

# Chief Operations Officer

## Job Specification



*Teagasc Head Office, Oak Park, Carlow, R93 XE12*

### Organisation Overview

### How to Apply

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**Enquiries in relation to this role should be directed to:**

**Ms. Teri Quinn, Osborne Executive**

**Email:** [teagasc@osborne.ie](mailto:teagasc@osborne.ie)

**Phone:** 041 986 5058 or 086 083 0690

## Chief Operations Officer

**Location:** Teagasc Head Office, Oak Park, Carlow.

The successful candidate will be based full time in Head Office and attendance at other locations and outside of normal hours can be expected from time to time.

**Contract Type:** Permanent

**Reporting to:** Director of Teagasc

**Grade/Salary:** Head of Directorate scale  
€169,819 (min.) – €194,262 (max.)

### Background:

Teagasc is a dynamic public service organisation built on partnerships and close working relationships with farmer and industry stakeholders, Government and other state agencies, research collaborators in Ireland and internationally, learners in its education system, and other collaborators in the agri-food system. Teagasc provides advisory services to all Irish farmers, including 43,000 fee paying clients. It has 3,600 enrolled learners in its education service, availing of full-time, part-time, distance and apprenticeship education offering. Its cutting-edge research programmes across the agri-food sector are internationally recognised and result in 600 refereed publications annually and include 200+ food company engagements.

Teagasc is unique in a global context of having the three pillars of the Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) within the same organisation (Research, Education, Advisory) and this structure has resulted in it being recognised internationally as an exemplar of best practice in knowledge transfer.

Teagasc's Statement of Strategy 2025-2028, "*Innovating for Impact*", reflects the evolving global and national policy environment, changing food demand, and the opportunities presented by new technologies including digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Its central thrust is to strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of the agri-food sector, enabling it to thrive economically while adapting to climate, environmental and market challenges. In response, Teagasc plays a key role in driving a competitive and climate-resilient agri-food system through scientific leadership, expert knowledge and innovation support, while advancing environmental sustainability and strengthening the economic viability of the sector and the well-being of rural communities.

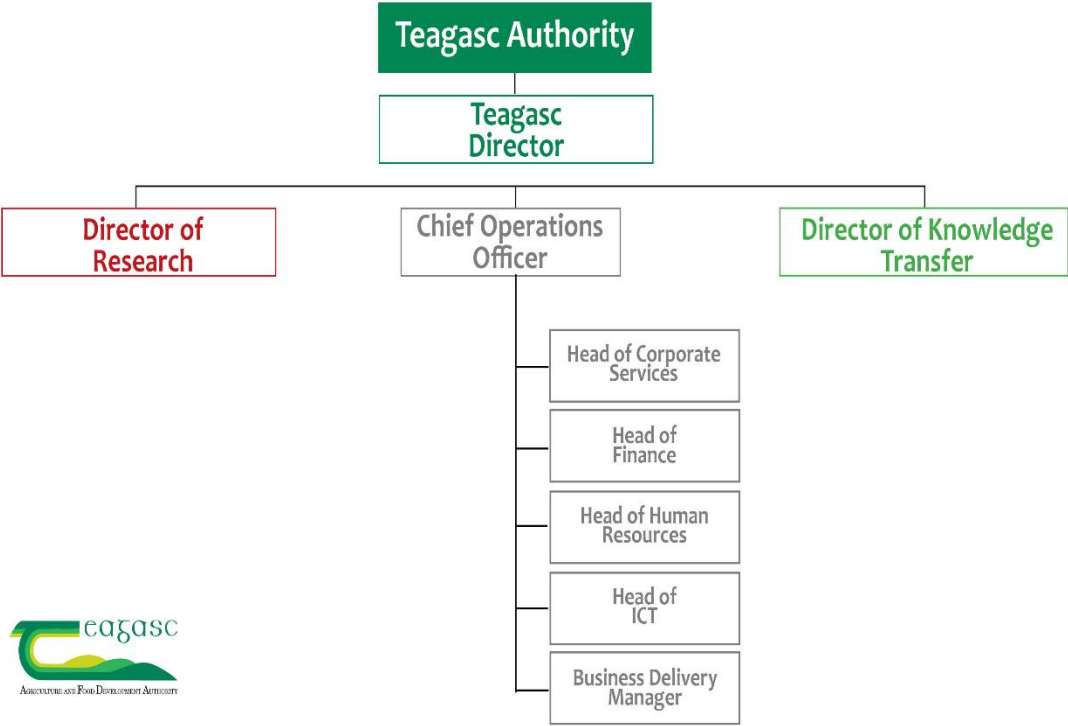
To support its continued success, owing to an imminent retirement, Teagasc now wishes to appoint a Chief Operations Officer to its executive team.

### The Role of Chief Operations Officer (COO)

The COO will report to the Director of Teagasc and will be part of the Teagasc Executive Team which also includes the Director of Research and the Director of Knowledge Transfer. As part of this team, the COO will provide strong strategic leadership across the organisation and will engage proactively with external stakeholders, in particular the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The COO is also Secretary to the Teagasc Authority (i.e. Board) and is responsible for Authority Affairs.

The COO will lead the Operations Directorate, with overall responsibility for the Finance, Human Resources, ICT and Corporate Services Departments through their respective Heads of Department. The role also includes responsibility for the Business Delivery Unit and for driving operational excellence and digitalisation through the Project Management Office.

The COO will provide strategic leadership and oversight across a diverse portfolio of corporate and operational functions together with carrying out the duties of Secretary to the Teagasc Authority. The role encompasses responsibility for corporate governance and operational efficiency, control and management of financial resources, delivering commercial returns and value for money, ICT and cyber security, business continuity, risk management, people and organisational development, data sharing and protection, business metrics and digitalisation, organisational development and change management. The key responsibilities associated with these functions are outlined in the following sections.



## Key Areas of Responsibility

### Governance, Risk and Public Accountability and Authority Affairs

As COO and Secretary of the Teagasc Authority, the appointee will have responsibility for ensuring good governance and auditing procedures across the organisation through the development of an appropriate culture based on full compliance with all relevant Codes, Policies and Procedures. They will adopt a proactive approach to identifying and resolving governance issues, monitoring the effective management of financial resources and maintaining up to date and best in class policies and procedures.

#### Duties:

- Continually develop and maintain a corporate culture based on full compliance with all relevant Codes, Policies and Procedures expected of a high performing state agency.
- Oversee the management of Authority affairs including undertaking the duties of Secretary to the Authority, with responsibility for the efficient operation of its meetings and those of its committees.
- Provide timely and accurate operational reports, metrics and advice to the Director and Authority to support evidenced-based decision-making and accountability.
- Ensure an appropriate audit and risk management culture, including compliance with high audit standards and effective maintenance of Risk Registers, and the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures and safeguards consistent with Teagasc's risk appetite.
- Prepare reports, proposals and presentations for the Authority on strategic organisational issues, particularly those related to the Operations Directorate.

### Strategic Leadership and Delivery of Organisational Change

The COO will be required to adopt a high-level, long-term perspective and to contribute to the strategic development and delivery of the organisation's programmes. They will play a leading role in delivering Teagasc's new Statement of Strategy 2025- 2028, *Innovating for Impact*. A key requirement of the role will be the ability to demonstrate empowering leadership practices that energise and build commitment of staff to the achievement of the organisation's goals. Delivering this strategic input to the organisation will require an ability to critically review and analyse information that will facilitate the evidenced-based decision making of the executive and senior leadership teams and the Authority.

#### Duties:

- Actively participate in strategy development and implementation for the organisation as part of the Executive Team.
- Demonstrate empowering leadership practices that facilitate staff to flourish, both personally and professionally, realising their full potential in contributing to the achievement of Teagasc's goals and objectives.
- Devise policies and implement strategies that will leverage the human, financial, technological support and physical resources of the organisation to maximise the impact of all Teagasc programmes through a culture of empowerment, operational excellence, and targeted ambition.
- Represent Teagasc on external committees or other bodies relevant to the role, and develop international linkages, as appropriate.

## **Operational Excellence and Digital Transformation**

The COO will be expected to improve the organisation's ability to execute its strategy and achieve its desired outcomes for stakeholders. Through the Programme Management Office, they will ensure the adoption of innovative, evidence-based methodologies and best practices from both the public and private sectors to continually strengthen Teagasc's operational excellence and programme delivery across its three Directorates. They will bring a strong ethos of continuous improvement through highly professional, and mission driven staff dedicated to delivering value for all stakeholders.

### **Duties:**

- Empower Teagasc's 70 business units to drive operational excellence and good governance through a focus on process improvement, leveraging technology, lean methodologies and project management.
- Ensure Teagasc can demonstrate that it is actively implementing a programme of efficiencies and cost reductions to achieve tangible savings in operational costs.
- Maximise the use of data and digital technologies in supplying services to clients and stakeholders, and in leveraging operational efficiencies internally.

## **Commercial and Financial Acumen**

The appointee will have the necessary entrepreneurial and commercial skills required to ensure effective and efficient business delivery across the organisation. They will bring a strong value-for-money focus seeking to optimise commercial return for the organisation, identifying and leveraging new income earning opportunities and maximising asset utilisation.

### **Duties:**

- Oversee a strong value-for-money focus and optimise commercial returns for the organisation, leveraging new income earning opportunities and maximising asset utilisation.
- Bring forward proposals that demonstrate commercial rigour and an entrepreneurial mindset.
- Adopt an evidenced based approach to reviewing programme delivery that highlights the return on investment in terms of programme impact versus programme cost.

## **People Leadership, Organisational Culture and Values**

As COO, the appointee will demonstrate an ability to lead major change initiatives while upholding and embedding Teagasc's core values of Respect, Excellence and Integrity. They will support staff wellbeing and their continuous development through initiatives that promote professional and personal growth, ensuring staff are actively engaged in business planning and fostering a collaborative approach to programme delivery. They will also develop Teagasc's Partnership and staff consultative structures to promote effective two-way communication across the organisation.

### **Duties:**

- To live Teagasc's Values through fostering a culture of respect, striving for excellence and acting with integrity.
- Build a future-ready Teagasc workforce equipped with the skills, agility and capacity to meet evolving challenges and opportunities.
- Foster an inclusive, high performing work environment that makes Teagasc a great place to work while delivering world-class services to stakeholders.

## **Leading and integrating a multi-functional Operations Directorate**

As line manager for the Operations Leadership Team, the COO will articulate an ambitious vision for the Directorate that is clearly communicated, understood and embraced by their leadership team, Operations Directorate staff and the wider organisation. They will demonstrate excellence in governance, people leadership, financial management and budgeting capabilities. The COO will develop Teagasc's ICT and Business Delivery capabilities and will carry out the following duties in close liaison with the relevant Operations Directorate Head of Department:

### **Duties:**

- Manage the strategic and operational development of the Human Resources, Finance, ICT, Corporate Services and Business Delivery functions.
- Ensure Statement of Strategy objectives are translated into business plans, KPIs and measurable efficiency and quality targets across Corporate Services, Finance, HR, ICT and Business Delivery.
- Continually improve Teagasc's capital infrastructure including co-ordinating the development of long and short-term capital programmes. Ensure all capital works are carried out efficiently and in accordance with Department of Finance guidelines and are scalable and adaptable to changing external environments.
- Continually review organisational resources, land, buildings, energy use, etc. to ensure they provide the maximum value to the organisation, while ensuring the organisation's assets are accurately quantified, protected and maximised.
- Ensure Teagasc adopts best practice in the management of its own operations and in procurement activity with regard to environmental performance including direct emissions and energy use, discharges to water, and biodiversity.
- Lead the provision of programme support services to the other Directorates, including Training & Development, Health & Safety, Data Sharing, Quality Customer Experience and Risk Management.
- Ensure proper management of all matters relating to property, insurance and legal issues and responsibilities, including appropriately managing potential liabilities arising from Teagasc's activities.
- Through the Business Delivery Unit, lead the development of the annual Programme of Activities and Business Plans, and undertake regular reporting on programme implementation.
- Utilise the Project Management Office to drive a project management approach to strategic planning, implementation and progress reporting.
- Manage the strategic development of the organisation's human resources to strengthen organisational capability and meet programme demands. Initiatives will include application of best HRM practices, including workforce planning, talent management, leadership and skills development, and staff wellbeing.
- Ensure financial resources are utilised optimally and managed appropriately to achieve the objectives of the organisation. This will include the costing of plans for the efficient attainment of the approved annual Business Plan.
- Oversee all financial and revenue regulations and reporting requirements to ensure they are fully adhered to by the organisation.
- Maintain the highest levels of compliance with public service procurement regulations while ensuring Teagasc achieves value for money for its expenditures.
- Manage the Delegated Sanction pay budget and staff numbers ceiling.

- Oversee the development and implementation of ICT strategies and services that will deliver the necessary support to enable and enhance programme delivery and operational efficiency through increased digitalisation.
- Ensure cyber security systems, policies and practices are representative of best industry practice at all times.
- Undertake such other duties as may be assigned by the Director from time to time.

*This job specification is intended as a guide to the general range of duties and is intended to be neither definitive nor restrictive. It will be subject to periodic review with the post holder.*

**While the post will require work outside of normal hours, the post holder will be expected to demonstrate leadership in promoting sustainable work-life balance, and flexible working practices, consistent with the responsibilities of the role.**

## Person Specification:

Candidates are not expected to have depth of experience across all areas set out in this Person Specification. However, candidates must demonstrate substantial senior leadership experience in a complex organisation, together with a strong understanding of public sector governance, and a proven track record in organisational performance, including financial oversight and resource management, stakeholder engagement, empowering people and delivering organisational change. Experience across the full range of operational functions as outlined in this Job Specification would be an advantage.

Category	Specification
<b>Qualifications</b>	<p>Candidates must hold a relevant Level 8 Degree, as recognised on the National Framework of Qualifications, or equivalent international qualification at this level.</p> <p>Alternatively, an equivalent professional qualification, in addition to a relevant postgraduate qualification, or comparable qualification or experience, in a field that embraces strategic management and leadership, may be considered.</p> <p>An MBA or other relevant strategic leadership qualification would be an advantage.</p>
<b>Knowledge / Skills / Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated strategic and operational leadership abilities at a senior level in a services-based/oriented organisation</li> <li>• Thorough understanding of the public sector and its governance (including the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies)</li> <li>• Excellent commercial acumen and business knowledge</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of best practice in human resource management and its alignment with the overall strategic needs of the organisation</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of best practice in strategic financial management and its alignment with the overall strategic needs of the organisation</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of best practice in managing and planning significant ICT resources</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of best practice in managing corporate affairs</li> <li>• Excellent stakeholder management abilities</li> <li>• Experience of dealing with government departments</li> <li>• Ability to provide leadership that engages and inspires others to achieve</li> <li>• Proven influencing skills in dealing with individuals and groups at all levels</li> <li>• Strong organisational awareness and interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Excellent critical thinking, analytical and problem-solving skills</li> <li>• Strategic awareness with the ability to articulate a vision clearly</li> <li>• Proven innovation and change management skills</li> <li>• Strong results-based, project planning skills</li> </ul>

Category	Specification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of dealing with large budgets, fixed assets and property portfolios</li> <li>• Professional ethos which reflects the highest standards of probity</li> <li>• Excellent communication, organisational, delegation and time management skills</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviour Competencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly motivated with a proactive and ambitious mindset</li> <li>• A results-driven and strategically focused leader with a strong track record in goal setting, performance management, accountability and the delivery of organisational objectives</li> <li>• An organised working style with the ability to prioritise and deliver on a diverse range of activities</li> <li>• Excellent soft skills underpinned by strong self-awareness and insight</li> <li>• A change-agent with the capability to lead, persuade and influence others to positively and proactively challenge the status quo and to promote innovation and new thinking within the organisation</li> <li>• An ability to build and sustain a wide network of collaborative working relationships inside and outside the organisation</li> <li>• Resilient and resourceful with an ability to maintain concentration and performance levels under high demand</li> <li>• An ability to create effective structures and systems for gathering and sharing information and transferring technology</li> <li>• A strong commitment to teamwork and ongoing personal and professional development</li> <li>• Leads by example and promotes continuous improvement with a quality and customer-oriented focus</li> <li>• A solid commitment to operating with a high degree of integrity in all aspects of work</li> </ul>

- While tailored to the specific requirements of the COO role in Teagasc, competency requirements for this role are aligned at a comparable level to the Irish Civil Service Assistant Secretary Competency Model.
- At all levels in Teagasc, we believe in growing and keeping alive an open, diverse and inclusive workplace which is respectful to all and nurtures different perspectives, for the benefit of all in the organisation. We are committed to the principles of 'Equal Opportunities, No Barriers, Active Inclusion'. We actively welcome applications from people from diverse backgrounds.

## Additional Information

### Salary

The salary scale relevant to this position is the Head of Directorate scale.

Min - €168,819; Point 2 - €177, 537; Point 3 - €185,901; Max – €194,262

Candidates should note that entry will be at the minimum of the scale and will not be subject to negotiation. The scale quoted above is the rate effective of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026. The rate of remuneration may be adjusted from time to time in line with Government pay policy. Increments may be awarded annually subject to satisfactory performance. Different terms and conditions may apply, if, immediately prior to appointment the appointee is already a serving Civil Servant or Public Servant.

### Probation

A 12-month probationary period will apply to this appointment. During the probationary period the appointee's performance will be reviewed on an ongoing basis with formal reviews carried out after three, six and nine months.

### Annual Leave

The annual leave allowance for this position is 30 days. This allowance is based on a five-day week and is exclusive of public holidays.

### Flexible Working and Other Benefits

Teagasc operates a number of policies under the Flexible Working Programme including home working, remote office working, compressed working hours and core hours. Teagasc also offers a range of health and wellbeing benefits including paid sick leave and death in service benefits, together with an employee wellbeing programme, and a number of on-site benefits including subsidised staff restaurant, extensive grounds for lunchtime walks or running, shower facilities, and free parking.

### Superannuation and Retirement

The appointee will be offered public service pension terms and retirement age conditions in accordance with pension arrangements in Teagasc depending on the status of the successful appointee. In general, an appointee who has never worked in Public Service will become a member of the Single Public Sector Pension Scheme. Where the appointee has worked in a pensionable capacity (non- Single Scheme Terms) within the Civil or Public Service in the 26 weeks prior to appointment different pension terms may apply. The pension entitlement of the appointee will be established prior to appointment in the context of their public service employment history.

### Eligibility to Compete and Certain Restrictions on Eligibility Citizenship Requirements

Eligible candidates must be:

- a) A citizen of the European Economic Area (EEA). The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; or
- b) A citizen of the United Kingdom (UK); or
- c) A citizen of Switzerland pursuant to the agreement between the EU and Switzerland on the free movement of persons; or
- d) A non-EEA citizen who has a Stamp 4 permission or a Stamp 5 permission.

Please note that a 50 TEU visa, which is a replacement for Stamp 4EUFAM after Brexit, is acceptable as a Stamp 4 equivalent.