**Job Description**

**Role title: Principal Lab Ecologist**

**Reports to: Head of Labs, AQUAFACT**

**Grade: Principal**

**Sector: Marine Industry Ireland**

**Division: AQUAFACT**

**Location: Galway, Ireland**

**Purpose / scope of role**

AQUAFACT (part of the APEM Group) is an established environmental consultancy company specialising in providing services to clients in the marine sector. One of the key services we provide is the provision of biological information on the type and diversity of animals and plants that live in both marine and freshwater habitats. Our laboratory team has the capacity to identify hundreds of marine and freshwater samples. This information is used to provide evidence-based assessments and the baseline against which the impact of various developments can be assessed. The work of the laboratory team covers areas such as freshwater resource use, aquaculture, ports and harbours, and offshore renewable energy developments.

AQUAFACT’s biological laboratory team provides the following services:

* Analysis of samples to establish ecological baselines for developments in marine and freshwater environments including intertidal, subtidal, and aquatic environments;
* Analysis of benthic samples collected as part of the national Water Framework Directive monitoring programme;
* Analysis of benthic samples collected as part of annual benthic audit regulatory monitoring for the aquaculture industry;
* Marine and freshwater benthic macroinvertebrate sample analysis including sample processing, sorting, identification to species, enumeration, and biomass calculation;
* Marine meiofauna and zooplankton identification;
* Physicochemical sediment analysis;
* Marine Institute Shellfish Biotoxin programme support;
* Habitat and Biotope Assessment;
* Ecological Desktop Studies;
* Biodiversity Chapters for AA/NIS and EIAR.

We are seeking an experienced, adaptable and enthusiastic individual who has the skills and experience to manage our laboratory services and to deliver complex ecology projects for our clients.

You will work within and across a wider team of specialist sectors and business support to deliver projects within Ireland, the United Kingdom, and globally.

You will support and work closely with our Head of Labs to manage/mentor team members and deliver high-quality technical reports and achieve excellent client feedback.

You will be able to deal confidently and professionally with clients, meeting quality, budgetary, and time constraints for project delivery. You will work collaboratively as part of the senior management team in AQUAFACT while continuing to provide expert advice in your area of expertise to a range of internal and external clients.

To be successful in this role, you will need:

* A clear vision for the laboratory and an ability to communicate this vision to your team and be able to provide the management, motivation and resources to the team to help them achieve this vision;
* Ability to optimise laboratory productivity through improving the efficiency of laboratory processes and identifying and removing bottlenecks that impede efficient sample processing and delivery of results;
* Experience in the application of quality assurances and quality control schemes;
* Ability to work closely with APEM’s health and safety leads to ensure laboratory practices are undertaken in a safe manner;
* Ability to provide, in collaboration and consultation with AQUAFACT’s consultancy and field teams, authoritative ecological advice and solutions to our clients;
* Assist with expanding and managing the current marine and freshwater ecology portfolio within APEM Group and to represent it externally;
* A track record in, or aspirations for, continuing professional development and supporting the development/ management of junior ecologists.

You will be offered the chance to work on a variety of projects, many of our employees have worked on projects that have been of personal interest to them. We match this with a commitment to continuous development and learning to support your career. We also offer benefits to look after you, from private medical insurance for all employees, access to mental health first aiders and comprehensive income protection if you cannot work. We also offer superb flexible working options, balancing work with your life.

**Key responsibilities**

* To work closely with the Principals and Associate Directors to expand our biological laboratory services across Ireland and further afield.
* To work with the Head of Labs to deliver growth objectives for the laboratory team.
* To plan, budget, and oversee lab-based projects.
* To develop, maintain, and manage internal and external stakeholder relationships.
* To prepare tenders and quotes that are responsive to our clients’ needs.
* To contribute to the positive evolution of APEM Group’s workplace culture.
* To lead project delivery sub-teams with appropriate skills and use of subcontractors.
* Mentoring, developing, and maintaining an engaged and performing team.
* Ensure that samples are processed to the required standard and quality.
* Work in collaboration with the other AQUAFACT teams (survey, consultancy & business support/finance), ensuring projects across AQUAFACT are delivered on time and budget meeting the business and customer expectations.
* Work effectively within the AQUAFACT lab team and assist with building a pathway for increasing technical capability and learning.
* To carry out any additional activities that may be reasonably required or requested.

# Skills/Knowledge/Experience/Qualifications

# Essential

* BSc or MSc degree in a relevant subject, and at least five years’ professional experience in environmental consultancy and/or biological laboratory work.
* Experience in offshore and inshore marine benthic ecology surveys
* Excellent experience in identification of macrofauna benthic and epibenthic species in the North-East Atlantic
* Experience with the NMBAQC scheme standards and internal and external quality control procedures
* Experience in the use of Deltek or other project management software.
* Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
* Excellent numerical skills and attention to detail.
* Proven ability to lead, plan and deliver projects or work packages on time, to agreed quality standards and within budget.
* Ability to work well in teams, work well under pressure and meet deadlines.
* Ability to adapt and manage change within teams and service delivery.
* Strong, creative problem-solving, organisational and analytical skills.
* Line management experience.
* Experience in preparing proposals and tenders.
* Competent with the use of Microsoft applications.
* Full Driving Licence.

# Desirable

* A relevant higher degree.
* Membership of a relevant professional body working towards chartership.
* Experience in zooplankton, phytoplankton, meiofauna and/or freshwater invertebrate identification.
* Experience in ROV/DDV surveys and analysis of epibenthic fauna and flora us BIIGLE image analysis systems or equivalent
* BOSIET/GWO/STCW certification.

**Our Values**

Our most important assets are our people who work here. We all work as one team and rely on each other. We wish to create a working environment to which our people are proud to belong, by maintaining our values at the forefront of everything we do. These values are:

* Integrity – We do the right thing
* Quality – Quality in everything
* People - We care
* Forward thinking – We focus on the future
* Positivity – We believe we can
* Fairness – We champion equality

**Our WOW Factor**

When home became work, we learned that flexibility, understanding and balance allowed us all to move forward and grow together. So, no matter where you’re based, the hours you keep, the toddlers you have to entertain, or outside interests that help with your wellbeing. We are committed to our Ways of Working (WOW) with each other so we can continue to be our best.

**You belong**

We recognise that everyone’s story is different. The opportunities, experiences and challenges faced in life shape who we are, and we understand that these are the things that make us individual and unique. Embracing our differences means we’re able to approach what we do from every angle.

Inspiration and insight can come from anywhere, and no matter your history or choices in life, we empower our people to be their best, so we can be our best, together. **We welcome the whole you.**