**NICS HR**

**Interchange Unit**

**Hosting Opportunity Proforma**

British Irish Council (BIC) Secretariat, Edinburgh

Name of Host

Organisation

**1. Interchange Manager’s details**

Conor McParland

Name

Organisation/

The Executive Office

Department

Executive Support Directorate

Stormont Castle

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Number

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E-mail

Type of Opportunity

**Executive Director**

Secondment - up to 2 years.

**Background**

The British-Irish Council was established under the Agreement signed by the UK and Irish Governments on 10 April 1998 which provided for various new institutional arrangements including the British-Irish Council. The Council comprises Ministers from the British and Irish Governments, the Devolved Administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and the Governments of the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey. The Council’s role, as defined in the Agreement, is to exchange information, discuss, consult and use best endeavours to reach agreement on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the relevant administrations.

**BIC Secretariat**

The Council has, in conformity with the St Andrews Agreement, established a full-time secretariat which is located at Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, Scotland and which has been operational since 4 January 2012.

The BIC Secretariat is headed jointly by two senior officials, one each from the British and Irish Government and is supported by three policy officers on assignment to the secretariat from the BIC administrations, together with an office manager from the Scottish Government. During the period of the assignment policy officers report and are accountable to the Joint Heads although they will remain part of their parent administration for the purposes of pay, conditions, promotion etc.

The role of the Secretariat is to facilitate and support the work of the Council. The Secretariat has a cross-cutting function, which includes:

* Supporting individual BIC work sectors;
* Supporting host Administrations in preparation for the BIC Summits;
* Supporting the BIC Coordinators’ Group;
* Leading and facilitating BIC internal and external communications including maintaining the BIC website;
* Managing and promoting relationships with key stakeholders;
* Advising on and coordinating the scheduling of all BIC meetings;
* Communicating decisions of the Council and monitoring their implementation;
* Responding to media queries relating to BIC;
* Ensuring proper accountability to the Council and Administrations;
* Carrying out such other tasks as the Council may direct.

In most cases these functions are carried out in conjunction and cooperation with officials in the BIC Member Administrations.

**Development Opportunity**

The Policy Officer will be required to travel to destinations across the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. This will provide the post-holder with first-hand experience of how each of the BIC Member Administrations interacts with the others on areas of interest. The post-holder will also develop their understanding of the political landscape across Member Administrations and an appreciation of how policy goals are shaped and formed and how policies support Ministerial objectives.

The Northern Ireland Executive is seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified individuals working at Staff Officer level or equivalent in the public sector. The assignment will be for a period of two years. The post represents the opportunity to gain an insight of intergovernmental working in action whilst remaining an employee of your current employer and retaining existing contract of employment and conditions of service. Salary costs and associated expenses will be met by the Executive Office.

Main objectives of the opportunity

**Policy Officer Role**

The Policy Officer will support the BIC Secretariat Joint Heads in implementing the BIC Secretariat Strategic Business Plan and developing further the role of the Secretariat.

**Key Tasks:**

* Act as the main support to individual BIC work sectors;
* Attend BIC Summit and work sector meetings and provide secretariat support as and when necessary;
* Liaise with Chairs of BIC work sectors and with BIC Senior Co-ordinators in each Member Administration;
* Provide logistical and administrative support to the BIC Summit hosts;
* Prepare briefing and BIC papers;
* Contribute to the BIC Annual Report;
* Assist in developing and implementing the BIC Secretariat Procedural Guidance, the BIC Secretariat Strategic Business Plan and the BIC Secretariat Communications Strategy;
* Prepare responses to press / public enquiries;
* Develop and update BIC website content and provide assistance with the BIC extranet;
* Provide input to responses to Parliamentary Questions/Assembly Questions/FOI requests etc;
* Liaise with and consider how to develop the relationship with external organisations, for example the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly;
* Prepare, collate and publish BIC statistics with the Annual Report;
* Travel regularly throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland to assist BIC activity.

**3. Skills requirements**

What qualities, skills and experience is required from the individual

**Essential Skills Requirements**

* Political awareness and knowledge of the British-Irish Council;
* Experience of working closely with elected representatives;
* Experience of drafting and providing briefing to senior officials;
* Excellent analytical, written and oral communications skills;
* Good interpersonal skills and the ability to create and maintain good working relationships within the Secretariat and with a wide network of officials across Government Departments of each BIC Member Administration;
* Good negotiating and influencing skills;
* Strong organisational skills;
* IT Literacy;
* Ability to deal with demanding deadlines within a complex organisational environment;
* Ability to plan for future demands, be self-motivated and demonstrate drive and commitment; and
* Ability to adapt quickly to a new and challenging work environment.

**Desirable Criteria**

* Experience of working closely with Ministers;
* Experience of planning/organising high level meetings.

**Competencies**

The Personal competencies required are consistent with the competency framework for the Staff Officer Grade. For this post the candidate will be expected to demonstrate the following key competencies:

**Strategic Cluster**

* Setting Direction
* Seeing the Big Picture
* Changing and Improving
* Making Effective Decisions

**People Cluster**

* Engaging People
* Leading and Communicating
* Collaborating and Partnering
* Building Capability

**Delivering Results**

* Delivering Value for Money
* Delivering at Pace
* Achieving outcomes through Delivery Patterns

**4. Personnel: Please state below**

Who will the individual report to?

The Joint Heads of the BIC Secretariat

Who will be the individual’s line manager and/or reporting officer?

The Joint Heads of the BIC Secretariat

**5. Transfer of learning**

Please give details of how the Opportunity will benefit your organisation, the

individual and their organisation.

The Secretariat is staff entirely by seconded personnel representing the membership of the British- Irish Council, thus ensuring that it serves the interests of all administrations.

The Policy Officer will be required to travel to destinations across the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. This will provide the post-holder with first-hand experience of how each of the BIC Member Administrations interacts with the others on areas of interest. The post-holder will also develop their understanding of the political landscape across Member Administrations and an appreciation of how policy goals are shaped and formed and how policies support Ministerial objectives. They will also be provided with for first-hand experience of how administrations use the BIC to exchange information, discuss, consult and use best endeavours to reach agreement on matters of mutual interest and how the various work sectors develop and implement policies both individually and collectively.

Seconded individuals will be able to use the experiences gained within BIC in policy development. These will include experience of engage with a wide range of people and organisations. Leading and communicating within the work sector and working collaboratively with other administrations to build relationships and capability. They will benefit from seeing policy development through a wider prism and should be able to see who to achieve value for money through collaboration with others where relevant. Working with the BIC will also involve interaction with Ministers, senior managers from the public and in some instances the private and third sectors. This will provide an excellent development opportunity for the secondee, improve their networking skills and ultimately the knowledge gained and contacts made should benefit the parent organisation in a new era of collaborative working.

**6. Logistics**

Please provide details of the likely start date, duration, location, resources (i.e.;

desk, PC, fax etc.) and funding arrangements for the opportunity.

**Location:** The post is located in Thistle House, Haymarket Terrrace, Edinburgh. Work will involve travel to meetings and events across all the United Kingdom and Ireland including the Crown Dependencies.

**Start Date:** A start date is sought as early as possible in the 2018-19 financial year by mutual agreement.

**Duration:** Up to two years.

**Salary:** £29,317 to £31,446

**Funding:** Salary including staff costs relating to the secondment will be met by the Executive Office.

**Selection:** Paper sift followed by shortlisting and interviews if necessary.

**Contact:** If you require any further information about the post, please contact Valerie Devlin in Programme for Government and Executive Support Directorate, the Executive Office on 028 3751 5018, or by e-mail to [valeriedevlin@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:valeriedevlin@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk).

**Closing Date:** 5.00pm on Friday 23 March 2018.

**7. Endorsement**

**Interchange Manager**

*Conor McParland*

Signed

12 March 2018

Date