

Job Description

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS ACCOUNTANT – G7

SALARY FROM £49,403 + qualification allowance from £3,107

We are recruiting these positions in Birmingham, Bristol, Exeter, Leeds, London, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Peterborough, Reading, Warrington, Worcester, Worthing, York on a Blended/flexible basis

ABOUT THE ROLE

DEFRA is the UK government department responsible for safeguarding our natural environment, supporting our world-leading food and farming industry, and sustaining a thriving rural economy. Our broad remit means we play a major role in people's day-to-day life, from the food we eat, and the air we breathe, to the water we drink.

Natural England (NE) are the Government's statutory adviser for the natural environment, playing a vital role in delivering the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. Natural England work with a wide range of partners, stakeholders, and customers on a huge range of projects.

The Defra Group Finance: Natural England Team is looking for an Environmental Projects Accountant to work within our existing Income and Green Finance workstream. This unit works with the business in considering, developing, and delivering alternate funding solutions for Natural England to that of our main Government Grant in Aid. Defra recognised that delivery of its objectives cannot be reliant on Government Grant alone and requires innovative thinking around alternative funding routes and mechanisms. As part of this, the role of Finance is to be clear about how these sit within our financial framework and control mechanisms, and the delivery of these new funding streams.

As an Environmental Projects Accountant in the Natural England Finance Business Partner (FBP) team you will ensure stewardship of public funds, and efficient and effective use of budgets. You will provide financial advice across the organisation and protect the Accounting Officer's interest as outlined in Managing Public Money.

This role exposes you to a broad range of duties, you will take ownership of the Green Finance portfolio working to support key business areas and inform strategic and operational decisions. You will need to be skilled at applying accounting standards, interpreting, influencing, negotiating, inspiring, and challenging, which are all vital to the role.

You will provide insightful financial advice and analysis, promote commercial awareness to inform decision making, provide constructive challenge and ensure that financial governance, control, and alignment is maintained. Your role is to protect, drive and add value. You will build trust with decision makers so that your advice is actively sought; and you are seen as a critical friend.

You will be respected for your financial knowledge and skill, and ensuring the business adheres to relevant finance policies. The role is equally about leadership, relationship, and information management as it is about financial technical skills.

Job description

Key responsibilities will include but not be limited to: -

You will be the key finance lead for high profile and technical new green finance programmes. The role provides the opportunity for you to develop into a Green Finance expert. Your key responsibility will be to support the Head of the workstream and their team in making robust investment decisions and implementing their action plans. The role will involve working closely with colleagues from across the business to deliver successful outcomes and you will also assist in providing insightful financial analysis to inform decision making. You will provide support to the business and collaborate with colleagues across the organisation, acting as the face of Finance and taking Finance to the heart of decision making. As a critical friend to the business, you will ensure stewardship of public funds, efficient and effective use of budgets.

Responsibilities

We're looking for someone with technical and commercial acumen who can develop relationships. You will contribute to the key accountabilities of the workstream, which include:

- Working with colleagues and stakeholders to support development and delivery of major green finance programmes, providing guidance on the legitimacy and usage of funding streams for a public sector body such as Natural England, up to final audit stage.
- Determine and document the accounting treatment of key financial issues, providing a clear audit trail for year-end accounting purposes and NAO audit. This requires being able to apply relevant accounting standards as articulated in the IFRS, FreM and Consolidated Budgeting guidance.
- Understanding the impact of new income streams on Natural England's budget outturn and future years budgetary implications including feeding into Spending Reviews. Ensuring clear understanding of financial implications, that relevant financial controls are in place and supporting robust forecasting and budgeting.
- Analysing performance against targets and identifying risks and/or opportunities.
- Providing guidance, training and expert financial advice on income management issues, based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the latest accounting principles and practice.
- Ensuring financial rigour is applied to business cases, cost recovery and the accounting of green finance.

Key Relationships

- Senior Stakeholders – Chief Officer and Director level and their leadership teams, providing a financial perspective to business area decision making and delivery
- Membership of project and programme boards, supporting more complex or higher risk business cases to relevant governance committees (ie investment committee)
- Operational Finance counterparts including;
 - Management Reporting
 - Compliance and Financial Accounting, to ensure accounting standards and treatments are applied appropriately
 - Centres of Excellence (ie Tax and Vat, Capital) to co-ordinate with for advise on technical issues

- Engagement with Spending Review teams on longer term planning and impacts
- Counterparts from other disciplines – HR, Commercial, DDTS, Estates and Project Delivery

Essential Experience and Skills:-

[Success Profiles - Experience \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Experience and Skills

- Excellent financial accounting skills, detailed understanding of accounting standards and a proven ability to apply them to the projects you support, knowledge of IFRS 15 (Income from contracts with customers), IAS 38 (Intangible Assets) and IAS 37 (Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets).
- Experience of establishing and implementing financial processes for new charge bearing services, including the pricing of products / services.
- Knowledge of VAT rules and regulations in respect of income and chargeable services.
- Supporting customers in the development of business cases and applying rigour to the review of business cases.
- The ability to think strategically and be able to horizon scan over the full life cycle of a project.
- Proven ability to work with senior financial and non-financial colleagues to deliver improved performance and value for money.
- Experienced in building sustainable relationships and personal credibility with senior stakeholders both across Government Departments and external.
- Strong written and oral communication skills and the ability to communicate complex financial issues and strategies to senior stakeholders.
- Excellent analytical, project appraisal and financial modelling skills, with the ability to gain rapid insight into complex issues.
- Excellent IT skills required particularly MS Excel, Word and experience in the use of a modern (preferably SOP) accounting system.
- Meeting targets and delivering quality outcomes within tight deadlines through effective prioritisation.

Technical Skills if applicable

[Success Profiles - Technical \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Professional Skills

Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral and written presentation skills • Data and analytics interpretation
Practitioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting, forecasting, and costing • The Budgeting Framework • Commercial acumen • Investment appraisal and evaluation
Working knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance Functional Standard • Strategic analysis and insight • Consolidated Budgeting Guidance • HMT Green Book • Managing Public Money • Accounting Officer responsibilities

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- Performance and risks
 - Understanding the role of the NAO
 - Risk management and fraud
 - Interpretation of accounts

Qualifications

- Qualified with [CCAB](#), [CIMA](#) or equivalent

But formal qualifications are not necessarily required to be successful in this role if the applicant can show relevant past experience.

Employees are eligible to receive an accountancy allowance during their professional CCAB, CIMA or ACCA training at the following (non-cumulative) increments:

- 'Part Qualified 1' will receive £796 (National) or £1,281 (London) annually.
- 'Part Qualified 2' will receive £1,590 (National) or £2,553 (London) annually.
- 'Fully Qualified' will receive £3,107(National) or £4,495(London) annually.

Behaviours

[Success Profiles - Civil Service Behaviours \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

- Communicating and Influencing
- Changing and Improving
- Managing a Quality Service
- Seeing the Big Picture

Strengths

[Success Profiles - Civil Service Strengths Dictionary \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

- Adaptable
- Analytical
- Strategic
- Team Player

Interview

Candidate successful at sift stage will be invited to a video assessment/interview (1hour 20/25 mins) that will consist of a blended interview of Behaviours and Strengths. A presentation or additional exercise relative to the role will also be assessed, further details will be given to candidates selected for interview.

Location

Please be aware that this role(s) will be contractually based in a Defra group workplace/office. The successful candidate is required to carry out all their duties from a UK location and cannot do so from an overseas location at any time.

Internal (core Defra) employees can apply for this role and choose to remain in their current location or to be based in one of the advertised locations.

All other applicants will be based in one of the advertised locations. Candidates will need to state their region preference on the application form so we can advise appropriate office locations.

If you are successful in your application and your base working location is London, please be aware that Defra's Nobel House Office at 17 Smith Square, London will be closing in December 2023.

This means that Defra new joiners will be located alongside existing colleagues in offices a short distance away from Nobel House in our other office at 2 Marsham St, London.

To work from 2 Marsham Street, you will require the higher level of CTC clearance. Therefore, confirmation of appointment to the advertised post will be dependent upon successful CTC clearance being confirmed as part of pre-employment checks.