
Expert Group on Organic Production (EGOP) Appointment of Members

Information pack for applicants

The closing date for the receipt of applications for this role is:
midday on Monday 10th October 2022



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Information packs are available in other formats such as larger font and Braille.

If you need a different format, please contact us.

Email: EGOP@Defra.gov.uk

Diversity

To ensure Defra better represents the communities we serve, we positively welcome applicants from all walks of life.

Equal opportunities

UK government has a policy of equality of opportunity. We aim to promote equal opportunity policies whereby no one suffers unfair discrimination either directly or indirectly, or harassment, on grounds such as race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or age.

Disability

Defra will be operating an interview access scheme for disabled people (as defined by the Equalities Act 2010) who meet the minimum criteria for this appointment as published in these notes. If you wish to apply for consideration under this scheme, please notify the Department when you return your application. In addition, if you require any special arrangements at interview stage, please give details in a covering letter to enable us to make the appropriate arrangements if necessary. Furthermore, reasonable adjustments will be made in the event of a successful application.

Expert Group on Organic Production (EGOP)

Introduction

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) invites applications for the position of Member of the Expert Group on Organic Production (EGOP).

The remit of the EGOP may include, but not be limited to:

Domestic elements:

1. Providing technical advice to allow the updating of the current annexes provided for in retained organic regulations, such as those concerning permitted non-organic ingredients and inclusion or removal of permitted inputs/substances.
2. Provide technical advice to support any revisions of the Organic regulations in England, Scotland and Wales, considering divergence in organic policy between GB and NI and the impact on the flow of trade between GB and NI.
3. Provide technical advice on issues arising that are outside of the Defra Organic Team's competence.
4. Provide technical advice on the sector as a whole; including trends worldwide, export opportunities, the success or otherwise of attracting new organic farmers/consumers, working with organic retailers, driving sales etc.

International elements:

1. Support the evaluation of new third country or third country control body applications to determine if recognition should be granted.
2. Support the evaluation of third country proposal(s) to extend scope of existing Organics agreements and if such extensions should be granted.
3. Support the review of annual third country and third country control body reports.
4. Provide advice and analyse trends worldwide, for example production, consumption, regulatory changes.

How will the Expert Group on Organic Production be constituted?

The Expert Group will play a vital role in advising the four UK Governments on future organic policy and advising on technical issues.

The EGOP will consist of members that are able to provide technical expertise in their specialist area of knowledge. Given that this is a new responsibility for the UK, we may hold occasional meetings of the full group or subgroups as appropriate. Longer term, we will review the efficacy of these meetings.

There will be up to 12 members plus a chairperson. Each member will be an expert in their area and together will provide a multi-disciplinary group to assess the evidence base and the policy challenges surrounding organic policy and technical issues.

The purpose of the Expert Group on Organic Production (EGOP) is to provide comprehensive advice to the Four Nations Working Group (FNWG), via the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), on future organic policy and technical issues requiring specific expert advice. This group will also provide assistance in reviewing third country and/or third country control body applications and annual reports.

In doing this, the group will need to consider such things as current Government commitments, impacts on stakeholders and practicality of implementation.

The Role

Description

We are looking for up to 12 individuals with the relevant expertise and right qualities to work alongside the Expert Group chairperson and fellow members to discharge the Group's functions and achieve its outcomes. You will work in partnership with the Government and group members to ensure the Group is able to provide optimal policy recommendations and technical advice to ensure the UK's organic sector remains world leading and avoids unintended consequences.

Group members will be commissioned on an ad-hoc basis to give advice on areas in which they have appropriate skills and knowledge.

The Seven Principles of Public Life (Annex A) apply to this role, even though this role is not a public appointment, to ensure these values are embedded in the Group.

Essential Criteria

Applicants should clearly demonstrate in their application the following personal qualities, skills and experience.

Personal Qualities

- A collaborative style and an aptitude for partnership working.
- An ability to work within a diverse team of experts and contribute effectively to group discussion while displaying independent thinking.

Skills

- An understanding of the interface between science, policy and practice and demonstrable ability in strategically assessing the application of evidence in policymaking.

- Strong analytical skills with the capacity to examine issues in an impartial way and the ability to ensure that EGOP provides high-level technical and science advice not limited by their area of expertise.

Experience

- A good understanding of the overall Organic regulations and an expert knowledge in one or more of the product areas covered by the UK organic regulations:
 - Livestock
 - Aquaculture
 - Arable
 - Production
 - Processing
 - Seeds and vegetative material
 - Wider issues such as imports/exports
 - Wider environmental and animal welfare

- A good understanding of UK agriculture and environment policy.

Terms of appointment

These will be provided to the successful candidate before any appointments are confirmed.

Period of appointment

The appointment will be for a period of three years and may be extended subject to mutual agreement by the candidate, Defra and the FNWG.

Fees and Allowances

Remuneration fee will be paid at a rate of £30 per hour. The fee for each face-to-face meeting is £210 per full day (based on a 4-hour meeting plus an average of 3 hours preparation time). Shorter teleconferences will be based on a 1-hour meeting and half an hour preparation time.

Ad-hoc or subgroup meetings will also be paid at a rate of £30 per hour, plus preparation time.

Reasonable (only standard class rate) travel expenses are also paid.

The Department has due regard to diversity. Expenses may include reimbursement of reasonable childcare or other carer costs, and the reimbursement of reasonable additional expenses of disabled people.

Time Commitment

Where possible, meetings using remote communication methods should be used, such as MS Teams.

Meetings will be organised by the Defra secretariat and the experts will be selected based on the nature of the meeting.

Meetings are normally arranged in advance, with briefing materials and every effort will be made to avoid school holiday periods.

We expect approximately six meetings each year, however this will be reviewed, and if required adjusted, as work progresses.

Conflicts of Interest

You must inform the Department if you have any conflict of interest that might affect your ability to undertake this role. You should disclose information on any relevant business interest, public appointment, or position of authority, including other connections with commercial, public, or voluntary bodies.

Applying for a role

How to respond

All candidates are required to complete the following forms:

- Monitoring form 1 (Conflicts of Interest, Conduct and Recruitment Questionnaire)
- Monitoring form 2 (Diversity Monitoring Questionnaire)

Candidates should submit their CV with educational, professional qualifications and relevant employment history, together with their statement of suitability (no more than 750 words). The statement of suitability should give evidence of strength and depth of your ability to meet essential criteria for this role. Please provide specific examples to demonstrate how you meet each of the criteria.

Your CV and statement should be returned to the following address by **midday on 10th October 2022**.

Email to EGOP@Defra.gov.uk with the subject "EGOP Member Application".

Selection Process

Short listing

The candidates who demonstrate that they meet all the essential criteria for appointment will be considered for interview. It is therefore essential for your statement to give full but concise information relevant to the appointment. All applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of the application review and whether they will be invited for interview.

Interviews & Selection Panel

Interviews will take place via MS Teams. We anticipate that interviews will take place during November and early December. Details will be circulated closer to the time.

The interview will last about 45 minutes and candidates will be asked questions to assess whether they can demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria. As part of the interview, candidates will also be asked to give a presentation lasting between 5 – 7 minutes, the presentation topic will be provided in advance. All interviewees will be advised in writing of the outcome of the interview.

For queries about your application or the recruitment process, please email EGOP@Defra.gov.uk

How we will handle your application

Defra will acknowledge receipt of your CV and statement. Candidates will be contacted again after the closing date and once the panel have considered all the applications.

Feedback will only be provided if you attend an interview.

Data protection

Defra is committed to protect your privacy and to process your personal information in a manner which meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.