

## **Marine Institute Job Description**

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Position</b>             | <b>Zooplankton Monitoring Scientific Technical Officer</b>                                                                  |
| <b>Grade &amp; Contract</b> | <b>Temporary STO Specified Purpose Contract for up to 24 months from commencement</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><br><b>The Marine Institute has a Blended Working Policy in Place</b> |

### **Who will you Work with and What Will The Role Involve?**

This important role supports our organisation in the delivery of its essential work programmes. This role provides candidates with the opportunity to work in a diverse organisation which invests in and celebrates its people.

The Fish Health Unit is Ireland's NRL for Finfish, Mollusc, and Crustacean Diseases. The laboratory monitors listed and emerging diseases, ensuring compliance with Council Directive 2006/88/EC and Regulation (EU) 2016/429. There is an ongoing requirement to maintain and develop capacity and expertise in shellfish diseases, particularly in response to national surveillance and EU reporting obligations.

The NRL is responsible for developing, validating and implementing appropriate methods for the testing of fish and shellfish diseases; monitoring for the diseases specified in Council Directive 2006/88/EC as well as for diseases of national importance. The laboratory is accredited to ISO 17025 standard. The FHU is also engaged in a number of research programmes related to diseases of significance for the fish and shellfish aquaculture industry in Ireland.

The successful candidate will lead the Zooplankton Monitoring Programme which aims to establish a standardised, science-based approach for tracking and analysing zooplankton communities at and around finfish aquaculture sites along the Irish coast. Zooplankton are a critical component of the marine ecosystem, playing a pivotal role in nutrient cycling and food web dynamics. However, certain zooplankton groups, particularly gelatinous zooplankton such as jellyfish, can pose significant threats to finfish aquaculture. Jellyfish blooms have been known to cause mechanical damage to fish gills, stress, and increased mortality in farmed fish, as well as oxygen depletion.

Understanding the distribution, abundance, and diversity of zooplankton is therefore essential for anticipating and mitigating potential biological threats to fish health and farm productivity.

This programme will support adaptive management strategies and enhance Ireland's blue economy through more informed and responsible aquaculture practices.

The Marine Institute recently completed reviews of its organisation and strategic achievement. The outcomes of these reviews are expected to affect the roles and duties of staff and to bring about other organisational changes. Any impacts or changes will be communicated.

## What Will You Be Doing Every Day?

### Principal Tasks:

- Co-ordinate and perform field sampling for zooplankton communities at designated aquaculture sites along the Irish coast.
- Operate and maintain field sampling equipment (e.g., plankton nets, water quality instruments) to ensure accurate and reliable data collection.
- Prepare, process, and analyse zooplankton samples in the laboratory, including microscopic and imaging tools to aid identification and quantification of key species and groups.
- Contribute to the development and refinement of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for zooplankton monitoring
- Record, manage, and curate datasets, ensuring data integrity and traceability.
- Monitor trends in zooplankton distribution, abundance, and diversity, with particular focus on gelatinous zooplankton (e.g., jellyfish) of concern to aquaculture.
- Support the development and validation of methodologies for plankton identification and monitoring.
- Prepare technical reports, data summaries, and visual outputs for internal use and stakeholder communication.
- Collaborate with colleagues in fish health surveillance, diagnostics, and research to integrate zooplankton data into broader risk assessments.
- Assist in research projects investigating the interactions between zooplankton dynamics, fish health, and aquaculture impacts.
- Maintain accurate laboratory records and ensure compliance with the laboratory's accreditation requirements.
- Participate in the day-to-day running of Fish Health laboratories.
- Support monitoring and research programmes and projects, as required.
- Contribute to all aspects of the Institute's quality system as required, for example, undertaking internal audits.
- Ensure health and safety and quality assurance standards are met throughout project activities.
- Any other duties as appropriate may be required from time to time.

## What do You Need to Have Done to Apply for This role?

(Education, Professional or Technical Qualifications, Knowledge, Skills, Aptitudes, Experience and Training)

### Essential / Important:

- Bachelor's degree in marine biology, environmental science, oceanography, or a related field.
- Demonstrated experience in marine fieldwork, especially in Zooplankton or water quality sampling
- Identification and quantification of zooplankton using microscopy and imaging tools.
- Proficiency in microscopy and biological sample analysis.
- Strong data management and analysis skills.
- Excellent organisational and communication skills, with the ability to prepare technical reports and present findings clearly.
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- Ability to work both independently and as part of a multidisciplinary team.
- Full, clean driver's license and willingness to travel to coastal sites.

- Knowledge of jellyfish and gelatinous zooplankton ecology.

### Ideally Nice to Have / Desirable:

- Master's degree or equivalent experience in relevant subject area.
- Familiarity with aquaculture operations or marine monitoring programmes.
- Familiarity with GIS tools and spatial data analysis for mapping zooplankton distributions.
- Experience working with and managing reference databases.
- Experience with statistical analysis software.
- Previous involvement in EU-funded or national research projects, with experience in scientific reporting and publication.
- Knowledge of molecular or genetic techniques for plankton identification.
- Experience with remote sensing data or oceanographic modelling related to plankton distribution.
- Proven ability to engage and communicate with diverse stakeholders, including aquaculture operators, regulatory authorities, and the scientific community.
- Track record of contributing to peer-reviewed publications or conference presentations in marine science or aquaculture health.

### What else do you need to know?

#### (Special personal attributes required for the role)

- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate and present effectively at all levels.
- Enthusiasm and dedication to science.
- Demonstrates energy, dynamism reliability and a positive attitude.
- Takes ownership of tasks and is determined to see them through to a conclusion.
- An ability to work in an organised manner and progress work independently, managing time effectively to deliver multiple outputs on time.
- A collaborative and open approach to project and programme success.
- Self-sufficiency, while being a good team player.
- Willing to travel for international project meetings.
- Possess sound, balanced judgement and strong analytical abilities.
- Solutions orientated with excellent initiative and problem-solving skills.

### Description of Service Group and the Wider Team

#### Marine Environment & Food Safety Services

Marine Environment & Food Safety Services (MEFSS) is a service area of the Marine Institute that plays a pivotal role in ensuring the safety of seafood, preserving environmental health, providing a variety of policy supports and safeguarding fish health. Operating as an integral part of the Institute, MEFSS undertakes multifaceted responsibilities primarily through the execution of scientific monitoring and research programs, coupled with offering expert scientific interpretation and regulatory guidance to government.

##### 1. Shellfish Safety

Shellfish Safety in MEFSS involves rigorous monitoring and testing to ensure the safety and quality of shellfish products, contributing to the protection of public health. This includes

adherence to established standards and regulations while actively collaborating with relevant authorities to maintain Ireland's superior shellfish health status. Collaborating with organisations such as the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, MEFSS actively monitors seafood safety, upholding the reputation of the Irish seafood industry for high-quality products while adhering to national and international regulatory standards.

## 2. Fish Health Unit

The Fish Health Unit in MEFSS serves as the national competent authority responsible for implementing EU and national aquatic animal health legislation, overseeing and monitoring the movement of finfish and shellfish into, out of, and within Ireland. Through comprehensive testing and disease surveillance, the unit aims to maintain Ireland's superior fish and shellfish health status, providing crucial support to the aquaculture industry and fisheries sectors.

MEFSS collaborates with various departments and agencies, including the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Environmental Protection Authority, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. This collaborative approach underscores the organisation's commitment to ensuring comprehensive and effective support across diverse domains. MEFSS ensures the highest quality standards with our laboratories accredited under EN ISO/IEC 17025:2017 for food safety, environmental monitoring, and fish health work. Furthermore, the Fish Health Competent Authority is ISO 9001:2015 certified, emphasising the organisation's commitment to excellence.

## Who Will You Report to / Who will Manage and Support You?:

The successful candidate will report directly to the Fish Health Unit Team lead or whomever the Fish Health Unit Section Manager designates as appropriate from time to time.

## What we offer

We value our staff, and we value their contribution to the work of the Marine Institute. In return for this, we provide benefits that promote a healthy work-life balance and which we hope will help them to develop professionally. These include personal and career development, work/life balance policies, an employee assistance programme, "Bike to Work" Scheme, staff medicals and annual flu vaccination.

### Training

A full range of training will be provided as required, on the job and through appropriate courses. Training needs will be identified through the MI Performance Management Development System (PMDS).

## Contacts:

**Within the Marine Institute:** Fish Health Unit team members, MEFSS Director, other MEFSS colleagues, colleagues across all service groups within the Marine Institute

**External:** The aquaculture industries, BIM, Academic Institutions.

### Salary:

Remuneration is in accordance with the Public Sector, Department of Finance approved Salary Scale for Scientific Technology Officer Grade which runs from €40,374 - €81,218 (as of June 2026), on a full time basis per annum pro-rated with time worked. This role will commence on the first point of €40,374 per annum pro-rated with time worked 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. You will 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 Scientific Technical Officer Grade is 25 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.

### Duration of Contract:

This temporary specified purpose contract of employment will be for a 24-month period upon commencement. The successful candidate will be on probation for the first six months of this contract.

### Conditions of Offer:

Internal offers are subject to receipt of one satisfactory reference check and the required medical assessment completed by a Marine Institute appointed medical professional where applicable for a role.

External offers require two satisfactory references and completion of an appropriate pre-employment medical or medical questionnaire completed by a Marine Institute appointed medical professional where applicable for a role.

### Who is the Marine Institute?

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 was given the 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 and users. This policy advice capacity, our broad mandate, and the research programmes we fund and undertake, give us a unique insight into the science-policy interface and make us an exemplar in the provision of integrated ocean knowledge.

The Marine Institute provides a broad range of essential scientific support to its parent department, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). There is an increasing demand from 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.

**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 6 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.

The Marine Institute 5 Year Strategic Plan (2023 to 2027) is available [Here](#)

## How to Apply:

A C.V. and letter of application, summarising experience and skill set applicable to the position should be emailed to [recruitment@marine.ie](mailto:recruitment@marine.ie) or posted to Human Resources at the Marine Institute, Rinville, Oranmore, Galway, H91 R673. All correspondence for this post should quote reference **MEFSS/STO/Zooplankton/OCT26**

### Closing date for Applications:

All applications for this post should be received by the Marine Institute in advance of **12 noon, Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> of October**. Unfortunately, late applications cannot be accepted.

Eligible Candidates must be:

1. A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway; or
2. A citizen of the United Kingdom (UK); or
3. A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
4. A non-EEA citizen who is a spouse or child of an EEA or UK or Swiss citizen and has a stamp 4 or a Stamp 5 visa.

**Use of Data** - all personal data and the information submitted for this application will be used solely for the purpose of this 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 campaign.

The Marine Institute is an organisation that champions Diversity, Inclusion & Equality for all. We encourage and welcome applications from anyone interested in this role.

Please do advise if there are any special accommodations required for the recruitment process. We are here to help you access opportunities with us.