



Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) seeks Expressions of Interest for External Members to its Audit & Risk Committee

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority is seeking expressions of interest from experienced and qualified persons who are willing to offer their services as an external member of the SFPA Audit & Risk Committee.

This is a non-executive and voluntary role to support the Authority's compliance with governance and public sector best practice.

The appointee should ideally possess prior knowledge / experience of fisheries legislation and practice.

Further details of the role can be found on www.sfpajobs.com

Any interested party should submit a **CV and Cover Letter** according to the application instructions outlined below by **5pm 31 May 2023**. The SFPA may arrange for a confidential discussion.

Expressions of interest will be assessed by a SFPA selection panel which will include the Chairperson of the Audit & Risk Committee.

[Information for Persons making an Expression of Interest](#)
[Background, Role Description and Person Specification](#)

Background and Introduction: The SFPA is seeking expressions of interest from experienced and qualified persons to offer their services as a member of the Audit & Risk Committee. This is an important specialist, non-executive and voluntary role intended to ensure best practice in the financial management and corporate governance of SFPA.

The appointee should ideally possess prior knowledge / experience of fisheries legislation and practice. Applicants should have a knowledge of the technical, legal and economic issues which impact sea-fisheries in Ireland, have no conflict of interest and are willing to offer their services on the terms outlined below. Applicants are accepted from current public servants and those who may be retired.

The SFPA was established in 2007 under the provisions of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 and is Ireland's competent authority for Seafood Safety and Sea-Fisheries Protection. It is governed by an executive structure known as the Authority. The Authority consists of a Chair and two Authority Members. The SFPA also has a senior management team consisting of the Authority members, and the Executive Managers of all other Business Units. The SFPA is a public body under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. With headquarters in Clonakilty, County Cork, the SFPA also has a number of offices in the major ports around the coast, at Killybegs, Ros a' Mhíl, An Daingean, Castletownbere, Dunmore East, Greencastle and Howth.

The continued health of Ireland's economy and coastal communities is dependent upon its natural resources being used sustainably. It is important for Ireland to have well managed fisheries and the SFPA will continue to engage with the fishing industry to promote compliance with the essential requirements of the legislation.

SFPA supports a sustainable and profitable commercial fishing sector, while protecting and conserving fisheries resources for long-term exploitation.

Further information on the SFPA is available on the website: www.sfpa.ie

As part of its governance framework, SFPA has established an Audit & Risk Committee. A copy of the terms of reference for the Committee is attached in Appendix 1. The Authority nominates members for



appointment; who are then ratified and appointed by the Audit & Risk Committee based on their suitability.

The purpose of the SFPA Audit & Risk Committee is to assist the Authority in fulfilling its overseeing responsibilities relating to:

- the integrity of the financial system including the financial reporting process;
- the risk management process;
- the system of internal control;
- the relationship with the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG);
- processes and internal controls for monitoring compliance of implementation of Official Controls in the areas of sea-fisheries, seafood safety, Health and Safety and other relevant laws and regulation;
- the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority code of conduct; and
- performance of the Authority's technical and corporate internal audit function and associated independent auditors.

Qualifications:

The appointee should ideally possess prior knowledge / experience of fisheries legislation and practice, as well as a knowledge of the technical, legal and economic issues which impact sea-fisheries in Ireland.

Prior experience of public sector financial and governance frameworks is not an essential requirement but could be an advantage. An appointee will be expected to quickly become familiar with relevant systems and frameworks.

Experience:

It is essential that the appointee will have relevant experience that would demonstrate her/his competency to effectively discharge the role of advising the Audit & Risk Committee of a Public Body from a fisheries perspective.

Independence:

The member will not have any personal or professional interest or relationship which could conflict with the unbiased discharge of the role. She/he will not be a staff member of SFPA. The appointed person is expected to bring an independent eye to the oversight role of the Committee.

Role: The role of the external member will include:

- Attending meetings of the Audit & Risk Committee
- Advising the Audit & Risk Committee on interpretation of technical documents
- Providing sound judgement on financial-related and corporate governance issues
- Contributing at meetings to ensure achievement of the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

Frequency of Meetings: The Audit & Risk Committee is expected to meet at least four (4) times per annum.

Fee and Expenses

Fee: A fee of €282.79 per meeting (subject to maximum annual fee of €1,697) is payable and subject to taxation in line with relevant Revenue guidance and legislation. It should be noted that in line with the 'One Person One Salary' principle no public servant will be entitled to receive this fee.

Expenses: Travel and subsistence expenses for attendance at Audit & Risk Committee meetings will be paid, in accordance with rates set from time to time by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Selection Process, Time Frame and Criteria

Expressions of interest from qualified persons will be sought through contacts to various sources including:

- Public Appointments Service;
- Other appropriate sources including sources identified by SFPA.

Appointment will be made by the Authority on the recommendation of the Selection Panel based on the criteria below.

All candidates should visit www.sfpajobs.com where there is a full list of available positions in the SFPA with the corresponding downloadable information document for each position. There will also be a link to the online application portal to where all applications must be submitted.

To apply, candidates must provide an up-to-date cv and cover letter and submit their application via the online application portal.

Applications will not be accepted after the closing date.

You must also confirm that you do not have any conflicts of interest or legal impediment which would interfere with your ability to contribute to the ARC.

The closing date and time for receipt of expressions of interest is 5PM 31 May 2023.

Assessment Process

An Assessment Panel (the "Panel"), which will include the Chairperson of the ARC will be convened by the Authority to consider and assess the expressions of interest received on or before the closing time and date.

The Panel will:

- review and discuss the expressions of interest received against the specific identified criteria for the role;
- assess potential appointees further, once they meet the specified appointment criteria, by undertaking any or all of the following steps:
 - Consideration of the written applications; and/or
 - Meeting/conference call; and/or
 - Any other selection method deemed appropriate.
- recommend the strongest candidate, based on the criteria and assessment process, to the Authority for approval and to the ARC for ratification.

The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, Annex on Gender Balance, Diversity and Inclusion sets out that all State Bodies should, at any time, have an appropriate gender balance on the ARC. Please note that appointments will be made with regard to this requirement.

A panel will be put in place for up to 12 months from the date the appointment is made, from which any additional vacancies that may arise will be filled.

APPENDIX 1

Audit and Risk Committee Charter Including Terms of Reference

Authority Policy Statement

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority recognises the significant contribution to good governance and effective internal control made by an efficient and effective Audit and Risk Committee.

The Authority supports the Audit and Risk Committee in discharging the authorities and responsibilities contained in this Charter. Further, it respects the independence of the Audit and Risk Committee and undertakes to provide adequate resources to enable the Committee to properly discharge its function.

Establishment and constitution

The Audit and Risk Committee is a committee of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority established by formal resolution. It comprises at least three independent non-executive members appointed by the Authority.

Membership

The Authority will have the power to nominate members for appointment. The Audit and Risk Committee will then ratify and appoint members on review of their suitability. The Chairman of the Authority will annually review the composition of the Audit and Risk Committee for recommendation to the Authority.

Members of the Audit and Risk Committee should have broad skills and experience in order to discharge their duties, including, but not limited to, recent relevant financial experience. The Audit and Risk Committee is empowered to co-opt members to provide specialist skills at a particular time and to procure specialist advice at reasonable and approved expense to the Authority to assist the Audit and Risk Committee with specific areas of committee business.

A member of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority may be a member of the Audit and Risk Committee but may not be the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Terms of appointment of membership to the Audit and Risk Committee will consist of a five year term initially. The length of terms of appointment should be varied to ensure that the Audit and Risk Committee does not have to be replaced en masse and to ensure that the committee has the necessary experience to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

The Audit and Risk Committee will be provided with a secretariat function by an appropriate employee of the Authority.

Governance policy

Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority supports and subscribes to the highest standards of corporate governance and specifically abides by applicable principles and guidelines defined in The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)

Purpose

The Audit and Risk Committee assists the Authority in fulfilling its overseeing responsibilities relating to:

- The integrity of the financial system including the financial reporting process
- The risk management process
- The system of internal control
- The relationship with the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG)
- Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority's process and internal controls for monitoring compliance of implementation of Official Controls in the areas of sea-fisheries, seafood safety, Health and Safety and other relevant laws and regulations
- The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority code of conduct
- Performance of the Authority's technical and corporate internal audit function and associated independent auditors
- The Audit and Risk Committee to confirm to the Authority, by way of a written report on an annual basis, that the systems of internal and financial control are both instituted and implemented and that they are effective (with statement aligned to provision 1.8 of the 2016 code). Any deviation from this confirmation needs to be explained in this annual report, together with an outline of the corrective actions being undertaken.

The Audit and Risk Committee is responsible for advising the Authority on whether an appropriate regime of internal control is in operation but not for the formulation or implementation of such a regime.

Scope of the Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee shall carry out the above purpose for both Corporate Governance and Technical Internal Audit functions within the Authority.

Independence and Independence Scrutiny

In order to check whether it is achieving its objectives, the audit process should be subject to scrutiny by the Audit and Risk Committee. The Audit and Risk Committee should have sufficient authority, expertise and resources to carry out this task effectively. The approaches to independent scrutiny may vary, depending on the activity. One or more independent persons should be members of the Audit and Risk Committee. Such independent persons should have access to the audit process and be empowered to contribute fully to it. Action should be taken to remedy any shortcomings identified in the audit process by the Audit and Risk Committee.

In order for the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority to comply with Section 5.4 of Commission Decision 2006/677/EEC as stated above, the Trade Compliance and Internal Audit Unit has developed both an Internal Audit Charter and an Audit Management System to ensure both audit independence and independent scrutiny by the Audit and Risk Committee.

The internal audit function will report on budgetary and administrative issues to the Finance Director and periodically to the Audit and Risk Committee with unrestricted access to the Chair of the Authority.

Authority

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority authorises the Audit and Risk Committee to:

- Conduct or authorise investigations into matters within its scope of responsibility
- Retain outside expertise to advise it in the conduct of its business

- Seek any information it may require from employees of Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority
- Meet with Authority officers and employees, external auditors or advisors as necessary

Meetings and reporting

The Audit and Risk Committee shall convene meetings as circumstances require but will endeavour to meet on at least four occasions each financial year. A minimum number of two independent non-executive members of the Audit and Risk Committee will be present for the meeting to be deemed quorate.

The non-executive members of the Audit and Risk Committee will regularly hold separate private meetings with the Internal Audit function(s) and, at least annually, with the C&AG. The Trade Compliance and Internal Auditing Unit, Finance Unit and other functions as appropriate will give updates to the committee as required on the multisectoral Internal Auditing activities within the Authority.

The members of the Authority, other executives of the Authority, and representatives of the C&AG, may be in attendance at meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee for selected agenda items at the request of the Chair. The Audit and Risk Committee may ask any or all of those who normally attend but who are not members to withdraw to facilitate open and frank discussion or particular matters.

Meeting agendas, along with appropriate briefing materials, will be prepared and provided to Audit and Risk Committee members at least one week in advance of meetings.

The Audit and Risk Committee will meet with the Authority once a year and will formally present a report. This report will summarise the conclusions of the Audit and Risk Committee from the work undertaken during the year, including the following areas:

- The financial statements
- Risk management
- Statement of Internal Financial Control
- Technical and Corporate functions.

Responsibilities relating to financial statements

The Audit and Risk Committee will discharge the following responsibilities in respect of financial statements:

- Review significant accounting and reporting issues, including complex or unusual transactions and highly judgemental areas, and recent professional and regulatory announcements and understand their impact on the financial statements
- Review with management and the C&AG the results of audits, including any difficulties encountered
- Review the annual financial statements, prior to submission to the Authority for approval, and consider whether they are complete, consistent with information known to Committee members, and reflect appropriate accounting principles

Responsibilities relating to Internal Control

The Audit and Risk Committee will discharge the following responsibilities in relation to internal control:

- Consider the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control over annual financial reporting, including information technology security and control
- Understand the scope of internal and external auditors' review of internal control over financial reporting, and obtain reports on significant findings and recommendations, together with management responses
- Within the general terms of this Charter, initiate any special projects or investigations deemed necessary by the Committee
- Monitor management's implementation of corrective action for agreed audit recommendations

Responsibilities relating to Risk Management

The Audit and Risk Committee will discharge the following responsibilities in respect of risk management:

- Review the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's process for the identification, impact assessment and occurrence assessment of regulatory, operational and financial risk
- Review, by reference to the work of Technical and Corporate Internal Audit, the adequacy and effectiveness of controls operated by management to mitigate regulatory, operational and financial risks
- Report to the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority on matters relating to the process for risk assessment and management action to mitigate risk
- Advise the Authority on the strategic processes for risk, internal control and governance

Responsibilities relating to Internal Audit

The Audit and Risk Committee will discharge the following responsibilities in respect of internal audit:

- Review with management, the Technical and Corporate Internal Audit functions, and the Trade Compliance and Internal Audit Unit, the Internal Audit Charter, plans, activities, staffing and organisational structure of the internal audit function
- Review the effectiveness of the Technical and Corporate Internal Audit functions, including compliance with the Institute of Internal Auditors' Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and the National Audit Systems (NAS) Network.

Responsibilities relating to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG)

The Audit and Risk Committee will discharge the following responsibilities in respect of the relationship with the C&AG:

Responsibility for Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority's External Audit lies, under Section 65 (2) of the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006, with the C&AG.

The Audit and Risk Committee will meet with the staff of the C&AG, without executive members of the Authority or employees of the Authority present, at least once a year to ensure that there are no unresolved areas of concern and that the office receives full co-operation in completing the audit. The representative of the C&AG will have free and confidential access to the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Responsibilities relating to reporting

The Audit and Risk Committee will discharge the following responsibilities with regard to reporting:

- Report to the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority about committee activities, issues and related recommendations
- Provide an open avenue of communication between internal audit, the external auditors and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority
- Review any other reports the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority issues that relate to Committee responsibilities

Other responsibilities

The Audit and Risk Committee are entitled to:

- Consider the adequacy of proposals for tendering for either internal or external audit services or for purchase of non-audit services from contractors who provide audit services and raise any concerns with the Authority
- Consider the adequacy of anti-fraud policies, protected disclosure processes, and arrangements for special investigations and raise any concerns with the Authority
- Perform other activities related to this Charter as requested by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority
- Review and assess the adequacy of the committee charter regularly, requesting Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority approval for proposed changes
- Confirm annually that all responsibilities outlined in this Charter have been carried out
- The Audit and Risk Committee will also periodically review its own effectiveness and report the results of that review to the Authority.