



Northern Ireland
**environment
link**

Chief Executive Information Pack

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Introduction

Dear Candidate

Thank you very much for your interest in the role of Chief Executive at Northern Ireland Environment Link.

We are the networking and forum body for organisations interested in the natural and built environment of Northern Ireland. With the current challenges to our environment locally, nationally and internationally, the projects we deliver and our work on influencing public policy has never been more important.

You would be stepping into the shoes of Craig McGuicken who will continue to champion the environment from a new public sector role. The small team we've developed under the leadership of Craig and the Board are passionate about what they do so we are looking for some-one who will be as committed to the cause of natural and built environmental protection.

You will be a strategic thinker but with the capability to marshal the evidence from a wide range of sources to inform policy, and to deliver on practical projects that are vital to our natural and built heritage.

We are working with our recruitment partners Engage on this search and selection, and they will be happy to answer any queries you might have in the first instance.

You can find out more about the role and our organisation in document, and in more detail on our website at www.nienvironmentlink.org.

If you are interested in applying your skills and experience to further NIEL's mission, have the collegiate mind needed to serve our members and ensure they have a voice when and where it counts, then we would love to hear from you.

Stephen Aston

Board Chair



Who we are

Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) is the networking and forum body for organisations interested in the natural and built environment of Northern Ireland.

NIEL was formally launched in 1990 to complete the UK network: Scottish Environment Link, Wales Environment Link and Wildlife and Countryside Link.



NIEL is managed by a Board of Directors, elected annually at the AGM, and consisting of Officers plus representatives of Full Members.

The Board of Directors convene four to six times per year to discuss operational matters and plan members' activities and publications. A number of sub-committees ('Strategic Planning, Information, Membership', and 'Human Resources, Finance and Funding') meet to carry forward specific work in their relevant management areas. These sub-committees report directly to the Board of Directors.

Day-to-day running of NIEL is carried out by the staff, who are overseen by the Board of Directors. This staff of fourteen work closely with the NIEL members, and other sectors.

What we do

Member Networking and Services

NIEL helps members understand complex issues and presents a unified voice by bringing together a wide range of knowledge, experience and expertise which can be used to help develop policy, practice and implementation across a range of environmental fields.

NIEL represents more than 70 Full Members (voluntary organisations) and over 40 Associate Members (statutory organisations, companies or individuals).



Full members represent over 200,000 individuals and collectively employ over 1,400 staff with over 1,700 volunteers. NIEL Full Members have a collective turnover of over £66 million and manage over 265,000 acres of land. Members are involved in environmental issues of all types and at all levels from the local community to the global environment.

We bring our members together in a range of events and collaborative programmes to help shape our sector's contribution to policy and action on the environment. These are supported by our publishing activities which in addition to our annual reports include consultations, NIEL and Member publications, the latest news from the NI Assembly and more.

Assembly Hub

We keep a close watch on all the activities of the Assembly that affect our mission and our members. We share our monthly review of the outcome of various Statements, Debates and Questions on environmental issues.

Policy Hub

Our role is to inform regional, national and international policy that can impact on the natural and built environment.

We work with political and government bodies; primarily the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Northern Ireland Departments, but also the UK Government and the European Union, include strong cross-border links with similar organisations in the Republic of Ireland. We engage with key decision makers to promote our strategic objectives and specific policy issues.

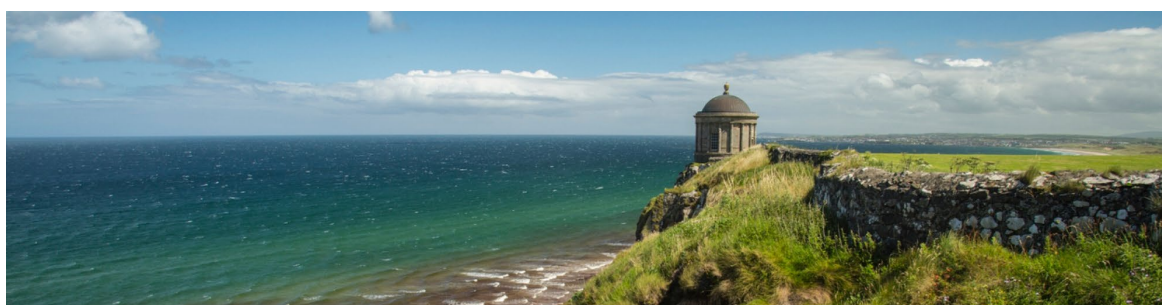
Working Groups

The majority of our policy work concentrates on major policy themes and much of this is delivered in conjunction with other organisations through a variety of working groups of varying structure and timescale. The groups we currently collaborate on include:

- Fresh Water Task Force
- NI Marine Task Force
- Climate Coalition NI
- Nature and Environmental Protection
- Sustainable Land Use
- Natural Capital
- Environment and Health

Facilities and Funding

As well as office space and facilities for staff, NIEL has a meeting room and can provide hot desking spaces for members. NIEL also has a funding database which can be accessed, free of charge, to members. NIEL is at the heart of the environment sector in Northern Ireland, and we constantly seek to improve the services that we can provide.



Some of Our Projects

Rural Resilience Network

This project is being co-developed with farming communities – sharing understanding in reducing the impact of risks like flooding, drought, shifting seasons and pests, and also take advantage of opportunities for new ways of working which could cost less and help make more money and increase food security.

Social Prescribing

Recognising that people's health is determined primarily by a range of social, economic and environmental factors, social prescribing seeks to address people's needs in a holistic way. It also aims to support individuals to take greater control of their own health. Guided by the Health Working Group, NIEL has been advocating for the environment in supporting human health and wellbeing, and seeking further collaboration and integration for health, voluntary, community, and environment sectors to expand the provision of Nature Based Treatments and Social Prescribing. We have recently launched a social prescribing toolkit, and initiated a partnership with the Healthy Living Centres Alliance (funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund).

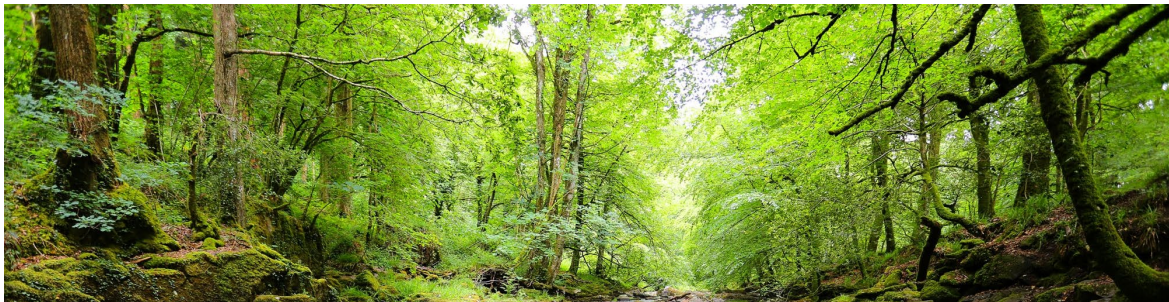
Urban Green Spaces

NIEL, together with the National Trust, is leading a programme to research the future potential of our Urban Green Spaces. Our project is gathering our collective understanding of where and how they benefit people in Northern Ireland, then exploring the potential for urban greenspace to play a future key role in addressing the health, climate and nature crises.

It will co-create a vision and action plan to 2030 – engaging with a wide range of stakeholders across government, health, voluntary and business sectors, as well as greenspace users and urban residents to understand needs, opportunities, and views. The programme is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Nature Targets

Supported by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the aim of the project is to forge a common four-country policy and advocacy position on future biodiversity targets. This will help galvanise UK governments behind a strong negotiating position capable of securing an effective global deal to bend the curve of nature's decline.



Historic Environment

Most of NIEL's work is around the natural environment, but given the breadth of the environment sector and of the NIEL membership, we maintain a strong relationship with the Historic Environment Division of the Department for Communities. Together with some member organisations, NIEL has been an important participant in the creation of an Historic Environment stakeholder group. We have been working to show how fundamental heritage is to our society - how it supports our economy, strengthens our communities and is crucial in shaping our character. NIEL manages the sectoral website 'NI Heritage Delivers' where up-to-date information and news is posted.

Education for Sustainable Development Forum (ESDF)

The ESDF is a network that promotes a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of environmental education in Northern Ireland. ESDF is led by a Management Committee, elected from the membership. We publish a series of newsletters throughout the year, as well as delivering training and networking events. We are currently working in partnership with Keep NI Beautiful to develop a new, one-stop, online Education Hub as part of our new Strategy and Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development in Northern Ireland.

Nourish NI

Nourish NI (formerly Belfast Food Network) is building, supporting and leading an emerging sustainable food movement across the country. We are the national NI partner for Sustainable Food Places, which is one of the fastest-growing social movements today. It is an alliance of cities, towns and boroughs, each of which is harnessing sustainable food as a vehicle for driving positive change. There are five proactive sustainable food partnerships across Northern Ireland that are promoting sustainable food as a means of enabling positive social, economic and environmental benefits for our communities, businesses and planet.

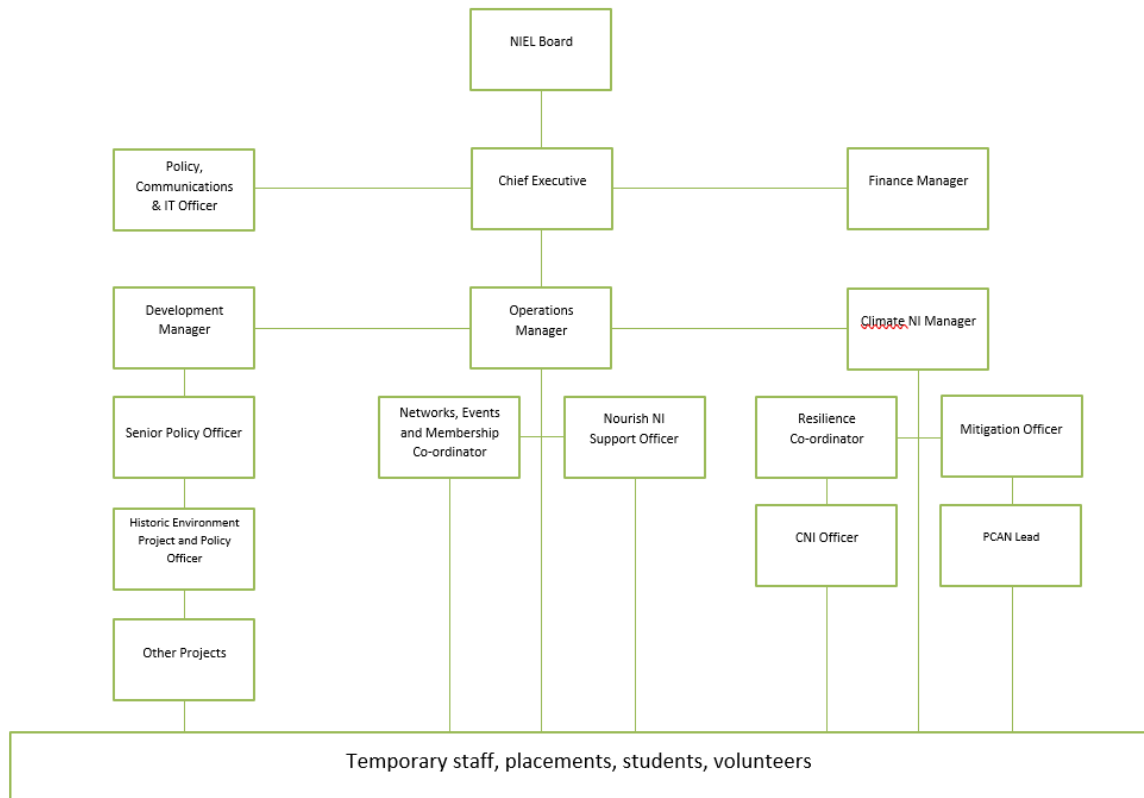
Climate Northern Ireland

The Climate Northern Ireland partnership brings together members from a range of key sectors to share best practice and promote positive action to address the impacts of a changing climate.

Over the past year Climate NI has delivered a broad programme of work (largely funded by DAERA), on subjects such as – Climate Change policy, adaptation, mitigation, public body reporting, the support and development of adaptation programmes, and climate emergency training. Climate NI is the primary point of contact within Northern Ireland for all aspects of climate change, and the team promotes a more coordinated and coherent approach that adds value to the work of our members.



How we're organised



Strategy

Vision

A valued, resilient, healthy environment.

Mission

To be a collective voice promoting the importance of environmental issues through influencing policy and developing partnerships for a healthy environment.

Strategic Aim 1: Environmental Policy and Advocacy

Advance the conservation, management and access of the environment through development of relevant policy and advocacy

Strategic Aim 2: Partnership & Collaboration

Advance collaboration within and beyond the Environmental NGO sector

Strategic Aim 3: Membership and Capacity

Increase the capacity and sustainability of the environmental NGO sector in NI

Strategic Aim 4: Communications

Communicate effectively with our members, partners, stakeholders and other target audiences.

Strategic Aim 5: NIEL- An Organisation Ready for the Future

To be an effective organisation with improved levels of resource and capacity

Charitable Objectives

- Advance, for public benefit, environmental conservation, protection, improvement and sustainability.
- Raise awareness of environmental issues by providing a forum for exchange of ideas and promoting a collective voice
- Advance the education of all sections of the public in environmental and ecological science



Financials

Here's a summary of our most recent published Income and Expenditure statement to 31 March 2022. You can click on the links below to access more information on our financial performance for the last three years.

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted funds £	Totals 2022 £	Totals 2021 £
Income					
<i>from donations and legacies</i>					
• Donations	3	-	-	0	-
• Subscriptions	3	965	-	965	3,715
• Grants	3	483,492	15,580	499,072	455,108
<i>from charitable activities</i>					
• Event and project income	3	-	-	0	4,761
• Members servicing and accommodation	3	2,167	-	2,167	10,004
<i>from other activities</i>					
• Sundry income	3	103,003	18,065	121,068	153,866
• Other servicing and accommodation	3	1,963	-	1,963	-
<i>from investments</i>					
• Investment income	3	660	-	660	604
Total income		592,250	33,645	625,895	628,058
Expenditure					
<i>on raising funds</i>					
• Advertising / PR costs	4	450	-	450	-
<i>on charitable activities</i>					
• Employee costs	4	434,517	32,359	466,876	407,302
• Premises costs	4	23,312	670	23,982	21,365
• Travel & training costs	4	2,780	80	2,860	1,048
• General administration costs	4	10,461	120	10,581	15,340
• Programme / event costs	4	91,231	-	91,231	155,695
<i>on other items</i>					
• Legal and professional fees	4	3,370	-	3,370	3,165
• Other expenses	4	592	-	592	326
• Depreciation of assets	4	-	-	0	-
Total expenditure		566,713	33,229	599,942	604,241

Annual Report March 2022

Annual Report March 2021

Annual Report March 2020

Meet the Board



Stephen Aston
Board Chair

Following his role as a senior Environmental Adviser to the Department of Environment Stephen Aston led the development of Land & Resource Management in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), was elected as the UK national president of the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management and subsequently appointed as the Director of Strategy & Innovation for NIEA from 2011- 2015.



Joanne Sherwood
Board Vice-Chair

Joanne is passionate about saving nature and protecting the environment through her current roles as Director, RSPB Northern Ireland and Vice Chair, Northern Ireland Environment Link as well as in previous senior roles within the Environment Agency of England and Wales and Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Natural Resources Wales.



Murray Watt
Board Treasurer

Murray has 30 years' experience in tenant engagement and community development with Supporting Communities and has been a long-standing member Board of NIEL as well as that of Community Places.



Paul Armstrong

Paul joined the Woodland Trust as Public Affairs Manager in January 2021. Prior to this, he worked in policy and advocacy roles at the National Trust and the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations. He is responsible for leading and managing the Trust's policy and advocacy work to support the creation, protection and restoration of woodlands in Northern Ireland for the benefit of climate, nature and people. He is the chair of the social enterprise Empowering Communities - which promotes best practice in community participation across the island of Ireland.



William Deane

William has worked with Action Renewables for 8 years and prior to that, spent 5 years working within the energy sector at a prominent electricity supplier. William supports the delivery of renewable energy projects in the private and public sectors across electricity, transport and heat.



Karen Kerr

Dr Karen Kerr (BEd PhD FHEA) is a lecturer in the School of Social Sciences Education and Social Work in Queen's University Belfast. She co-ordinates the Science PGCE programme and has a strong track record of research in outdoor learning, environmental education and education for sustainable development.



Ian Humphreys

CEO of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Board Member and Treasurer of the Foundation for Environmental Education, Advisory Group Member of the Global Environmental Education Partnership and Member of Copeland Bird Observatory.



Dawn Miskelly

Works for Ulster Wildlife since 2004, Northern Ireland's largest local nature conservation charity, in a number of roles most recently as Director of Development & Governance.



Darren Rice

Darren has had a passion for heritage since early childhood. He works with individuals and groups around intangible, cultural, natural, and built heritage.



Diane Ruddock

Diane Ruddock is External Affairs Manager for the National Trust in Northern Ireland and leads the conservation charity's policy and advocacy activity, with a particular focus on landscape protection, sustainable land use, climate and nature recovery and the historic environment.

Job Description

Job Title	Chief Executive
Location	NIEL Office with some homeworking
Reports to	NIEL board
Responsible for	All staff
Duration of contract	Full time permanent, with 6-month probationary period
Hours per Week	37.5
Salary	Equivalent to NICS Grade 7 £52,026-£55,685, negotiable subject to experience, 7.5% employer pension contribution
Leave entitlement	25 days plus public holidays

Job Purpose

The postholder will provide strategic leadership of the organisation guided and directed by the Board of Trustees, with a focus on continuous development. The Chief Executive is responsible for overseeing the management of all staff through the direct line management of its senior staff.

The Chief Executive will have skills and attributes in the following areas of leadership:

- **People Management** – evidence of making best use of resources to deliver strategic priorities and maintain business continuity, developing organisational capability, championing equality and diversity, managing change effectively and working in partnership;
- **Financial Management/governance** – evidence of effective governance including planning, agreeing and monitoring the delivery of stretch financial and outcome targets, identifying and implementing innovative ways to secure resources and assets and improve efficiency and effectiveness of their use;
- **Analysis and Use of Evidence** - evidence of predicting and securing appropriate evidence as a basis for decisions, analysis and advice;
- **Programme and Project Management** – evidence of taking responsibility for the definition and successful delivery of programme benefits, managing risks and communicating effectively with stakeholders;
- **Strategic Thinking** – evidence of influencing the organisation’s strategy and priorities, and knowledge and understanding of the wider policy, environment and institutional constraints;
- **Communications and Marketing** – evidence of using communications, marketing and operations, aligning policy and service delivery with clear communication.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Strategic Thinking

Influencing an organisation's strategy and priorities, and knowledge and understanding of wider policy, environment and institutional constraints

- Provide strategic direction to the organisation guided and directed by the Board, recommending changes to strategies and policies for approval by the Board as appropriate.
- Oversee production of an annual report for NIEL members, NIEA and other funders and quarterly reports to the NIEL Board.
- Ensure the organisation addresses in full its obligations in respect of its membership organisations, and to expand that membership as appropriate.
- Work actively with other 'partnership organisations' to deliver aims and objectives in relation to funding and the NIEL Strategic Plan.
- Horizon-scan to expand the NIEL network to new audiences.
- Manage both operational and strategic relationships between the NI Assembly and members, acting as the interface between NIEL members and other public bodies, including NIEA and DAERA.
- Manage both operational and strategic relationships between the NIEL members and the Historic Environment sector.
- Ensure that NIEL remains a part of, and an active supporter of, Environment Links UK, and that it works closely with regional or other groupings of that body to achieve efficiencies and greater influence regionally and nationally.
- Develop and oversee strategic partnerships with all relevant sectors.
- Ensure the organisational, administrative and staffing requirements to deliver against funding and partnership activities and services are in place.

2. People Management

Making best use of resources to deliver strategic priorities and maintain business continuity, developing organisational capability, championing equality and diversity, managing change effectively and working in partnership

- Inspire, motivate, encourage and where appropriate assist with the training and development of staff and volunteers.
- Ensure compliance with relevant employment legislation and best practice.
- Recommend to the Board changes in staff structure and implement approved changes.
- Provide leadership, management, supervision, staff development and ensure appraisal of all staff.
- Facilitate and encourage partnership working.

3. Financial Management/Governance

Effective governance including planning, agreeing and monitoring the delivery of stretching financial and outcome targets, identifying and implementing innovative ways to secure resources and assets and improve efficiency and effectiveness of their use

- Support the NIEL Board in delivering best practice corporate and financial governance within NIEL and its associated activities, and ensuring an appropriate skills mix at Board level.
- Ensure that NIEL complies in full with all aspects of the NI Charities Act, along with Charity Commission, HMRC and Companies House regulations.
- Work closely with the Chairman to ensure that the Executive members are fully engaged in all aspects of governance.
- Agree annual budgets with the board and report performance against the agreed budgets at board meetings.
- Compile and maintain a corporate risk register in collaboration with the board, and report on progress or issues at each board meeting.
- Drive fundraising activities to sustain the organisation's activities.
- Implement NIEL policies and procedures including those relating to financial, human and physical resources.
- To execute the responsibilities of a company Chief Executive according to lawful ethical standards, as referenced in the Companies Act, The Nolan Principles and other relevant procedures.

4. Analysis and Use of Evidence

Predicting and securing appropriate evidence as a basis for decisions, analysis and advice

- Ensure that the operational requirements of NIEL's environmental support services are delivered on the basis of best available data and evidence.
- Identifying evidence and innovation needs to support the policy making process and seek funding where appropriate to address gaps.
- Co-ordinate and oversee responses to consultations on environmental policy.

5. Programme and Project Management

Taking responsibility for the development of new projects and the definition and successful delivery of programme benefits, managing risks and communicating effectively with stakeholders

- Develop and deliver new and existing projects.
- Implement the advocacy work of the organisation, which will enhance NIEL's ability to influence decision-makers, including through the work of various task forces and working groups.
- Oversee current NIEL projects, including as at March 2023:
 - Education for Sustainable Development Forum
 - Climate Northern Ireland
 - Urban Green Space
 - Health and Environment
 - Dormant Accounts
 - NI Protected Areas
 - Historic Environment networking
 - Other projects which arise

6. Communications

Using communications, marketing and operations, aligning policy and service delivery with clear communications

- Foster a culture of good communications at all levels within NIEL and between NIEL and membership organisations/other stakeholders.
- Produce authoritative, user-focused statements on key issues affecting the Northern Ireland environment.
- Develop and maintain links with relevant government departments and agencies (including NIEA), EU influencers, other Link organisations and political parties.
- Represent NIEL publicly in cooperation with broadcast, print and social media as required.
- Develop and implement a digital communications strategy.
- Represent NIEL on other groups and committees and at conferences.
- Provide the link between NIEL, its members and its Executive Committee.

The postholder will be required to undertake all other reasonable duties as may be required, consistent with the level of the post.

Person Specification

Qualifications	• Third level qualification
Essential Experience	• At least five years' experience of leading, managing and motivating a team. • At least three years' experience of project management. • At least three years' experience of managing a range of stakeholders in the delivery of organisational objectives. • At least three years' experience of managing budgets at a senior level. • Demonstrable experience of successfully developing funded programmes including the preparation of funding applications and programme management. • A demonstrable understanding of the key issues within the environmental NGO sector in Northern Ireland. • A sound understanding of relevant legislative and governance requirements including the NI Charities Act and Companies Act • An understanding of the strategic context (EU and government policy and practice), political institutions and the process of government relating to the environment. • Demonstrable experience of influencing public policy.
Desirable Experience	• Additional relevant professional qualifications eg. Technical and/or Leadership/Management • Membership of professional body(ies). • Membership of government committees or fora. • Professional experience of dealing with the media.
Knowledge and Skills	• Ability to think strategically and communicate that thinking to the Board and other stakeholders. • Excellent interpersonal and relationship building skills with multiple levels of stakeholder • Excellent communication skills, both written and oral, including presentations, report writing, lobbying, advocacy, negotiating and networking skills. • Ability to plan and manage a complex organisational workload to meet agreed targets. • Knowledge of GDPR and how to maintain organisational commitment to confidentiality when required. • Computer literate with experience of MS Office and video conferencing. • Ability to develop and implement a digital communications strategy for optimal effectiveness and efficiency in the dissemination information through digital platforms
Attributes	• Ability to meet deadlines under pressure. • Ability to work within the mission, vision and values of NIEL and ensure professional quality outputs.

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- Commitment to co-operative working and supportive of other staff and their development.
 - Enjoy working independently and within a small team.
 - Drive and enthusiasm.
 - Established credentials in the UK or Irish NGO environmental sector and with stakeholders.
 - Innovative: ability to introduce broader ideas and new thinking.
 - A willingness to undertake regular travel and to work out of office hours when necessary.
 - A full driving licence and access to a car or access to another form of transport suitable to meet the post's requirements
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How to apply

Please forward a **CV, maximum three A4 sides**, together with a completed **Supplementary Questions form** available from www.engageexec.co.uk, ensuring you have included mobile, work and home telephone numbers, as well as any dates when you will not be available or might have difficulty with from the recruitment timetable. You will also be asked to submit a separate **equality form** (see below).

The deadline is **10am on Tuesday 21 March 2023**. Applications should be made by email to: **patrick@co3.org.uk**

Contact Patrick Minne on 07792 509003 if you have any queries about the role or the application process.

Equality Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure

Along with the CV and Supplementary Questions Form, you will be asked to complete and return the Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Criminal Convictions Disclosure Form in a separate document. Neither of these will be disclosed to anyone involved in shortlisting your application.

Disability

In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act a person is disabled if they have, or have had, “a physical or mental impairment which has, or has had, a substantial and long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

If you consider yourself to have a disability relevant to the position for which you are applying, please contact Patrick Minne so that we can process your application fairly, make any specific arrangements for your interview, and make any necessary reasonable adjustments or adaptations, or provide any aids to assist you in completing the duties of the post if appointed.

Equal Opportunities

NIEL is an Equal Opportunities Employer and all applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

Timeline

CV, Supplementary Questions and Equality Monitoring and Criminal Convictions forms to be submitted **10am, Tuesday 21 March 2023**

First Interviews

Friday 31 March 2023 and Monday 3 April 2023

Second Interviews (may include a seen or unseen task) **Thursday 20 April 2023**

Final Interviews

Tuesday 25 April 2023 (provisional)





A primary source of funding for NIEL is the NI Environment Agency.



Please address any enquiries relating to the advertised position, and your submission, to NIEL's recruitment partners:

Patrick Minne



Tel: 07792 509003

Enquiries unrelated to this recruitment can be addressed to:

Northern Ireland Environment Link
89 Loopland Dr, Belfast BT6 9DW

Tel: +44 (0)28 9045 5770

Email: info@nienvironmentlink.org

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