

Appointment of the Chairperson for the Designated Areas Appeals Advisory Board (DAAAB) – Special Area of Conservation and Natural Heritage Area Sites

Appointing Authority	Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
Location	Hearings will take place throughout the country in the regions where designated sites are located.
Department's Websites	http://www.ahrrga.gov.ie & www.npws.ie
Closing date for expressions of interest	19/5/2017

The Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs wishes to appoint a Chairperson for the Designated Areas Appeals Advisory Board (DAAAB) – Special Area of Conservation and Natural Heritage Area Sites. Expressions of Interest for this appointment must be submitted by 5.30 pm on 19/5/2017 to daaab@ahg.gov.ie. Any enquiries in relation to the position must also be submitted to daaab@ahg.gov.ie.

Background to the DAAAB

The DAAAB makes recommendations to the Minister in cases where landowners/users object to the inclusion of their land in Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). It is independent of the Department and reports directly to the Minister.

Membership of the DAAAB is comprised from a (i) Landowners/User/Producer Panel and (ii) Conservation Groups Panel nominated by the relevant organisations. The Minister appoints the Chairperson.

The Board has available to it an independent Scientific Advisor. Secretarial services for the Board are provided by a member of staff of the Department.

Role of Chairperson:

- To review the scientific reports relating to each appeal which will be forwarded by the secretary to the Board in advance of the appeal hearing;

- To chair the proceedings at the appeal hearing which will typically include a site visit to the area under appeal and a hearing at which the appellant and the ecologist representing the appellant have an opportunity to present a case to have land excluded from the designated area;
- To chair the meetings of the Board following the hearing at which the Board determines the recommendation to go to the Minister. In the event that the Board members do not agree on a recommendation, the Chairperson holds the casting vote;
- To ensure all Board members have access to accurate, timely and clear information to enable sound decision making by the Board; and
- To foster an environment conducive to constructive debate, openness and effective decision making by the Board.

Remuneration

The Chairperson is paid a fee for attendance at appeal hearings. The current rate is €208 *per diem* and the Chairperson is paid this fee for the day of the hearing and for a preparatory day to review the relevant reports relating to the appeal. Travel and subsistence are payable at the appropriate civil service rates.

Time Requirements

There are currently 12 sites with appeals outstanding. These appeals will involve in the region of 30 hearing days. Hearings will take place outside Dublin in the regions where these sites are located.

There are 4 Special Protection Area (SPA) sites with appeals outstanding involving in the region of 70 hearing days. It is possible that the DAAAB Chairperson for SAC and NHA sites may be requested to assist with SPA appeal hearings.

Person Specification

The Chairperson of the DAAAB needs to be independent of Landowner/User/Producer Groups and Conservation Groups, as well as of the Department. He/she needs to:

- Have excellent communication skills;
- Have an ability to work with individuals and groups coming from considerably different perspectives;
- Be tactful and demonstrate an empathy with others;
- Have an understanding of, and be able to assess, various and sometimes complex legal and environmental issues and the regulatory framework in which the designation process operates;

- Have an interest in/knowledge or experience of nature conservation areas;
- Have an interest in/knowledge or experience of regional and rural affairs;
- Provide direction and facilitate decision making;
- Have experience in chairing boards/forums and/or stakeholder engagement/consultation; and
- Have a strong sense of ethics and integrity.

Submission of Expressions of Interest

Expressions of interest must be made by the submission of a cover letter and supporting Curriculum Vitae. The cover letter and CV must clearly specify how the particular background and experience of the applicant meet the requirements of the person specification set out above. In the cover letter the applicant must confirm that he/she does not have a conflict of interest or legal impediment which would be likely to interfere with his/her ability to act as Chairperson of the DAAAB. The applicant must also confirm that he/she will make himself/herself available to attend hearings and to carry out the duties of Chairperson of the Board.

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Assessment Process

An Assessment Panel (the “Panel”) will be convened by the Department to consider and assess the expressions of interest received. The Panel will review and discuss the expressions of interest received against the person specification for the appointment. It will then arrive at a shortlist of suitable candidates to be sent forward for consideration by the Minister. The Minister may invite the proposed/shortlisted Chair to meet to discuss the approach which he/she will take to the role of Chairperson. A decision will then be taken by the Minister on the appointment.

Confidentiality

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

The Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 also apply.

The Chairperson, on appointment, must hold information obtained in his/her role as Chairperson confidential and act in accordance with provision 5.6 of the code of practice for the governance of state bodies in this regard.

Appendix 1

DAAAB Guidelines

Code of practice for the Governance of State Bodies