

Sustainable Water Network (SWAN)

Communications Officer

Job Description



Salary: €30,400 - €34,400 for 4 days per week (€38,000 - €43,000 Full-time Equivalent)

Location: Hybrid-working, with 2 to 3 days per month in the office (Dublin 2) and attendance to in-person meetings and other events as required.

Contract type: This is a fixed-term contract until the end of 2027 with a view to extend subject to funding. There will be a probation period of four months.

ABOUT SWAN

Ireland's rivers, lakes and coastal waters provide an invaluable network of resources. They support urban and rural communities and contain rich and varied habitats and a wealth of biodiversity. However, these special places are under threat from a range of human activities and the Sustainable Water Network (SWAN) is committed to their protection.

SWAN is an umbrella network of 25 of Ireland's leading national and local environmental non-governmental organisations (eNGOs) working together to protect and enhance the quality of Ireland's waters and to secure ecologically sustainable water management in Ireland.

We do this through policy research and development; facilitating participation of our members in implementation of water-related policy and legislation; communications, campaigns and advocacy; and supporting this work with strong governance, administration and financial management.

THE ROLE

This role presents the opportunity to join a positive, flexible organisation and to contribute to a healthy environment for nature and people. The role of the Communications Officer is to work with your line Manager, the Communications and Advocacy Manager, to facilitate smooth and effective communication and engagement both within our members' network and between the network and outside agencies. It is also to communicate SWAN's policy priorities and drive our work in advocating for these using a wide range of communication tools and approaches, including the SWAN website and via social media and traditional media.

You will be responsible for translating SWAN policy positions into communication messages appropriate to a variety of audiences. Secondary to this, the role also involves raising awareness of water issues more generally where this work supports SWAN's policy objectives.

The role includes responsibility for internal network communication and member liaison & support. Applicants should have an appreciation of and familiarity with the value of, and threats to, the water environment in Ireland and also of the work of the Irish environmental NGO sector.

RESPONSIBILITIES

COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

- Work with the Communications and Advocacy Manager on the Communications Strategy in consultation with the CEO and members, to support the strategic objectives of SWAN.
- Work with the Communications and Advocacy Manager on the development and implementation of an annual Communications Action Plan in order to deliver on the goals of the Strategy.

MEMBER/NETWORK COMMUNICATIONS

- SWAN member co-ordination and support; you will be a key point of contact for SWAN members on communications; responding to email and telephone enquiries from them and offering general support, in conjunction with the SWAN Finance and Office Administrator.
- Explore new ways to support and amplify members' water-related work and activities.
- Working with the Communications and Advocacy Manager and other staff to develop resources for members to support engagement in water-related communication and advocacy work aligned to SWAN policy priorities.
- Innovating other ways to support, encourage and enhance member engagement in SWAN work.

ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNING

- Working closely with the Communications and Advocacy Officer to strategise and execute effective written and visual communications across SWAN's external communications channels (website, emails, social media).
- Creating arresting written and visual content that translates SWAN policy positions into advocacy messages appropriate to a variety of audiences.
- Working with the Communications and Advocacy Manager with conceiving, development and implementation of campaign activities and events (on-line and in person) to promote SWAN's goals and policy priorities.
- Support and equip members to participate in campaigns aligned to SWAN advocacy goals.

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Develop and maintain positive working relationships with online, print and broadcast journalists and other media staff.

- With the Communications and Advocacy Manager develop and execute media strategies and activities, including press releases, one-to-one briefings, press conferences, media pitches and other written materials.
- Identifying opportunities to respond to media moments to get SWAN's position into the public eye on relevant issues that support our policy and advocacy goals.
- Handle press inquiries, in consultation with the Communications and Advocacy Manager, and liaise with the CEO and relevant Policy Officers as necessary, to respond.

DIGITAL MARKETING

- Develop SWAN's social media platforms, keeping them active with engaging content that supports the organisation's policy priorities, mission and values.
- Create attractive and effective visual digital media to relay policy and advocacy objectives and goals, suitable for each platform.
- Develop and maintain the SWAN website as an up-to-date platform for promoting SWAN's work and policy objectives; as a source of water-related news and information and as a repository of relevant resources, for all aspects of water policy in Ireland.
- Design, writing and dissemination of water-focused news updates to subscribers.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- Assisting with the development of high-quality written material for SWAN, focusing on key messages and relevance for the target audience.
- Development of executive summaries and 'plain English' materials from SWAN research reports and submissions.
- Assisting with report copy editing and proofreading.

OTHER

- Work as part of the SWAN team, carrying out general office tasks e.g. answering the phone and responding to general email queries and covering team members' duties when they are on leave.
- Contribute to Workplans, Planning Sessions and Progress Reports
- Support the SWAN Finance and Office Administrator to maintain and update a database of SWAN member organisation contacts, in line with GDPR requirements.
- Assist in making quarterly returns to the lobby register.
- Undertake training and development as required
- Comply with all SWAN internal policies and procedures

- Undertake any other reasonable work-related duties and responsibilities assigned by the SWAN Management Team and/or the Board that are consistent with the nature of the job and level of responsibility.

PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

ESSENTIAL

- Minimum 3 years' experience and proven track record in a communications, media relations or campaigning role
- Third-level qualification in communications or other relevant area; or a third level qualification in environmental science and equivalent communications experience.
- Ability to translate complex policy material into digestible, engaging communication messages.
- Proficiency in a wide range of communication tools and approaches and the ability to assess their suitability and impact for an NGO like SWAN. These should include:
 - Social media platforms and digital marketing
 - Press releases; press conferences / media briefings
 - Experience with website content updates and maintenance
 - Experience with video and graphic editing tools
 - Newsletters and generation of original stories
- Excellent writing skills and proven record of impactful writing (e.g. journalist piece; advocacy material).
- Strong media engagement skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills with a strong capability to communicate in an engaging way and build and maintain relationships with a variety of internal and external stakeholders, including colleagues, media representatives, and partner organisations.
- Good organisational skills and ability to adapt and respond to the diverse needs of member organisations.
- Excellent attention to detail and an eye for good design.
- Empathy with the work and aims of SWAN and a demonstrated commitment to environmental protection.
- Curious about the world with an interest in national and international current affairs and an understanding of the political and environmental landscape in Ireland.
- Positive 'can-do' attitude and proven ability to work with limited resources as part of a small team, often online.
- Ability to work independently and with initiative. Proactive approach to identifying opportunities, taking ownership of tasks, and driving communication efforts.

DESIRABLE

- Experience of working in the not for profit/NGO/environmental NGO sector.

- Experience in advocacy and campaigning.
- Previous experience working in a membership organization.
- Understanding of water issues and challenges facing Ireland.
- Familiarity with online collaboration platforms (e.g. MS Office, Dropbox, Slack)
- High level of computer literacy, including Microsoft Office suite and basic web software.
- Experience in planning and managing events.
- Advanced skills in design/multimedia (including video editing) packages. Ideally experience with Adobe Creative Suite.

BENEFITS OF WORKING FOR SWAN

This role presents the opportunity to join a positive, flexible organisation that offers a healthy work-life balance and the opportunity to contribute to a healthy environment for nature and people. You will be part of a small, growing team that understands the importance of collaboration, a collegial work atmosphere, and good team spirit.

SWAN offers the following benefits:

- a matching contribution up to 5% towards pension, from the first day of employment
- 25 days paid annual leave (pro-rata for part-time employees), as well as Good Friday
- 10 paid sick days per calendar year
- Flexitime and time-off in lieu
- Bike to Work and Tax savers schemes
- Ongoing support and training

A typical day in this role might involve:

- Checking the news for water-related stories, discussing with colleagues and responding on social media; possibly drafting a reactive press release.
- Checking social media and sharing/posting stories; Consulting with Policy Officer and/or Coordinator regarding messaging (where necessary).
- Meeting with the CEO, Communications and Advocacy Manager and a relevant Policy Officer to strategise and discuss advocacy messaging to support the launch of SWAN research.
- Liaising with SWAN member organisations in relation to a campaign launch and promoting the use of SWAN comms around the campaign.
- Researching for articles for the website and newsletter.
- Working on a press release.
- Shooting or editing a video for social media.
- Designing visual content for social media to support campaign launch.

If you're an adaptable, solutions focused, communications professional with advocacy or campaigning expertise, a positive disposition, and a can-do attitude, we'd love to hear from you!

APPLICATION FOR THE ROLE

To apply for this role, please email your CV and a cover letter (1-page max) in an editable, outlining your suitability for the role, to jobs@swanireland.ie by **Sunday 15th June COB**. Please include the role title in the subject of your email.

We aim at having the interviews on the week starting 7th of July.

We regret to inform you that we may not be in a position to respond to all candidates and can only guarantee a response to shortlisted candidates.

Conditions are according to Irish legislation including the legal ability to live and work in Ireland. SWAN adheres to Irish law that prohibits discrimination on basis of age, sexual orientation, marital status, birth, fortune, religious, philosophical or political beliefs, language, present or future state of health, disability, physical or genetic characteristics, sex, pregnancy, childbirth, maternity, change of sex, nationality, alleged race, skin colour, ancestry, national, ethnic or social origin.

The working language is English, but applicants are not expected to be native speakers.

All documentation received by SWAN will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR; 2018). The information will only be used by SWAN in the processing of job applications and for ongoing administrative purposes with job candidates.