



CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

SCIENTIFIC OFFICER

Scientific Officer (FTC-9 Months) Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division

AGRI-FOOD AND BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE (AFBI)
NORTHERN IRELAND

Completed application forms must be returned to AFBI HR no later than
12 noon (UK time) on Friday 10th November 2017

Contents	
About the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute	3
Agri-Environment Branch	5
Job Description	5
Terms And Conditions	5
Person Specification	6
Shortlisting Criterion	6
The Application and Assessment Process	7
Selection Process	9
Equal Opportunities	11
Annex: Key responsibilities of the Scientific Officer (FTC 9 Months)	13

About the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute

The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) is an internationally renowned multidisciplinary scientific organisation that delivers research and other scientific services to a wide range of local, national and international customers in the public and private sectors. In line with the Institute's mission of "scientific excellence in Northern Ireland.....serving the world", AFBI is engaged with the international research community in providing scientific solutions to the global problems of climate change, food security, and environmental protection. To fulfil these goals, AFBI staff undertake world class scientific research, surveillance, and analytical and diagnostic testing in the areas of animal health and welfare, sustainable agricultural systems, plant science, food innovation and safety, environmental protection, fisheries and aquatic ecosystems, and agricultural and rural economics.

AFBI was established in April 2006 as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) (now part of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, DAERA) in Northern Ireland and has a staff complement of circa 630 and revenue of £50 million. Core grant-in-aid from DAERA represents just over 70% of AFBI's income with the remainder derived from a wide range of research grants and commercial contracts.

AFBI is based at seven sites in Northern Ireland and in addition operates a marine research vessel as follows:

Newforge Lane, Belfast; corporate headquarters, food science, agricultural and food economics, freshwater and marine fisheries, environment, agricultural and rural economics, biometrics and information systems, and plant science (including plant pathology).

Hillsborough, Co. Down; sustainable livestock systems (dairy, heifer rearing, beef, sheep, pigs and poultry research), modern dairy and anaerobic digestion units, biomass production, long term environmental monitoring sites, environment and renewable energy centre, 315 ha farm platform.

Stormont, Belfast; animal health diagnostic laboratory and research, and food safety (chemical and microbiological), modern laboratory accommodation incorporating animal biocontainment category 3 laboratories.

Omagh, Co. Tyrone; animal health diagnostic laboratory.

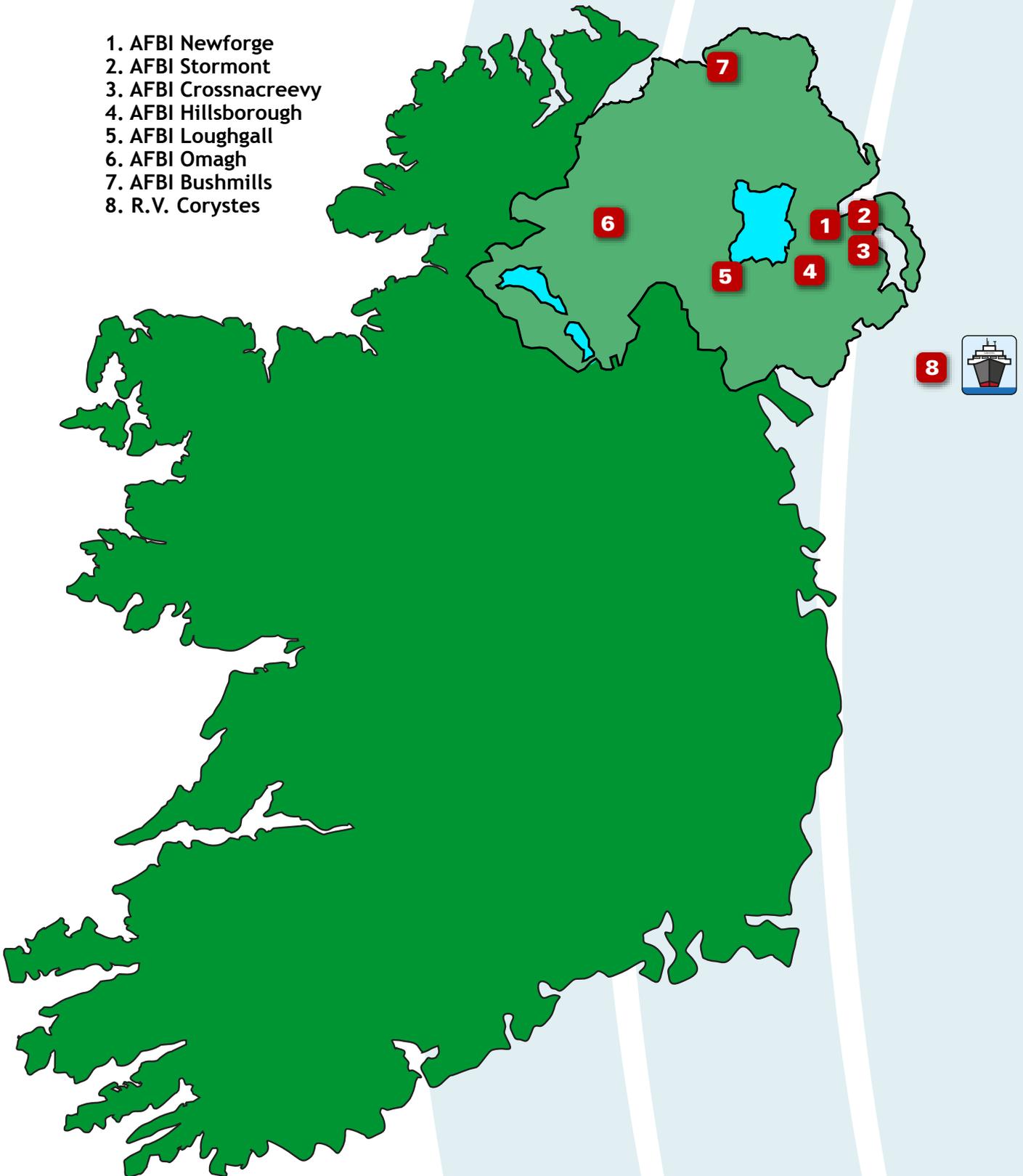
Loughgall, Co. Armagh; grass breeding, mushroom, apple, and agro-forestry research and biomass production on a total land area of 120 ha.

Crossnacreevy, Co. Down; plant variety trials, herbage distinctiveness and uniformity testing and official seed certification, on a 46 ha and platform.

Bushmills, Co. Antrim; salmon population research, fish river trap and rearing tanks.

Research Vessel Corystes; AFBI also operates a 53m marine research vessel which is used to carry out a comprehensive programme of fish stock assessment, ecosystem research and commercial contract work, including seabed mapping, in the Irish Sea.

1. AFBI Newforge
2. AFBI Stormont
3. AFBI Crossnacreevy
4. AFBI Hillsborough
5. AFBI Loughgall
6. AFBI Omagh
7. AFBI Bushmills
8. R.V. Corystes



Preparations are well underway for a proposed large-scale capital investment in AFBI's estate which, on completion, will result in one of the most modern built estates and ancillary research platforms of any agri-food research institute in Europe.

Agri-Environment Branch

The Sustainable Agri-Food Sciences Division (SAFSD) operates across seven Branches with this branch "Agri-Environment" being one of them. These Branches together provide a continuum of scientific expertise across the agri-food chain, from the growing environment, through to plant and animal production systems, aquatic ecosystems, food safety and quality and finally profitability of the agri-food sector.

Agri-Environment Branch sits at the interface between intensive livestock production and environmental management and regulation. Research dominates the work of the branch which is focused on developing land use management practices to protect the environment, underpinning the Agri-Food Strategy Board's Going for Growth Strategic Plan, and providing the scientific basis for government policy in relation to soil, air and water quality management. There are four integrated research programmes, namely Soil Biogeochemistry and Terrestrial Ecology, Water Catchment Sciences, Agri-Environmental Technologies and Soil Management and Crop Nutrition Management. These provide much of the scientific evidence needed for the development and maintenance of Northern Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme and Derogation, and help the farming industry comply with the Water Framework Directive and reduce its carbon footprint.

The Branch is based at AFBI Newforge Lane but also undertakes research on AFBI's other sites at Hillsborough and Loughgall and on a wide range of commercial farms throughout Northern Ireland. It has a complement of 41 staff which includes project leaders, research scientists and scientific technicians. There are also a number of postgraduate students annually recruited to the branch.

External non-DAERA work represents around 35% of total branch expenditure and broadly breaks down into 50% for EU funded science programmes and 50% for UK and Republic of Ireland funded work.

The Branch maintains close relationships with DAERA Policy makers and other customers and has regular engagement with stakeholders in Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, GB and elsewhere.

Job Description

There is currently one 9 month fixed term position to be filled at Scientific Officer grade. A reserve list will exist and will be held for a period of 12 months from the date of interview, to cover any similar vacancies which may arise.

Appointments will be made on the basis of a fixed term contract of 9 months. If there is a continuing business need, the fixed term contract may be extended by a further 3 months, subject to satisfactory performance and attendance. The successful candidate will be an employee of AFBI.

Terms and Conditions

Appointments will be made on the basis of a fixed term contract of 9 months. If there is a continuing business need, the fixed term contract may be extended by a further 3 months, subject to satisfactory performance and attendance. The successful candidate will be an employee of AFBI.

Salary

The salary for the post will be within the range £26,413 - £27,544, within which pay increases will be on an incremental basis provided staff reports are satisfactory.

Location

The successful candidate will normally be based at AFBI Hillsborough, Co. Down, BT26 6DR, however, they will, on occasion, also be expected to travel locally and work at other AFBI sites in Northern Ireland as required.

Travel

The post may entail some travel throughout the UK, Ireland and internationally and for this reason the successful applicant will require access to a form of transport that will permit them to meet the requirements of the post in full.

Annual Leave

In addition to the usual public and privilege holidays, there is an annual leave allowance of 19 days, rising to 25 if the fixed term contract is extended to 12 months.

Working Hours

The successful candidate will normally be required to work 5 days each week, totalling 37 hours. On occasions the duties may include some evening and weekend working. AFBI operates a flexi working system.

Probationary Period

The post holder will serve 3 month probation in the new post. This will commence from the date of appointment. At the end of the probation period a formal review will be conducted to determine if the posting will be extended.

Further Information

Further Information about the post may be obtained from Philip White on 028 9025 5060 or e-mail: philip.white@afbini.gov.uk

Person Specification

Applicants must demonstrate in their application form that they possess the following criteria, by the closing date:

1. Second class degree in a science related discipline
2. Three years' experience in running and reporting on research & development project work.
3. Three years' experience in working with biomass combustion facilities and emissions analysis.
4. Proven experience in experimental and research work with biomass combustion
5. Proven experience in Research and Development Project Management
6. Proven ability to record, analyse and Interpret data and produce written reports.

In providing evidence for it will be essential that candidates draw upon specific examples of work they have undertaken to illustrate the extent to which they possess the experience and skills required. It will not be sufficient simply to list the duties and responsibilities of posts held.

Relevant or equivalent qualifications:

Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated. If you believe your qualification is equivalent to the one required, the onus is on you to provide the panel with details of modules studied, information proving equivalency, etc. so that a well-informed decision can be made.

Shortlisting Criterion

In the event that further shortlisting is required the selection panel will reach a decision as to whether or not an applicant meets each criterion on a scored basis for criteria 2 - 6 with a minimum score set for each criterion. Only those applicants assessed as meeting all essential criteria will be eligible to proceed to the next stage of the selection process.

However, in the case of a high volume of applicants AFBI may decide to limit the number of applicants it invites for interview in a proportionate manner. In this instance all applicants who meet the essential requirements will be listed in merit order according to their total score and the highest scoring applicants will proceed to interview.

Please note:

- **You should ensure that you provide evidence of your experience in your application form, giving length of experience, examples and dates as required.**
- **It is not sufficient to simply list your duties and responsibilities.**
- **The panel will not make assumptions from the title of the applicant's post or the nature of the organisation as to the skills and experience gained.**
- **If you do not provide sufficient detail, including the appropriate dates needed to meet the eligibility criteria, the selection panel will reject your application.**
- **ONLY the details provided by you in your application form (the employment history and eligibility criteria) will be provided to the selection panel for the purpose of determining your eligibility for the post.**
- **Further information on the Core Competences for this grade can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk**

What is the NICS competency framework?

The competency framework sets out how all NICS employees should work. It puts the Civil Service values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality at the heart of everything they do, and it aligns to the three high-level leadership behaviours that every civil servant needs to model as appropriate to their role and level of responsibility: Set Direction; Engage People and Deliver Results. Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance. The framework outlines ten competencies, which are grouped into three clusters. The competencies are intended to be discrete and cumulative, with each level building on the levels below i.e. a person demonstrating a competency at level 2 should be demonstrating levels 1 and 2 as a matter of course.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service competency framework can be accessed through www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk.

It is important that all candidates familiarise themselves with the competency framework as this forms the basis of the assessment / interview criteria as outlined below.

You should refer to the behaviours listed under level 5 of the relevant competence areas.

<https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/resources/documents/n/i/c/nics-cf.pdf>

The Application and Assessment Process

The Application Process

Application is by completion of the application form and equal opportunities monitoring form which can be downloaded at: www.afbini.gov.uk/index/careers

The email address for applications is: recruitment@afbini.gov.uk

The closing date for applications is 12pm, noon, on Friday 10 November, 2017.

The application form is based on the criteria in the Person Specification set out above.

Please note that the equal opportunities monitoring form is regarded as part of your application and failure to complete and return it will result in disqualification.

Candidate documentation and application materials may be available in alternative formats. For more information contact AFBI HR at 028 9025 5060, or email: recruitment@afbini.gov.uk

All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

AFBI is an equal opportunities employer.

The Assessment Process

In the first instance, all applications will be considered by the Selection Panel. The Selection Panel will consider the evidence provided in the application forms against the criteria set out in the Person Specification.

Interview Criteria

In addition to satisfying the above eligibility (and if appropriate shortlisting) criteria, applicants will also be expected to display the following qualities and skills at interview:

1. Professional Knowledge and Skills

- Develops and updates professional/specialist/technical knowledge and skills to meet objectives and improve performance
- Demonstrates an in-depth knowledge and understanding of current developments in the renewables and bioenergy markets in UK and Ireland.
- Applies knowledge and skills in the management and progress of the project work

Marks available: 50 **Minimum standard: 30**

2. Changing and Improving

- Understands and applies technology to achieve efficient and effective business and personal results
- Considers and suggests ideas for improvements, sharing this feedback with others in a constructive manner.

Marks Available: 10

3. Making Effective Decisions

- Monitors the progress of the project and the resulting data and uses it to support decision making and conducts regular contacts with colleagues and commercial collaborators

Marks Available: 10

4. Leading and Communicating

- Displays enthusiasm around goals and activities – adopting a positive approach when interacting with others.
- Communicates with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm, both orally and in writing

Marks Available: 10

5. Collaborating and Partnering

- Proactively seeks information, resources and support from others outside own immediate team in order to help achieve results.
- Readily identifies opportunities to share knowledge, information and learning and makes progress by working with colleagues

Marks Available: 20 **Minimum standard: 12**

6. Managing a Quality Service

- Works with others to set priorities, create clear plans and manage all work to meet the needs of the customers and the activity objective.
- Ensure that levels of service are maintained – flag up risks or concerns in order to meet customer/project requirements.

Marks Available: 20 **Minimum standard: 12**

Total marks available: 120

Overall minimum standard: 72

Further information on the competency framework can be obtained on the NICS website page:

<https://irecruit-ext.hrconnect.nigov.net/resources/documents/n/i/c/nics-cf.pdf>

Interview dates

It is intended that interviews for this post will take place at AFBI Newforge, Belfast late November/Early December 2017

Employment Requirements

AFBI HR will ensure that you are legally entitled to work in the United Kingdom. Entry to the United Kingdom is controlled under the Immigration Act 1971. Everyone who does not have the right of abode is subject to immigration control. You should check whether there are any restrictions on your stay or your freedom to take or change employment before you apply for a post. If you are invited to interview we will ask you to provide documentation confirming that you are entitled to work in the UK, under the terms of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.

Advice on entitlement to work may be obtained from the Home Office website,

www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Nationality Requirements

There are no nationality requirements for AFBI posts.

Vetting Procedures

For this post the level of vetting is a Baseline Standard. For this check you will be required to provide the following:

- Your passport OR
- A document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) AND your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version).
- Other acceptable documents are listed on www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
- A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form etc.

We will organise a Criminal Record Check on all applicants.

You should not put off applying for a post because you have a conviction. We deal with all criminal record information in a confidential manner, and information relating to convictions is destroyed after a decision is made.

Criminal Record information is subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978.

Order of Merit

The selection panel will assess candidates against the interview criteria. Those candidates who meet the required standard(s) and pass mark will be deemed suitable for appointment. The selection panel will then list those suitable for appointment in order of merit with the highest scoring applicant ranked first. The order of merit is valid for one year.

Selection Process

Making your application

The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the eligibility/shortlisting criteria.

Guidance for Applicants

- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.

- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either typescript font size 12, or legible, block capitals using black ink.
- Applicants must not reformat application forms.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- AFBI HR will not examine applications until after the closing deadline.
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your branch or your job.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write "I" statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the panel will be interested in.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria. This is very important as the examples which you provide may be explored at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your unique role the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.
- Where qualifications form part of the eligibility/shortlisting criteria, candidates will be required to provide documentary evidence, if invited to interview.

Application Form Submission

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before completing an application.
- All parts of the application form must be completed by the applicant before this application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date. Late applications or applications received by fax or by email will not be accepted. Applicants using the courier service should note that this does not guarantee next day delivery.
- Only the eligibility section will be made available to the panel.
- Please do not attempt to reformat application forms as this will result in disqualification.

Interview Guidance

If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind that it does not require you to:

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish;
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience; or
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the competence the question is designed to test.

A competence-based interview does however require you to:

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfill the competences required for effective performance in the role; and
- Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the required competence areas.

In preparation for the interview you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:

- Situation – briefly outline the situation;
- Task – what was your objective, what were you trying to achieve;
- Action – what did you actually do, what was your unique contribution;
- Result – what happened, what was the outcome, what did you learn.

The panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the competences. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail a range of examples which best illustrate your skills and abilities in each competence area. You may draw examples from any area of your work / life experiences.

Disability Requirements

Any candidate who, because of a disability, cannot complete the application form in its current format should contact Philip White, AFBI HR on +44(0)28 9025 5060, or email philip.white@afbini.gov.uk

Equal Opportunities**Policy Statement**

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Equal Opportunities Policy statement to which AFBI adheres is set out below. "The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is committed to providing equality of opportunity. It is our policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and advancement in the NICS on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work. Everyone has a right to equality of opportunity and to a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere in which all workers are encouraged to apply their diverse talents and in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated. This right is protected in many instances by legislation.

In order to provide a high quality service to the people of Northern Ireland the NICS needs to recruit, retain and promote the best available people. Our equal opportunities policy is central to this strategy. We aim to foster a culture which encourages every member of staff to develop his or her full potential and which rewards achievement. Creating a working environment where individual differences are valued and respected enables all staff to give of their best and helps us to respond more effectively to the needs of the people we serve.

The NICS seeks to maintain the confidence of the whole community. It will continue to promote equality of opportunity and fair participation within the framework of the law and will strive to achieve a workforce that is broadly representative of the society which it serves.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of and to apply this policy. Both Management and Trade Union Side are fully committed to the policy and will endeavour to ensure its full implementation."

Completed Application Forms should be sent to:

Philip White, AFBI HR, Workforce Planning Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9 5PX

or recruitment@afbini.gov.uk

Your application must be received no later than:

12 Noon (UK time) on Friday 10th November 2017.

Applications received after the due date will be excluded from the competition.

Annex: Key Responsibilities of the Scientific Officer

The post holder will join a team working on land based technologies for improving agricultural sustainability linked with bioenergy and environmental protection. The main duties of the post will be to carry out project work on assessing the potential of current underutilised biomass materials for biomass fuel supply chain; energy crops, agri residues, scrub, wastes, etc. The work includes: baseline assessment for feedstock availability and a review of complementary supplies, raw material quality and analysis, new fuel combustion trials and project writing amongst other duties in direct relation to helping develop the land based bioenergy sector and operational functionality of the Environment & Renewable Energy Centre.

The role will also include elements of project management within AFBI and with external industrial partners, collating time sheets and preparation of quarterly reports as well as maintaining relevant aspects of ISO accreditation.

The main duties of the post will be:

To conduct all activities within the research project

- Running of a Low Temperature Hot Water Biomass Boiler and analysis of energy output, efficiencies.
- Running of fuel combustion trials, combustion emissions analytical equipment, measurement and data interpretation. (Experience with Dekati Impactors and Horiba flue gas analysers would also be of preference.)
- Biomass and combustion ash Analysis (energy and chemical makeup)
- Collate and compile experimental data from all fuels sources

To establish and maintain networking relationships

- Establish active and productive linkages with other scientists within AFBI to optimise the outputs of the project.
- To liaise with collaborative commercial companies and further their research needs within the project scope

To undertake continuous professional development

- Demonstrate willingness to continuously develop and maintain an up-to-date knowledge applicable to sustainable energy development.
- To maintain an up-to-date knowledge of the scientific objectives of the Branch and its research programme and demonstrate willingness for continuous personal development in all areas relevant to the post.

To fulfil other duties

- The post holder will be required to support the overall operation of Branch administration.
- The work will involve both office and Energy Centre Lab work. Risks align with standard risk of these activities.

The post holder will be required to fulfil any other duties and responsibilities as determined by management that fall within the remit of the post and within the branch. The job description is not intended to be rigid and inflexible. Rather, it should be regarded as working guidelines within which the post holder will work.