

**Recruitment of  
Service Group Director for  
Marine Environment &  
Food Safety Services**

**Candidate Information  
Booklet**





## CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

The Marine Institute is a non-commercial semi-state body, which was formally established by statute (Marine Institute Act, 1991) in October 1992.

Under the Act, the Marine Institute has the statutory responsibility:

***“To undertake, to co-ordinate, to promote and to assist in marine research and development and to provide such services related to marine research and development, that in the opinion of the Institute will promote economic development and create employment and protect the marine environment”.***

The Marine Institute is Ireland’s scientific agency responsible for supporting the sustainable development of the state’s maritime area and resources. We do this through conducting applied research and providing scientific knowledge, advice and services to Government, industry and other stakeholders. This policy advice capacity, our broad mandate, and the research programmes we fund and undertake, uniquely position the Institute at the science - policy interface, and as an exemplar in the provision of integrated ocean knowledge.

The Marine Institute provides a broad range of essential scientific support to our parent Department (of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)). Demand is also increasing from across Government for the data and evidence that are essential to inform national policy and to underpin the State’s governance of our maritime area. Through laboratory, field and seagoing work, the Institute carries out statutory environmental, fisheries and aquaculture surveys, seafood testing and other monitoring programmes assigned by Government. The Institute plays an important role in supporting the state’s response to the impacts of our changing seas and oceans, through working with the national and international scientific community to observe, study and understand our changing oceans. This essential scientific advice supports industry, protects consumers and underpins legislative and other obligations aimed at the protection and management of the marine environment.

The Marine Institute’s 5 Year Strategic Plan (2023 to 2027, available [here](#)) articulates our ambition and purpose:

**Our vision:** *The Marine Institute is a national and international leader in ocean knowledge that benefits people, policy and planet.*

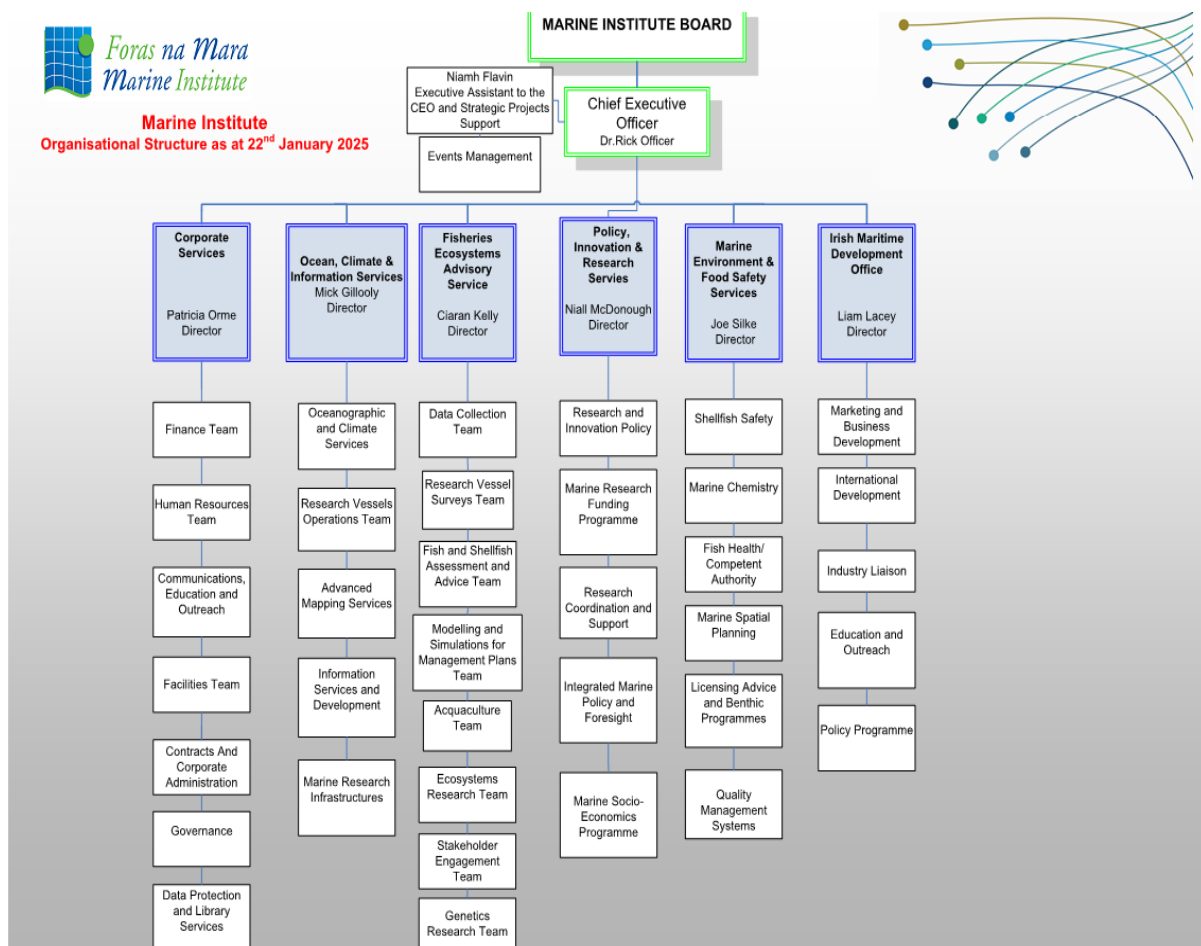
**Our Mission:** *The Marine Institute provides scientific, research and development services to Government, agencies, industry and society that support the sustainable use of our maritime area, the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems, and promote a shared understanding of the ocean.*



There are currently six broad service areas within the Marine Institute:

1. Ocean, Climate and Information Services;
2. Marine Environment & Fish Health Services;
3. Fisheries Ecosystems Advisory Services;
4. Irish Maritime Development Office;
5. Policy, Information and Research Services; and,
6. Corporate Services.

## CURRENT ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:



The Institute is currently reviewing the evolving environment in which it operates, and its organisational structure. Changes to the Marine Institute's organisational structure are anticipated to ensure the resilience of the organisation and its continued effectiveness in responding to immediate and emerging demands.



<b>Role</b>	<b>Service Group Director for Marine Environment &amp; Food Safety Services</b>
<b>Grade &amp; Contract</b>	<b>Director / Principal Officer, Contract of Indefinite Duration</b>
<b>Service Group</b>	<b>Marine Environment &amp; Food Safety Services (MEFSS)</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Marine Institute, Oranmore, Co. Galway, Ireland</b>
<b>Reports to</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>
<b>Closing date for applications</b>	<b>12 noon, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>

## **SUMMARY OF THE ROLE: Service Group Director for Marine Environment & Food Safety Services**

The successful candidate will provide strategic leadership to the Marine Environment & Food Safety Services (MEFSS) Group, currently overseeing a team of managers across six interconnected sections:

1. Fish Health Unit;
2. Marine Environmental Chemistry;
3. Shellfish Safety;
4. Quality Control;
5. Benthos Science and Licencing Advisory Services; and,
6. Marine Spatial Planning.

These units work collaboratively to fulfil our statutory and strategic responsibilities, supported by strong leadership.

As Director, you will play a pivotal role in ensuring effective coordination across these sections, integrating services, and fostering the ongoing development of scientific and advisory expertise. Key responsibilities include: Strategic Implementation Planning for the Service Group; Oversight of annual work planning; Workforce development; Laboratory innovation; Strategic stakeholder engagement; and, Ensuring alignment with national and international policy frameworks - all in accordance with the Institute's corporate strategy.

You will promote regular communication of programme outputs from the MEFSS team through multiple channels and keep the CEO fully informed on critical issues affecting the delivery of the Marine Institute's strategy and the policy areas relevant to our key clients.



As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Director will contribute to the broader strategic direction of the Institute, demonstrating strong collaboration and teamwork.

The Marine Institute is currently undertaking a review of its organisational structure and the achievement of its corporate strategy. Upon completion, changes to roles and responsibilities are anticipated, as well as enhancements in Institutional Policies and Processes. As a member of the Marine Institute's Senior Leadership Team the MEFSS Director will share a leading responsibility for the design and implementation of these changes.

### **Principal Tasks:**

#### **Senior Management Role**

- Produce Strategic Implementation Plans for the Marine Environment & Food Safety Service Group, and oversee annual work planning of MEFSS Sections, including the management of the annual budgeting process for the Group.
- Work with other Directors in developing and overseeing the implementation of the Institute's strategic direction and focus, particularly as it relates to functional roles of MEFSS in the implementation of operational and strategic plans.
- Lead and Implement change management initiatives as required, critically reviewing projects and activities to ensure they meet organisational requirements.
- Develop and implement initiatives to improve overall management and operational efficiency and effectiveness.
- Build professional relationships and networks of trust and credibility with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.
- Bring innovative thinking and creativity to resolve often complex issues, through sound decision making and judgement.
- Communicate with impact and influence (written, oral, and in presentations) whilst interacting internally and advocating for the MI externally with stakeholders, both nationally and internationally.

#### **Directing MEFS for Success**

- Lead the marine environment, fish and shellfish safety, fish health services, chemistry, licensing and policy advice and quality programmes; effectively delegating to develop capacity and capability within the teams. Support the provision of reports and advice to the relevant Government Departments.
- Manage, motivate and provide leadership for members of the MEFSS team, further developing a culture of learning and development and open, two-way communications.



- Provide senior leadership to the Institute's work programmes in respect of the implementation of European environmental legislation (e.g. MSFD and WFD), working with Government Departments and agencies on a collaborative basis.
- Work closely with DAFM, the Departments of Environment, Climate & Communications (DECC) and Housing, Local Government & Heritage (DHLGH), and other Government Departments in the effective provision of scientific services and policy advice.
- Proactively engage with colleagues externally to build and manage relationships with senior policy makers and develop close working relationships and strong professional networks with key external partners, such as the: Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI); Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA); Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM); National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS); and, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Make timely decisions and identify coherent solutions to complex issues.

#### **Resource Management & Good Governance**

- Make optimum use of resources, instilling the importance of good governance practices, efficiencies and value for money while ensuring effective budgeting and management of the MEFS financial resources, including proactive planning and allocation of service group resources in line with changing business priorities.
- Work with the MEFSS team and with other service areas to develop appropriate and value-adding non-Exchequer sources of income for relevant research programmes.
- Participate in regular Human Resources reviews, promoting training and staff development in a culture of learning and development, to ensure that MEFSS is a rewarding place in which to work.
- Support the development of innovative data management to maximise the value of marine data generated by MEFSS, in collaboration with other Marine Institute teams.

#### **Quality and Risk Management**

- With the CEO, SLT and Risk Officers contribute to effective Risk Management, Business Continuity Planning, and Safe Working Practice (to include ensuring and promoting Safe Working practices and culture within MEFSS).
- Participating in Crisis Response activities and implementing risk mitigation programmes.
- Proactively manage and mitigate risks for the Service Group and wider organisation as a Risk Owner and Director in line with the Risk Management Policy.
- Support and oversee the MEFSS Quality Management Programme.



### **Policy, Advice, Communications and Stakeholder Engagement**

- Build and maintain effective relationships with industry sectors which are impacted by Marine Institute programmes, including aquaculture.
- Provide leadership and coordination in the development of new programmes as may be required under EU initiatives.
- Provide support to emerging Government Policy areas as outlined in the Programme for Government such as Marine Spatial Planning, Ocean Carbon, and Climate Mitigation.
- Ensure the ongoing and effective communication of MEFSS outputs including reports, workshops, website and the publication of results in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- Ensure consistent and regular internal communications within the MEFSS team, promoting active listening, shared understanding, and employee engagement.
- Participate on behalf of the Marine Institute at fora such as the Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee, Water Framework Directive groups, and at International Conferences or meetings with the European Commission.

### **Organisation & Programme Development**

- Develop and maintain any skills and expertise across areas relevant to this role and recognised internally and externally.
- Ensure the effective use of Information and Communications Technologies within the service group, in particular digitising processes and the use of technology to bring about efficiencies and new ways of programme delivery.
- Promote a culture of collegiality and collective achievement within MEFSS and across the Marine Institute, consistent with the Institute's values and its commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Any other duties relevant to the post and grade, as assigned by the Marine Institute CEO.

## **EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

### **Essential criteria:**

- A Degree and or equivalent professional qualification in a relevant discipline complemented by at least seven years post qualification relevant work experience.
- Relevant experience of managing teams and individuals in a scientific or technical environment.



- A clear understanding of the role and vision of the Marine Institute in developing Ireland's marine and maritime sectors, and in protecting the marine environment.
- Ability to translate strategic goals into meaningful objectives and deliver on the Marine Institute Strategic Plan.
- Strong demonstrated leadership qualities and the abilities to work in a matrix / cross service and team environment for collective success, engage with, manage, develop and motivate people at a range of levels and experiences.
- Familiarity with national and EU legislation in the areas of the Marine Environment, Food Safety and Fish Health.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate professionally and credibly, and manage critical relationships with clients including Government Departments and Agencies, and a diversity of stakeholders internal and external to the Institute.
- Ability to quickly assimilate information, objectively analyse and evaluate complex information, and to identify key issues.
- Experience in delivering outcomes under pressure by effectively planning projects, optimising use of available resources, and setting achievable timeframes.
- Demonstrated experience of complex budgeting, financial management procurement / tendering.
- Ability to take personal responsibility, and to delegate responsibility as appropriate, to ensure accountability and performance within the MEFS Management team and wider Service Group.
- Ability to identify and resolve conflict situations constructively in early course, utilising effective negotiation and conflict resolution skills.
- Competent in the use of MS Office Software.
- Ability to travel within Ireland and overseas as required for the role.

**Desirable criteria:**

- A relevant post graduate degree or professional qualification.
- Familiarity with the status and potential of the Irish marine sector, including aquaculture and emerging areas (biotechnology, energy).
- Experience of chairing meetings and achieving consensus with diverse groups.
- Experience of securing funding and in the management of research projects.
- Experience of contract management.
- Experience of Quality Management systems and their accreditation.
- Full driving license.



## **SPECIAL PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES FOR THE ROLE:**

- Delegates wisely, shows leadership while challenging and supporting others to perform to their potential.
- Can proactively build and develop relationships with colleagues, customers and key contacts, building strong professional networks.
- Ability to facilitate open exchange of ideas and to foster an atmosphere of open communications.
- Demonstrated ability to use sound judgement in coming to conclusions, and to present persuasive arguments when communicating with others.
- Develops new insights into situations and provides innovative or coherent solutions to complex issues or to implement organisational improvements.
- Proven ability to perform effectively under pressure, maintaining focus and composure even in adverse or challenging situations.
- Demonstrates energy, dynamism, and a positive mental attitude.
- Ability to make sound and well-informed decisions, understanding their impact and implications. Equally able to make decisions with limited information in times of pressure.
- Experience in supervising and collaborating with members of a diverse team.
- Ability to manage time effectively and work to deadlines delivering on time and within budget, even when faced with pressure.
- Excellent interpersonal skills with a diplomatic manner and an ability to resolve issues before conflict occurs.
- Demonstrated alignment with the core values of the Marine Institute and to its culture embracing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE GROUP:**

Marine Environment & Food Safety Services (MEFSS) focuses on ensuring consumer protection through seafood safety monitoring/testing services; providing monitoring services in support of protection of marine environmental legislation/obligations; and providing advisory services in support of sustainable development and management of the marine environment. This work is delivered via three core functions: Monitoring; Advice and Technical Support; and, Research.



### **Monitoring**

MEFSS conducts statutory monitoring programmes in support of the aquaculture industry, overall seafood safety and the protection of the marine environment. This includes the National Biotoxin Monitoring Programme; the seafood component of the National Residues Control Programme; implementation of inspections and monitoring of movements of fish and shellfish stocks as required under the EU Fish Health Directive; and chemical monitoring required under the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Shellfish Waters Directive (SWD), and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). In support of these programmes, the Institute is the National Reference Laboratory for diseases in shellfish, finfish, and crustaceans; biotoxins; microbiological contaminants in shellfish; and certain chemical substances in aquaculture and the marine environment. Monitoring under the WFD and SWD specifically focuses on detecting and quantifying physico-chemical parameters, priority substances, phytoplankton, and benthic fauna in transitional and coastal waters. Monitoring to ensure compliance with international environmental obligations—such as reporting to OSPAR, and International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES)—is also a key element of MEFSS work.

A robust, accredited (INAB – ISO17025) quality system underpins the delivery of many of these food safety and environmental programmes.

### **Advice – Technical & Scientific**

MEFSS staff provide advice on a range of topics relating to seafood safety, aquaculture, marine environment and related topics, e.g.:

- Advice to DAFM on applications for Aquaculture Licences;
- Appropriate Assessments of aquaculture fisheries activities in NATURA 2000 sites;
- Implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD);
- Shellfish safety;
- Issues related to the disposal of dredge spoil at sea; by way of participation on the EPA Dumping at Sea Advisory Committee;
- Advice to Government Departments on applications for Foreshore Leases/Licences; and,
- Marine Spatial Planning technical and scientific advisory services.

In addition, MEFSS contribute to the work of the OSPAR Convention (Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic) and ICES.

### **Research**

Research programmes, in support of our core work (above) and national and international legal/regulatory obligations are a core component of the work of the MEFSS. The current research focus includes: Fish health; Shellfish biotoxins; Microbiological safety in shellfish; Ocean acidification; Contaminants in seafood; and, Oversight and coordination of external



research conducted through the use of the MI's marine biorepository and associated laboratories in MEFS.

In 2008, the Marine Institute was designated as the Competent Authority under the European Communities (Health of Aquaculture Animals & Products) Regulations, which gave effect to EU Directive 2006/88/EC. This regulation sets out the Community framework for fish and shellfish health in aquaculture and inland fisheries. The Fish Health Competent Authority office was awarded ISO 9001 certification in 2014.

A collaborative approach is a key feature of all the work outlined above, which is carried out with/on behalf of the: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM); Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC); Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHLGH); Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI); Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA); Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS); several other Government Departments and Agencies; and international bodies (e.g.: OSPAR, ICES).

## WHAT WE OFFER

We value our staff, and their contribution to the work of the Marine Institute. The Marine Institute provides benefits to promote a healthy work-life balance and to help staff to develop professionally. These benefits include personal and career development, work/life balance policies, investing in lifelong learning, an employee assistance programme, "Bike to Work" Scheme, staff medicals and annual flu vaccination.

The Marine Institute operates a Blended Working (Remote Working) policy is instrumental in our efforts to increase flexibility, enhance health, wellbeing, and work-life balance, and contribute positively to climate action. Our Blended Working arrangement aim to develop a more dynamic, agile and responsive Public Service, while sustaining strong standards of performance and high levels of productivity.

## CONTACTS:

**Internal:** Chief Executive Officer, other Service Group Directors, Managers and Teams within MEFS, Section Managers and Staff of the Institute.

**External:** External contacts including: DAFM; DECC; DHLGH; FSAI; SFPA; EPA; NPWS; Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI); Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM); and Higher Education Institutions. International contacts include the European Commission, World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), and the Competent Authorities in other EU Member States and in certain Third Countries



## TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT:

**SALARY:** Remuneration is in accordance with the Public Sector, Department of Finance approved contributory (PPC) Salary Scale for Director (Principal Officer), which runs from €104,971 - €129,841 on a full-time basis per annum pro-rated with time worked. You will commence on the first point of the scale €104,971 and become a member of the Single Public Service Pension Scheme unless you are currently or have worked in the Public Sector in the past 6 months and are a member of another Public Sector Scheme.

**ANNUAL LEAVE:** Annual leave entitlement for a Director (Principal Officer Grade) is 32 working days per annum pro-rated to reflect time worked. Annual leave entitlements are exclusive of Public Holidays. All leave must be approved in advance in line with Marine Institute leave policies and using time and leave management system in place, by your manager or their authorised representative.

**TERM OF CONTRACT:** This role is offered on a Contract of Indefinite Duration subject to performance and business needs. The contract terms include the requirement to successfully complete a 12-month probationary period based on consistent satisfactory performance.

## WHERE TO APPLY:

This role will be advertised on our website at <https://www.marine.ie/site-area/working-us/vacancies> and on Public Jobs at <https://publicjobs.ie/en/>.

Internal applicants can access the job description and apply via our intranet vacancies page.

For any questions regarding the role, please email [recruitment@marine.ie](mailto:recruitment@marine.ie).

## HOW TO APPLY:

Applications must include a comprehensive *Curriculum Vitae* outlining your career history and achievements, along with a Supporting Letter that explains your motivation for applying, and relates your experience and skills to the role description, key competencies, and person specification.

Applications should be emailed to the Marine Institute's Head of Human Resources [Catherine.johnston@marine.ie](mailto:Catherine.johnston@marine.ie), or posted to Human Resources at the Marine Institute, Rinville, Oranmore, Galway.

All correspondence for this post should quote reference **MEFS/DIRECTOR/JUN25**.



## TIMETABLE FOR APPLICATION PROCESS:

Stage in Recruitment Process:	Estimated Timeline:
Closing Date for Receipt of Applications	Friday, 20 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
Convening of Shortlisting Panel to review applications	Week beginning 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2025
First Round Interviews	Week beginning 14 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
Second Round Interviews and Assessment	Week beginning 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2025
Offer Extended to Successful Candidate	Week beginning 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2025

## CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:

All applications for this post must be received by the Marine Institute by **12 noon, Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025**. Late applications will not be accepted.

**Use of Data** - all personal data and the information submitted for this application will be used solely for the purpose of this recruitment campaign, after which it will be deleted in line with our General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy and data retention schedule. All information will be treated with the strictest confidence and accessed only by those involved directly in the recruitment campaign.

## SELECTION PROCESS:

### SHORTLISTING

Typically, the number of applications received for a position exceeds the number of available vacancies. While candidates may meet the eligibility criteria, it may not be practical to interview all applicants. Therefore, the Marine Institute may implement a shortlisting process to select a subset of candidates for interview.

An expert panel will review the applications against the selection criteria aligned with the requirements of the position. This process does not imply that candidates who are not shortlisted are unsuitable or incapable of performing the role. Rather, it reflects that some applicants appear, based on their submitted information, to be better qualified or possess more relevant experience.



For this reason, it is in your best interest to provide a thorough and accurate account of your qualifications and experience in your application.

#### **SELECTION METHODS**

The selection process may include shortlisting of candidates based on the information provided in their applications. Candidates who progress will be invited to interview.

Given the seniority of this position, the Marine Institute reserves the right to require candidates to attend a second interview.

Satisfactory references will be sought, but referees will not be contacted without the candidate's prior consent.

#### **EQUALITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

The Marine Institute is fully committed to fostering a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion. We actively champion an inclusive workplace and warmly welcome applications from all qualified individuals interested in this role.

#### **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you require any reasonable accommodations to support your participation in the recruitment process, please let us know. We are committed to ensuring an accessible and inclusive experience for all applicants.