



# PEACEPLUS

Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



European Union



UK Government



# Candidate Booklet

## Finance Officer Certifying Authority

3 Year Fixed Term Contract



Special EU Programmes Body  
Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE  
Special EU Schemes Board



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## FOREWORD

### Thank you for your interest in a role with the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

As an organisation, we pride ourselves on recruiting the best people and providing them with the tools and support they need to make a positive contribution to our work, while realising their full potential.

The Special EU Programmes Body is one of six cross-border bodies established under the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. The SEUPB has the statutory remit for managing EU funding programmes within Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

This is an exciting time in the organisation's history as we celebrate twenty-five years of advancing peace, prosperity, and growth. Our new funding programme PEACEPLUS will build upon this work, investing €1.14 billion in a range of sectors including health and social care, the environment, rural regeneration, smart towns and villages and youth services while continuing the fundamental work of embedding peace and reconciliation.

The work we do is challenging but also incredibly rewarding, our offices in Belfast, Omagh and Monaghan are a hub of energy and enthusiasm. Our staff value the knowledge that they are making a positive and lasting contribution to society and the world that they live in.

We welcome those who share our vision for a better, more peaceful and more prosperous society and our belief that our combined effort can make that vision a reality.

This booklet will provide you with further information about the key responsibilities of the role you are applying for and sets out the skills and competencies required. We look forward to receiving your application.

**Gina McIntyre**  
Chief Executive  
Special EU Programmes Body



## INTRODUCTION

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is one of six North South Bodies established in 1999 as a consequence of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement – an agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The SEUPB has the statutory remit for managing EU funding programmes within Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, helping to foster peace and prosperity across the region.

Over the last 25 years, the SEUPB has managed a number of European Union investment programmes, including the PEACE and INTERREG programmes.

A total of €3.39 billion has been invested through previous programmes, funding over 23,000 projects, and touching the lives of more than two million citizens.

The PEACEPLUS Programme will continue to provide this vital support to Northern Ireland and the border counties with an investment of €1.14 billion focusing on embedding peace and promoting prosperity across the region.

### **SEUPB Mission Statement:**

*“Underpinning Peace and Prosperity for People and Places.”*

### **SEUPB Vision Statement:**

*“Inspiring people. Improving places. Investing in partnerships. Creating sustainable progress through peace and prosperity.”*

### **Our Guiding Principles:**

In carrying out our work we will adhere to the following guiding principles:

- We will deliver our mission, striving for excellence at all times. We subscribe to the principle of accountability and transparency.
- We will act at all times in the interests of our stakeholders, beneficiaries and the public. Demonstrating the highest levels of integrity in ensuring the mission of the SEUPB is delivered.
- We will demonstrate equality and respect in all that we do and everyone with whom we work and meet.
- Working together, we will listen and adapt to the needs of both internal and external colleagues so that we are continually improving.

## SUMMARY OF JOB:

To perform key functions of the Accounting Function role within the SEUPB for the PEACEPLUS programme, as detailed in EU regulations. To manage the cashflow of the programme. To work with Government Departments in both NI and Ireland, setting annual programme budgets and providing financial information. To collate and analyse large volumes of financial information.

Key aspects of the role include:

- Performance of key duties of the Accounting Function role within the SEUPB for the PEACEPLUS programme, as detailed in applicable EU legislation.
- Budgeting and Cash-flow management.
- Financial Reporting & Analysis.
- Liaising with a wide range of individuals and organisations, both internal and external.
- Maintenance and use of applicable Financial Systems and Project Databases.
- Governance & Efficiency.

### STAFFING RESPONSIBILITIES:

Clerical Support Staff (where required).

### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

#### Accounting Function role

- Process payments to projects.
- Perform numerical checks on project expenditure claims to gain assurance over accuracy and completeness.
- Prepare submissions to the European Commission including Payment applications, Programme Accounts, Forecasting and Financial Data.
- Record, analyse and manipulate large amounts of financial data using Microsoft Excel.
- Record and report on irregularities.

#### Budgeting and Cash-flow management

- Collate and analyse project forecast information, including performance of variance analysis against actuals.
- Assist with preparation of budgetary information for both internal use and for government departments.
- Monitor actual spend against budgets and communicate any issues to relevant parties.



- Monitor cash balances to ensure adequate cash is held to meet payment obligations to projects.

### **Financial Reporting & Analysis**

- Prepare month end financial reports for review by management.
- Prepare programme balances for inclusion in the SEUPB annual accounts, including supporting working papers for audit.

### **Liaising with a wide range of individuals and organisations, both internal and external**

- Responding to queries from stakeholders, including government departments.
- Follow-up of recommendations made by audit bodies including the Audit Authority, internal and external auditors.

### **Maintenance of Financial Systems/ledgers**

- Complete monthly reconciliations of control accounts.
- Prepare weekly and monthly journals.
- Assist in the development of functional specifications for new systems for the PEACEPLUS Programme and subsequent testing of new systems and functionality.
- Create bespoke financial reports.

### **Governance and Efficiency**

- Ensure adherence to/compliance with best practice, Government accounting and EU Regulations.
- Identification and implementation of efficiency savings across the team and organization.
- Updating of team procedures and processes as required.

**The above is given as a broad range of duties and is not intended to be a complete description of all tasks.**





## PERSON SPECIFICATION

**JOB TITLE:** Finance Officer Certifying Authority

**DURATION:** 3 Year Fixed Term Contract

**HOURS:** 37 hours per week (excluding breaks)

**SALARY SCALE:** £32,880 - £34,011 per annum

**REPORTS TO:** Finance Manager

**LOCATION:**

The successful candidates will be based at the Clarence West Building, Clarence West Street, Belfast BT2 7GP.

**ESSENTIAL CRITERIA and QUALIFICATIONS:**

A minimum of 5 GCSEs Grades A-C (including English Language and Maths) or equivalent

or

A minimum of Leaving Certificate (Standard/Ordinary level) – 5 Grades A-C (including English Language and Maths) or equivalent.

**EXPERIENCE:**

- A minimum of 3 years' experience, gained within the past 10 years, in a financial environment within the public, private, voluntary or community sectors.
- Excellent technical skills with experience using financial accounting systems and extensive experience using excel spreadsheets.
- Experience collating and analysing large volumes of financial data.
- Cash-flow management/ budgeting experience.
- Experience preparing financial reports, including both quantitative and qualitative analysis.
- Processing payments and reconciling control accounts.



## **REQUIRED COMPETENCIES**

### **Seeing the Big Picture**

- Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with, and supports, organisational objectives and the wider public needs.

### **Making Effective Decisions**

- Effectiveness in this area is about being objective, using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to provide accurate, expert and professional advice. It means showing clarity of thought, setting priorities, analysing and using evidence to evaluate options before arriving at well-reasoned, justifiable decisions.

### **Collaborating and Partnering**

- Effectiveness in this area is about creating and maintaining positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the organisation. It requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders.

### **Delivering at Pace**

- Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. It is about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way.

## **DESIRABLE CRITERIA and QUALIFICATIONS**

These will be used for shortlisting purposes in the event of a large number of applicants.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

A recognised accountancy qualification with a professional body or working towards accountancy qualification or a third level qualification.

### **EXPERIENCE**

Experience working with EU Structural Funds and an understanding of their implementation.





## WHAT WE OFFER

### **Blended (Hybrid) Working**

SEUPB offers a blended working arrangement based on three days in the office and two days homeworking per week. This facility will be applicable to this role after two months, following full completion of onboarding, training, and familiarisation.

### **Financial**

To attract, motivate and retain talented people we believe an attractive, flexible and rewarding pay structure is essential. (We therefore offer our employees competitive salaries).

### **Pension**

The SEUPB operates a defined benefit occupational pension scheme (the North South Pension Scheme) worked out on a Career Average basis.

We have outlined some of the key features of the Scheme below.

Generous pension payable for life after you retire which increases in line with inflation\*

The pension amount is based on your average salary during your career and the number of years you spend in employment.

The best way to think about the value of the pension is to estimate how much you might have to save to get an equivalent pension privately via another pension scheme. For illustration purposes, as a % of your pay, the cost of an equivalent pension might be up to 40% of pay per year. This annual cost increases with age (i.e. the older you are the greater the % of pay it costs to pay for your pension). So, you'd have to put a significant proportion of your earned income aside to secure such a pension.

As it turns out, typically you are required to make a contribution of between 4.6% and 7.35% of pay per year, with the balance effectively funded by the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish government. There are other benefits payable too to provide protection to you and any beneficiaries in the event of illness or death.

\*Inflation is measured by an index known as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which measures changes in the price level of a weighted average market basket of consumer goods and services purchased by households.



### **Holidays NI**

We offer our staff an annual leave entitlement of 25 days rising to 30 days after 5 years' service. In addition to this we also offer 12 statutory holiday days.

### **Employment Policies**

The SEUPB recognises the importance of work life balance and offers a range of family friendly policies and practices for its employees.

### **Learning and Development**

All employees will have access to the SEUPB Employee Support & Development Programme. The SEUPB has a dedicated Learning and Development Strategy in which we provide our employees with the training they need to be as efficient and productive while also offering development opportunities to further develop their career in the SEUPB.

### **Cycle to Work Scheme**

You are encouraged to take advantage of our 'Cycle to Work' scheme, which gives you access to a bike and equipment valued to £1,000 through a VAT-free scheme, for use commuting to and from work.

### **Family Leave**

Maternity Leave – Up to 52 weeks of which 18 weeks is on full pay. We also offer Paternity Leave, Parental Leave/Shared Parental Leave and Adoption Leave.

### **Employee Assistance Programme**

All our employees have access to a fully independent 24-hour helpline to assist with any of life's issues or problems, along with access to an accredited counselling service. (All of which is free at the point of use and completely confidential).

### **Location**

The SEUPB Headquarters is located in Belfast with two Regional Offices in Monaghan and Omagh.



## THE SELECTION PROCESS

### Eligibility Sift

Shortlisting of candidates on the basis of the information contained in their application.

### COMPETENCY APPLICATION FORM GUIDANCE

#### Personal Details

Enter your title, name, preferred name to be addressed by and address on the front page of the application form.

We may contact you by email or by telephone, therefore include an up-to-date telephone number and email address that we can contact you on. We issue notifications by email, so check your email regularly if you have applied for a job with us.

#### Education and Qualifications

Use this section to show us that you have the necessary qualifications and any professional memberships to do the job. Ensure you read the Person Specification when completing this section.

List all the academic institutions you've attended in this section. Include the name of the institution, the courses you took and any qualifications you received.

If you are applying for a job on the basis of a qualification which is not specifically detailed in the person specification, but which you consider to be a relevant equivalent qualification, you must highlight the areas or modules which you think are relevant. This will enable the panel to decide if it is an equivalent qualification. If you don't provide details on the equivalency of your qualification, the panel may not consider your application any further.

Some jobs will require you to have professional qualifications, or to be a member of a professional body. This will be detailed in the employee specification.

If you are currently studying for or waiting for exam results, we cannot consider these unless otherwise stated in the person specification.

#### Employment History

Complete the current employment box if you are currently working. This does not only apply to paid work, so include any voluntary work or work experience placements that you have done or are doing at the moment.

Include the companies that are most relevant to the position you are currently applying for. If you have gaps in your employment, explain them. Show how you



increased your skills, perhaps through volunteering, and any courses you've completed.

We require the exact dates of your employment history as these are used for short-listing purposes.

### **Criteria Questions**

This is the most important section of the application form, and it is an opportunity for you to tell us about yourself, what you can do and the skills and experience you have which make you a good candidate for the job.

You need to show us that you meet the eligibility and essential criteria for the job. You should refer to the person specification, as this will detail what essential criteria you will need evidence of on your application form. Different jobs require different skills, knowledge, competencies, and qualifications.

The selection panel will not read across the various sections of the application form. If you submit this information in another box or in a different section of the application form, it may not be considered by the selection panel.

If you do not tell us, we will not know!

We will not make any assumptions about you or your abilities, even if you already work with us. Do not leave out any relevant skills, knowledge or experience you have gained, for example voluntary or unpaid work – it is still relevant.

You are asked to give 'personal and specific examples' which demonstrate your experience, so include examples of situations that you have experienced that demonstrate what is being asked for. What we mean by personal and specific examples is evidence of your personal involvement in this experience, how you dealt with it and relevant examples to show the breadth of your experience.

The interview panel can only make a decision to invite you to the next stage of the selection process based on the information you provide in your application form, and how this matches the criteria in the person specification. If there is a required length of experience, make sure you include the start and end dates of your experience, so the panel know you meet the timeframe.

### **Good Example Answers**

To demonstrate your personal involvement, you should use 'I', not 'we', when completing your application form. Using 'I' portrays your personal involvement more and lets the panel know exactly what your personal involvement was and what you were personally responsible for doing. 'We' gives the impression that you did not personally undertake the duties or that you were somehow involved but didn't really have ownership or responsibility for the experience – it does not tell the panel about



your personal experience, only that of a team or the organisation. It is evidence of your individual personal experience that the panel is looking for.

You want to customise your responses on each job application form you fill out. Read the job description and be sure to answer each question thoroughly. It is tempting to copy and paste responses in multiple job applications, but this will not create a strong application. Use relevant terminology and phrases that are unique to the industry and will catch the eye of the reader. Tailor your work experience, references, and answers to each job.

Always check the word count for each question and make sure your answer is as close to the word count as possible. Writing too little suggests that you may have underestimated the importance of the question or do not have the level of experience required for the role. Not being able to complete the question within the word count may suggest that you are not expressing your point clearly, or that you need to focus on a specific area. You should also provide specific detail of your experience, that is, how you went about gaining the experience, what you did, what this involved and provide examples which demonstrate the breadth of your experience.

Use the STAR method.

The STAR method is a way to keep your answers concise, clear, and full of relevant details. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result. It is useful for job applications when answering role-based questions about previous experiences. Using the STAR method can help you explain what you learned from previous situations and how you will apply the skills you gained to a new position. It's important to thoroughly proofread your application to find any grammatical errors, misspelt words, or confusing language. Use key phrases that will catch the reader's eye and show that you understand the job specifications.

It is helpful to have someone else read your application, as another perspective can find mistakes you might miss.

### **Shortlisting**

The first stage in the selection process will be to conduct a sift of completed application forms against the essential qualification criteria. Applicants who have not fully demonstrated on their application form how they meet this criterion will not be progressed to the next stage of the process.

Application forms are formatted so that applicants are required to demonstrate how they meet each essential competency. The onus will be on applicants who are completing application forms to demonstrate how they meet each competency.

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 above. If putting forward an equivalent qualification, please provide the type of qualification and date awarded. The date awarded is the date on which you were notified of your result by the official awarding body. 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 etc. so that a well-informed decision can be made.

Should the SEUPB receive a high level of applications, the desirable criteria may be applied to shortlist candidates for interview.

### **At the Interview**

Those candidates called for interview will be questioned on the areas covered in the application form, personnel specification, and job description. Candidates will be asked questions to enable them to illustrate their competence in each of the areas. They may enlarge upon the information provided on the application form or use different information to illustrate the answer. Candidates will be assessed against the essential criteria and key competencies identified as being a requirement for the role.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Applicants should note that starting salary would normally be at the minimum of the pay scale.

Applicants who intend to return their applications by post should ensure that they post documents in sufficient time to reach us by the closing date.

Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances. We will accept application forms by either post or electronically by the closing date and time. It is your responsibility to ensure applications reach us by the notified deadline.

## **EQUALITY STATEMENT**

SEUPB is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from suitably qualified candidates irrespective of religious belief, gender, disability, race, political opinion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or whether or not they have dependants.

*The Body would particularly welcome applications from the Protestant community who are currently under-represented in the workforce.*