



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Expressions of Interest in Membership of the Board of Pobal

Closing Date: 17:00 on Thursday 28 October 2021

Expressions of Interest in Membership of the Board of Pobal

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) is inviting expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced potential Board members for six vacancies that have arisen on the Board of Pobal and any such vacancies that may arise within one year of the submission of the panel to the Minister.

Interested parties should have significant professional experience in community development with a substantive knowledge and understanding of the community and voluntary sector. Some strategic and corporate knowledge of Pobal is also desirable.

Shortlisting of potential Board members will be on the basis of the written expressions of interest received. Appointments shall be made from this shortlist by the Government of Ireland, based on recommendations by the Minister for Rural and Community Development.

Submissions should be made by emailing a current curriculum vitae, along with a cover letter outlining the specific expertise they would bring to the role of Member, to pobalboard@drcd.gov.ie. Closing date is 17:00 on Thursday, 28 October 2021.

Membership of State Boards

High standards of corporate governance in all State Agencies, whether in the commercial or non-commercial sphere, are critical to ensuring a positive contribution to the State's overall social and economic development.

Members of State Boards are appointed to act on behalf of the citizen to oversee the running of the affairs of state bodies. State bodies must serve the interests of the taxpayer, pursue value for money in their endeavours (including managing risk appropriately), and act transparently as public entities. Members of State Boards, and the relevant management team, are accountable for the proper management of the organisation.

Board members should act on a fully informed basis, in good faith, with due diligence and care, and in the best interest of the State body, subject to the objectives set by Government. In that regard and in accordance with 13.2 of the Guidelines on Appointments to State Boards, "it is advisable that no member of a State Board should serve more than two full terms of appointment or should hold appointments to more than two State Boards."

The [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016](#) (the Code) provides a framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by both commercial and non-commercial State bodies.

In order to be an effective contributor on a State Board it is recommended that members should:

- bring independent and objective scrutiny to the oversight of the organisation;
- be prepared to be challenging when necessary while being supportive to the delivery of organisational strategy and objectives;
- be equipped to offer considered advice on the basis of sound judgement and experience; and be prepared to make a time commitment to their work commensurate with their role.

Appointments to the Board of Pobal

Location:	Ormond Quay, Dublin (1 meeting per annum held outside Dublin)
Number of Vacancies:	Six
Remuneration:	Nil. Travel and subsistence is payable at appropriate Civil Service rates.
Time Requirements:	8 - 9 half day meetings per annum.

In addition members will be required to sit on sub-committees. The sub-committees are:

- Audit Finance and Risk Committee
- Programme Oversight Committee
- Governance and Sustainability

The Audit Finance and Risk and Programme Oversight Committees meet six times annually and the Governance and Sustainability Committee has a minimum of four meetings each year.

1. Background

Pobal (formerly Area Development Management Ltd.) was established by the Government in 1992. It was reconstituted as Pobal in 2005 under the oversight of the then Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Pobal was established to administer EU funding for the purposes of fostering local development, promoting social inclusion, reconciliation and equality and countering disadvantage through local and social economic development. It is a company limited by guarantee and without share capital; it is also a registered charity.

The policy context for Pobal's work is provided by the Programme for Government; Government Action Plans for Jobs and Rural Development, The Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland, Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015 – 2024, Better Outcomes Bright Futures 2014 – 2020, First Five, Putting People First and EU Recovery Plan, Project Ireland 2040, Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities and the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland.

The Company is subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General and its operations are covered by the Freedom of Information and Ethics in Public Offices Acts.

Pobal operates under the aegis of the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) which has an oversight and co-ordination role in respect of the company. Pobal employs approximately 537 people and currently manages the administration of schemes and programmes on behalf of a range of Government Departments and other public bodies. Pobal distributed over 717 million euros to beneficiaries in 2020. Working in partnership with a wide range of local groups, Pobal supports projects in thousands of communities, both urban and rural.

Further detail on all of the programmes which Pobal administer may be found [here](#).

Economic, demographic and administrative changes to the context of Pobal's service delivery provide a range of challenges in the coming years. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the social and economic well-being of the nation, resulting in loss of life, an unprecedented increase in unemployment, reduced and unequal access to education, as yet unknown mental health consequences and numerous impacts on other essential services. While all members of Irish society have been adversely affected by Covid-19, evidence increasingly shows that marginalised and disadvantaged individuals and communities are disproportionately vulnerable to both the direct and indirect impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The emphasis of much of Pobal's local work will change in future years from assisting government in combatting the current impact of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis to supporting longer term, sustainable development.

As the company systems and information technology have provided it with strong data sets, Pobal is moving to higher quality and more effective data analysis to assist government in its planning. As government and EU policy on financial management, grant administration and service commissioning develop, Pobal needs to continuously adapt its approaches to ensure optimal services. As Ireland's population changes, Pobal needs to continuously improve its understanding of local needs and its methods to target them.

Pobal's current Annual Report can be viewed [here](#).

Functions of the Board

Members of the Board of Pobal (it is a 16 member board) are appointed by Government from nominations provided by the social partners and other stakeholders, in addition to expressions of interest received from the general public. It is the responsibility of the Minister for Rural and Community Development to bring the nominations to Government.

The Board has a responsibility to see that procedures are in place to ensure statutory responsibilities are met, an effective corporate compliance programme has been established and corporate documents and records are properly prepared, approved and maintained.

Directors will comply with the codified duties of directors and provisions are per the Companies Act 2014:

Matters reserved for the Board include the following: -

Schedule of Matters Reserved for Board Decision	
Strategic and Operational Planning	Approval of the Strategic Plan Approval of Operational Plans and annual budgets
Annual Reporting	Approval of Annual Reports and Financial Statements Approval of the Chairperson's Comprehensive Report to the Minister Approval of the Statement on Internal Control
Effectiveness of internal Controls	Assessment of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls; including financial, operational and compliance controls, and risk management processes

Corporate Governance	<p>Approval of the Corporate Governance Manual</p> <p>Approval of appointments to Board Sub-committees</p> <p>Approval of the terms of reference of Board Sub-committees</p> <p>Approval of changes to Executive management structures</p> <p>Approval of amendments to the Schedule of Matters Reserved for Board Decision</p> <p>Approval of the delegation of authority to Board Sub-committees and the CEO to exercise functions of the company</p> <p>Approval of the statement of roles of the Chairperson and the CEO and the division of responsibilities between them</p> <p>Approval of the Executive process for the appraisal of funding applications</p>
Contracts	<p>Approval of any decision to commence new business where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It has a value in excess of 5% of total budget in the previous year or b. The business proposed is of a new type or is funded by a government department or state agency with which Pobal does not currently do any business <p>Approval of any decision to cease to operate any material part of Pobal's business</p> <p>Approval of transactions (or related programmes of transactions) not in the ordinary course of business</p> <p>Approval of all property leases of whatever value</p>
Appointment of CEO	Approval of the appointment, remuneration, performance assessment and succession planning of the CEO.
Risk Management	Approval of the Risk Management Policy
Human Resources	<p>Seek assurances of compliance with statutory and administrative requirements in relation to the approval of the appointment, number, grading and conditions of all staff, including remuneration and superannuation</p> <p>Approval of significant amendments to the pension benefits of the CEO and relevant staff.</p>

The current composition of the Board can be viewed [here](#).

2. Person Specification

Candidate's attention is drawn to the provisions of the Code in relation to the role of a Board member, where the principle states: -

- Each State body should be headed by an effective Board which is collectively responsible for the long-term sustainability of the body.
- Non-executive Board members should bring an independent judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance resources, key appointments and standard of conduct.

Details on the role of Board Members can be found in Section 3 of the Code which can be found [here](#).

Required Experience

The Minister for Rural and Community Development invites expressions of interest from members of the public who have the appropriate skills and knowledge to enable them to discharge the duties and responsibilities of a Board member of Pobal. The Minister seeks to create a diverse Board with a broad range of relevant skills and experience.

Candidates must demonstrate in their application evidence of extensive experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Significant professional experience in community development in a rural or urban context
- Has operated at an appropriately senior level role which directs and contributes to organisational and strategic development
- Has a substantive knowledge and understanding of the community and voluntary sector
- Substantive knowledge and personal/professional experience of equality, social inclusion and social disadvantage
- Financial management, audit and accountancy
- Public policy and administration experience at a senior level
- Has substantive knowledge of Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School Age Childcare (SAC)
- Experience which would demonstrate relevant knowledge of the Local Authority sector/Local and Community Development Sector
- Experience which would demonstrate implementation of successful change management initiatives
- Board membership in the non-profit, public or private sectors
- Board or Committee Chairing experience
- Audit and Risk Committee experience
- Strategic and corporate knowledge of Pobal

Desirable Experience:

- Corporate governance experience and/or qualifications
- Risk Appraisal and Management experience and skills

- Legal and regulatory expertise
- Human Resource management experience
- Quality Improvement experience
- Experience in delivering on sustainable development initiatives
- Experiencing in delivering on climate action and environmental improvement initiatives
- Experience which would demonstrate relevant knowledge of the Local Authority sector/Local and Community Development Sector

The Minister shall have regard to the desirability for gender balance, diversity and inclusion on the Board as the Minister considers appropriate and determines from time to time when making appointments, in line with the updated Code.

In order to qualify for appointment a person must not have any legal impediment or conflicts of interest likely to interfere with his/her ability to assume the role of a member of the Board. Please give careful consideration to the possibility of any potential conflict of interest that may exist and address this in your cover letter. The Assessment Panel may decide, based on the perceived level of conflict, not to forward your name for consideration.

3. Term of Appointment

Board members are appointed by the Government of Ireland.

- Appointments to the Board are subject to rotation at the AGM:
 - At each AGM one-quarter of the directors shall be required to retire. The directors to retire in every year shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment and as between persons who become directors on the same day, those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree amongst themselves) be determined by lot.
- Retiring directors shall be eligible for re-nomination and appointment. No Director shall be entitled to serve on the board of Directors for more than two consecutive terms.
- A member of the Board may resign his or her membership of the Board by notice in writing sent or given to the Company Secretary, and the resignation shall take effect on the day on which the Company Secretary receives the notice.
- The roles and responsibilities of Board Members are described in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies which is available here: [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies](#).

4. Submitting your Application

Before submitting your expression of interest, please review the self-assessment questionnaire which can be found [here](#). This questionnaire is designed to help you in considering whether to submit an expression of interest – it is not part of the application process and you are not required to submit the questionnaire as part of the process.

Having considered the general suitability criteria for membership of a State Board, you should consider carefully how your background and experience fits with the specific appointment criteria set out in the Person Specification section in this booklet.

Please give careful consideration to the possibility of any potential conflict of interest that may exist and address this in your cover letter. The Assessment Panel may decide, based on the perceived level of conflict, not to forward your name for consideration.

Your submission should be made via email to pobalboard@drcd.gov.ie together with your **Curriculum Vitae** and a **cover letter**. An acknowledgement of receipt of your submission will be issued.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Please take care when submitting your expression of interest. As the Assessment Panel will make its recommendation(s) based on consideration of the documentation which you submit, it is most important that you ensure your Cover Letter (and supporting CV) clearly specifies how your particular background and experience meets the requirements of the Board position(s) specified in this booklet.

This will help ensure that the Assessment Panel is as informed as possible as to the basis for your candidature and why you believe you are a person who could potentially be appointed to this State Board. **Please only include information that is directly relevant to the particular role for which you are applying.**

If you have any questions regarding the application process please email pobalboard@drcd.gov.ie

5. Assessment Process

An Assessment Panel (the "Panel") will be convened by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) to consider and assess the applications received. The Panel will be chaired by an independent person and typically consists of members from DRCD, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and Pobal.

The Panel:

- will consider the expressions of interest submitted to pobalboard@drcd.gov.ie against the specific appointment criteria for the role, as advertised in this Information Booklet. A pre-assessment process may apply depending on the number of applications received;
- may seek advice from a person with expertise particularly relevant to a competency sought as part of its consideration.
- will select suitable potential Board members for a shortlist of qualified applicants to be put to the Minister.

6. Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, 2014, applications will be treated in strict confidence. All enquires, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that aspect of the process.

Certain items of information, not specific to any individual, are extracted from computer records for general statistical purposes.

7. Data Protection Act 2018

Once an application is submitted, the Department will act as data controller of such data as is submitted in connection with the application and will retain it for up to one year following the appointment/s. Unless you request the withdrawal of your application such data may be used in considering your suitability for other similar vacancies/ roles that arise for a period of up to one year for this Board.

The Department's Privacy Notice and other information are available [here](#).