 1992. Its purpose is “to protect, improve and restore our environment through regulation, scientific knowledge and working with others”. The EPA has a broad environmental remit and plays a key role in environmental regulation, provision of knowledge and advocacy for the environment.

Further information in relation to the EPA is available on our website www.epa.ie

Some of our staff at work:



Key Benefits of Working at the EPA:

You will have the opportunity to carry out purposeful work that makes a difference and impacts on our society and people. Not only do we have exciting career opportunities in many disciplines, there are also great benefits to working in the EPA. Check out some of these benefits:

Benefits package

A comprehensive benefits package is available for all staff. This includes excellent career progression opportunities with public sector pay rates, pension benefits and annual leave entitlements. We also offer a 35-hour work week which includes flexible working hours and flexi leave for most grades. [Check out the specific benefits for this role.](#)

Blended working

The blended working model adopted by the EPA provides us with an opportunity to direct and shape the future of our work in a way that takes full advantage of this new way of working. It is one of our flexible working options and will reduce commutes, contribute to improving well-being and work-life balance.

Health and Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of our staff is a priority for the EPA. Now more than ever we recognise the importance of caring for our mental and physical health and general wellbeing. We have an active Wellbeing Group who organise events and positive initiatives to help us stay well and create an open and supportive culture for everyone. We are proud to say we have been accredited with the 'The KeepWell Mark' award which is an evidence-based accreditation for health and wellbeing standards.

Continuous Professional Development

Our staff can avail of excellent learning and development opportunities and we are fully committed to continued professional development. We offer many opportunities to develop through on the job learning, by engaging with multi-disciplinary teams across the organisation and through generous formal internal and external training. Our further education schemes include financial assistance for degrees, diplomas and masters to help you develop your career.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

We are committed to creating an environment that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion. Our workforce is made up of a wide range of employees with diverse backgrounds, circumstances and skills, they are our greatest asset. Through our EDI policy and our core values and behaviours we continue to demonstrate high standards in how we attract, develop and retain staff to ensure the commitment, engagement, wellbeing and performance of our workforce.

The role and how to apply

Overview of the Role:

The successful candidate will fulfil the role of **Scientific Officer II (Level 4) – Freshwater Ecologist**.

The successful candidate will work in the EPA's Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Unit which undertakes monitoring and assessment of the ecological health of Ireland's surface water resource. The role will involve extensive fieldwork, and travel away from the designated office location, monitoring surface waters within Ireland, as well as sample and data analysis and reporting.

Reporting Arrangements: The appointee will be assigned a technical role reporting to the Senior Scientific Officer or another designated officer.

The key responsibilities will include:

Specialist duties:

- Undertaking biological and general physico-chemical monitoring of surface waters under the National Water Quality Monitoring Programme; with a focus on rivers and lakes.
- Collecting and analysing environmental data from field surveys.
- Development and implementation of hydromorphological assessment tools, monitoring programmes and standards.
- Implementing quality control procedures for data collection and processing.
- Preparing ecological assessments.
- Assisting in the preparation, supervision and implementation of monitoring programmes for surface waters.
- Preparing water quality reports and other publications.
- Specifying and steering research projects.
- Provide advice on the quality of the freshwater environment and related matters.

General duties may include:

- Participating in and working with multi-disciplinary teams engaged in water management.
- Participation in a performance management & development system (PMDS)
- Managing resources, including staff and contract management and contract tendering/procurement.
- Contributing to the delivery of the Work Programme.
- Managing and presenting environmental and/or management information.
- Acquiring a clear and detailed understanding of relevant legislation.
- Dealing with the public, media and various external organisations and stakeholders.
- Participating in national and/or other expert groups and committees.
- Adhering to and supporting the development of health and safety protocols.
- Such other duties/activities as may be assigned from time to time.

Essential Requirements:

Candidates must have on or before 4pm on Friday 8th November 2024

1. An appropriate degree (NFQ Level 8) in a Biological or Environmental Science with specific experience in freshwater ecology.
2. A minimum of 2 years' work experience in three of the following:
 - a. River/lake hydromorphological assessment methodologies and their application.
 - b. Monitoring and assessment of rivers/lakes using invertebrates and or aquatic plants.
 - c. Monitoring and assessment of lakes using phytoplankton, algae, or similar biological elements.
 - d. Use of GIS and database applications.
3. Excellent written and verbal communication skills with the ability to communicate complex issues clearly and effectively.
4. Demonstrated excellent interpersonal skills with a proven track record in building effective working relationships with stakeholders.
5. Applicants must hold and maintain a current full Driving Licence valid for driving in Ireland.

Desirable Requirements:

1. A relevant postgraduate degree in freshwater or environmental science.

Eligibility to Compete and Certain Restrictions on Eligibility

Eligible candidates must be:

- (a) A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; or
- (b) A citizen of the United Kingdom (UK); or
- (c) A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
- (d) A non-EEA citizen who has a stamp 4* or a Stamp 5 visa;

*Please note that a 50 TEU visa, which is a replacement for Stamp 4EUFAM after Brexit, is acceptable as a Stamp 4 equivalent.

In addition to the specific requirements set out above, candidates must be able to demonstrate that they possess the competencies identified for effective performance at Level 4.

The EPA will use the essential criteria to shortlist candidates and scoring will be based on the information contained in the application form for the role of **Scientific Officer II (Level 4) Freshwater Ecologist**.

Applicants must demonstrate, by reference to specific achievements in their career to date that they possess the qualities, skills and knowledge required for the role of **Scientific Officer II (Level 4) Freshwater Ecologist** as identified in the 'Essential requirements'.

The EPA will convene an expert board to carry out the competitive stages of the selection process to the highest standard of best practice.

In addition to the specific requirements set out above, candidates **at interview** must be able to demonstrate that they possess the required competencies identified for effective performance as set out in Appendix A:

Required Competencies

- Team Player and Leadership
- Customer and Stakeholder Focus
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- Management and Delivery of Results
- Analysis and Decision Making
- Specialist Knowledge/Expertise and Self-development

Further information regarding competencies is available in **Appendix A**.

How to apply:

Application Forms and Candidate Information Booklets are available from the careers section on the EPA website www.epa.ie.

Please note that cover letters and CVs are not required and should not be submitted. Only applications submitted by email on the official EPA application form for this competition will be accepted. Applications will not be accepted after the closing date and late applications will be ineligible for consideration. Therefore, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have allowed adequate transmission time for receipt of your application. Applicants must ensure they retain a copy of the email submitted to including the date and time in case of any queries. Canvassing is prohibited.

Important Note: Closing Date for Applications is 4.00pm on Friday 8th November 2024:

Email Instructions for Submitting your Application Form:

The following naming convention should be used as your **email subject heading**:

- Post Number and Post name: e.g. 000437 Scientific Officer II (Level 4) Freshwater Ecologist.

Your application form should be **attached** to your email using the following naming convention:

- Post number and applicant name: e.g. 000437 Mary Smith
- A typed signature may be used.

Important Note: Application forms must be completed and sent to recruitment@epa.ie.

Electronic applications will be accepted in Microsoft Word or a readable PDF file format. A readable PDF file format is when a Microsoft Word document is converted to a PDF document, using the 'Saved as' function in Word and selecting the file type as '.pdf'. The PDF text should appear on the screen in the correct orientation.

Candidates with Disabilities

Candidates who would like to avail of reasonable accommodations are asked to submit a psychologists/medical report. The purpose of the report is to provide the EPA with information to act as a basis for determining reasonable accommodations where appropriate.

These reports must be forwarded by email to recruitment@epa.ie marked for the attention of the Disability Officer, Human Resources before the closing date for applications for this competition.

Selection Information

The EPA will use the Information in application form to shortlist candidates and scoring will be based on the information contained in the application form for the role of **Scientific Officer II (Level 4) Freshwater Ecologist**. Applicants must demonstrate, by reference to specific achievements in their career to date, that they possess the qualities, skills and knowledge required for the role.

The EPA will convene an expert board to carry out the competitive stages of the selection process to the highest standard of best practice. Interviews are likely to be held either virtually or in person in November.

For more information in relation to the selection process please see **Appendix B**.

Important Notice

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

Confidentiality and Freedom of Information

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014, applications will be treated in strict confidence. All enquires, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that aspect of the process. Personal information supplied by applicants may be stored by electronic means e.g., in a database, for use solely for the purposes of processing your candidature and should you be successful, retained by the EPA's HR Team for employment purposes. Certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes. The provisions of the Data Protection Act, 1988 - 2018 will be fully complied with. Candidate records are retained electronically for a period of one year.

Salary and Benefits

Remuneration:

Salary Scale: *€57,112 to €71,939 (PPC Rate) per annum includes provision for two Long Service Increments after three and six years respectively on the maximum of the scale for permanent staff.

*(A modified scale may apply to existing public/civil servants)

Candidates should note that new appointments 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. Long service increments may be payable after three (LSI-1) and six (LSI-2) years of satisfactory service at the maximum of the scale.

Increments are normally awarded annually subject to satisfactory performance; however, payment of increments and or the rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy.

Important Note: Candidates should note that different salary terms and conditions may apply if, immediately prior to appointment, the appointee is/was a serving civil or public servant.

Annual Leave

29 days rising to 30 days after 5 years per annum.

Tenure

The term of appointment for the role will be permanent and pensionable. The appointee will be required to serve a twelve-month probationary period. If at any time during this probation it appears that the appointee would not be suitable for final appointment, the probation will be terminated.

Hours of Attendance

Hours of attendance at work will be arranged from time to time by the EPA and will amount to 35 hours net per week. Normal working hours will be 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. with a minimum of 30 minutes for lunch. The EPA operates of a flexible working hours scheme. This is included for grades from entry level up to EPA Level 3.

Blended Working Policy

Blended working is part of the EPA commitment to be an employer of choice and it supports the organisation's ability to retain and attract high quality talent.

The EPA has a blended working arrangement with a minimum of two and a half days in the office/on site. Further details about the EPA policy in relation to blended working are available on request.

Business Travel

When absent from place of work on duty appropriate travelling expenses and subsistence allowances will be paid subject to the normal Department of Expenditure and Reform regulations.

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 Public Service Sick Leave Scheme.

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. In general, an appointee who has never worked in the Public Service will be offered appointment based on membership of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme (“Single Scheme”). Full details of the scheme are at www.singlepensionscheme.gov.ie.

Where the appointee has worked in a pensionable (non-single scheme terms) public service job in the 26 weeks prior to appointment or is currently on a career break or special leave with/without pay different terms may apply. The pension entitlement of such appointees will be established in the context of their public service employment history.

Declaration

Applicants will be required to declare whether they have previously availed of a Public Service Scheme of incentivised early retirement. Applicants will also be required to declare any entitlements to a Public Service pension benefit (in payment or preserved) from any other Public Service employment and/or where they have received a payment-in-lieu in respect of service in any Public Service employment.




Pension Abatement

If an appointee has previously been employed in the Civil or Public service and that appointee is entitled to or in receipt of a pension from the Civil or Public Service or where a Civil/Public Service pension comes into payment during the appointee’s re-employment that pension will be subject to abatement in accordance with Section 52 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and other Provisions) Act 2012.




Please note: In applying for this position, you are acknowledging that you understand that the abatement provisions, where relevant, will apply. It is not envisaged that the employing Body will support an application for an abatement waiver in respect of appointments to this position.

Appendix A

Level 4 Competencies — Effective Performance Indicators

	Team Player & Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with the Team to achieve high performance and addresses any performance issues that may arise. Deals with tensions/conflict within the team in a constructive manner. Acknowledges the contribution of others and ensures that the recognition for achievements is shared. Encourages a supportive and collaborative approach in dealing with work. Respects diversity and encourages the contributions of all team members.
	Customer & Stakeholder Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides timely and individually tailored information to meet the needs of our customers and stakeholders. Proactively meets the needs of individual customers and stakeholders and looks for ways to add value beyond the immediate request/s. Continually strives to improve customer's and stakeholders' experience and considers alternate solutions including researching best practice. Deals with difficult customer's and stakeholders' issues and is committed to finding an appropriate solution. Demonstrates sensitivity and understands the customer's perspective. Represents the organisation at relevant customers and stakeholders events and forums.
	Interpersonal & Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates using appropriate styles, methods and timing, to maximise understanding and impact. Communicates clearly, confidently and effectively to colleagues and customers/stakeholders in a way that is readily understood. Acts as an effective link between staff and management. Influences and gains buy in by outlining the relevant information and evidence to achieve good outcomes. Produces clear and concise, high quality written reports, documents and correspondence. Collaborates and supports colleagues to achieve EPA goals.

Level 4 Competencies — Effective Performance Indicators

	Management & Delivery of Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes responsibility for delivering expected outcomes on time and to standard (own and team). Puts plans in place and re-assesses workloads and priorities if situations change or people are facing conflicting demands. Monitors and develops quality of service delivery within team. Applies relevant risk management processes. Adopts an innovative approach to delivering our work programme. Understands the impact of change on self and team and acts positively to implement change initiatives. Works collaboratively to achieve results.
	Analysis & Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathers, analyses and interprets information/ data to make decisions. Uses trends/patterns across different sources of information to make sound decisions. Can absorb and consider large amounts of information in order to make decisions. Finds a balance between being thorough and making a timely decision. Recognises scope of own authority for decision making and empowers team members to make decisions.
	Specialist Knowledge/ Expertise & Self Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops the expertise necessary to carry out the role to a high standard and shares this with others. Keeps up to date with current developments that may directly impact their work. Proactively manage own career and identify learning needs including engaging with and applying learning opportunities. Sets challenging performance goals for self and others to support development.

Appendix B

Further Information on the EPA's Selection Process:

Application:

Application Forms and Candidate Information Booklets are available from the careers section on the EPA website www.epa.ie. Application forms must be completed and sent to recruitment@epa.ie.

Only applications submitted by email on the official EPA application form for this competition will be accepted. Applications sent to other email addresses will not be considered. Please note that cover letters and CVs are not required and should not be submitted. Canvassing is prohibited.

Please Note:

Applications will not be accepted after the closing date and late applications will be ineligible for consideration. Therefore, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have allowed adequate transmission time for receipt of your application. Applicants must ensure they retain a copy of the email submitted including the date and time in case of any queries.

An acknowledgement email will generally be issued in respect of all applications received (simply acknowledging receipt and it will not confirm eligibility or otherwise). If an applicant does not receive an acknowledgement email within 2 working days of date of submission, the applicant should contact recruitment@epa.ie to ensure the application has been received.

The EPA accepts no responsibility for communication not accessed or received by an Applicant. Notification to attend interview will issue at least one week in advance. Candidates who do not attend for interview when and where required, will have no claim for further consideration and their candidature will be deemed to be withdrawn.

The EPA will not be responsible for any expenses, including travelling expenses, candidates may incur in connection with this competition.

Candidates must produce satisfactory documentary evidence of all qualifications claimed by them, on request. Failure to produce such documentary evidence when requested may lead to disqualification from the competition and/or termination of contract. Therefore, it is advised that you have this documentation available to you when making your application.

Should the person recommended for appointment decline, or having accepted it, relinquish it, the EPA may, at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process.

Shortlisting

Normally the number of applicants exceeds the numbers required to fill existing and future vacancies to that position. This means that while you may meet the eligibility requirements of the competition, if the numbers applying are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, the EPA may decide to invite a smaller number to interview. The EPA will conduct a shortlisting process to select a group that based upon examination of the application forms, appear to be the most suitable for the role. *This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable, or incapable of undertaking the job, rather that there are some candidates who better demonstrated their qualifications, relevant experience and or criteria.*

An expert board will examine the application forms against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. It is therefore in your own interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/ experience in your application and to fully demonstrate your ability to carry out the role outlined.

Interviews

A competency interview will be the final stage of the selection process. An Interview Board will be appointed by the EPA to conduct the interviews. The interview will be based upon the EPA core competencies and the technical requirements for the role. Candidates invited for interview should familiarise themselves with the EPA competency framework for the **Level 4**. A description of the competencies is set out in Appendix A.

Candidate review procedures in respect of the selection process

A request for an informal review/complaint may be made by a candidate against how the decision was made and/or how the selection process was carried out by a representative of the Agency. When requesting an informal review/complaint the candidate must clearly outline the reasons why they believe the selection process was unfair in their case. If, following the informal process, a candidate is subsequently not satisfied with the outcome, they can request a formal review process.

Informal Review

A request for an informal review/complaint must be in writing and must outline the facts that the candidate believe show that the selection process followed was incorrect. No additional information/evidence can be accepted. The request must be made within two days of notification of the decision, and will normally, take place between the candidate and a representative of the EPA who played a key role in the selection process or alternatively a member of Human Resources. The role of the reviewer is not to reassess or remark the

candidate, but rather to establish whether any errors occurred during any part of the selection process. The reviewer will consider whether:

1. The procedures set out in the selection process were followed correctly.
2. The original decision was made on the basis of correct and full information throughout the process.
3. The original decision was made appropriately.

If the candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal process the formal review process, set out below, may be invoked. The candidate must invoke the formal process within two working days of the notification of the outcome of the informal process.

Formal Review of the Selection Process

A request for a formal review must be submitted by email to recruitment@epa.ie. When making a

request for formal review, a candidate must support their request by outlining the facts they believe show that the action taken, or decision reached was wrong. A request for review may be refused if the candidate cannot support their request. A formal review will be carried out by two Human Resources staff.

The outcome will be notified to the candidate within ten working days.

Feedback

Feedback in relation to the selection process is available on request. If shortlisting is applied candidates who have not progressed to interview can request their score sheet. Feedback is available after the interview stage this feedback will be the competency score sheet and summary commentary (written). There are no specific timeframes set for the provision of feedback.

Canvassing

Canvassing is prohibited and will result in disqualification from the competition.

Appointment from Panel

Through this competition, the EPA will establish a panel of the successful candidates in order of merit. The panel will expire after a set period from its establishment (usually twelve months), or when it has been exhausted, whichever is sooner. Qualification and placement on a panel is not a guarantee of appointment to a position. Candidates not appointed at the expiry of the panel will have no claim to a position thereafter because of having been on the panel.

References

Prior to confirming an appointment, the EPA will make all such enquires deemed necessary, to determine the suitability of the candidate. The EPA will only contact the referees provided in your application should you come under consideration after the interview stage. Please note, should you be successful at final interview, we will require a reference from your current

employer prior to confirming appointment. Successful candidates will be required to complete a number of clearance processes such as health declaration or medical and any other relevant checks required for the particular role. Records are retained electronically for a period of one year.

Candidates Obligations

Candidates must:

- Have the knowledge and ability to discharge the duties of the post concerned;
- Be suitable on the grounds of character;
- Be suitable in all other relevant respects for appointment to the post concerned.
and if successful, they will not be appointed to the post unless they:
- Agree to undertake the duties attached to the post and accept the conditions under which the duties are, or may be required to be, performed;
- Are fully competent and available to undertake, and fully capable of undertaking, the duties attached to the position.

Candidates in the recruitment process must not:

- knowingly or recklessly provide false information;
- canvass any person with or without inducements;
- interfere with or compromise the process in any way;
- record the interview or any feedback conversations

Candidates who are found in breach of any of the above, will be disqualified from the campaign and any offer of employment may be revoked/terminated.

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

It is important to remember that this is a competitive process for a role where integrity is paramount. Sharing information on the selection process e.g. through social media or any other means, may result in you being disqualified from the competition.