

Finance Officer

Background

The Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere (GSAB) was designated in July 2012 as Scotland's first UNESCO Biosphere and is now one of seven in the UK. Covering 9,800 km² across Dumfries and Galloway, South Ayrshire, and East Ayrshire, the Biosphere encompasses rich natural heritage, diverse habitats, and vibrant rural communities.

Governed by an independent, community-rooted SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation): the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Partnership (SC044137), the governance model ensures local ownership and long-term sustainability, with Trustees drawn from local representatives in the public sector, environmental NGOs, community organisations, and local businesses.

Our vision is to demonstrate “a passion for living in a way that benefits people and nature” and our mission is to promote a balanced relationship between people and the environment by leading collaborative, place-based work across conservation, climate action, sustainable enterprise, and learning.

We focus on delivering tangible change through a diverse portfolio of projects such as the £750k Borderlands OPIN Project, a 5 year pilot transforming how farms assess and improve their environmental performance, species recovery initiatives and a wide range of sustainable business and education programmes. We also currently host the Dumfries and Galloway Community Climate Action Hub supporting 40+ grassroots groups in delivering community based climate adaptation.

The Biosphere Partnership has a current annual turnover of £800,000+ comprising a mix of core funding and project delivery. Funders currently include public sector partners, private trusts, foundations and donations. With pressure to reduce dependency on public funds the funding model is becoming increasingly diverse with a growing focus on generating our own income through social enterprise activities.

This has led to the Biosphere Partnership creating a Company Limited by Guarantee, called Biosphere Enterprises Ltd. This is a trading arm through which we offer a small range of paid services and run our fledgling business Merrick Scottish Blackface Knitwear. Profits from Biosphere Enterprises Ltd. are reinvested into the charity to enable further delivery of its core purposes.

The Role

As Finance Officer you will be responsible for co-ordinating the financial management of the organisation, helping to ensure strong financial governance, robust budgeting, effective financial reporting, and compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. You will support the senior management team in both core and project funding applications and reporting to both funders and Trustees. As a key member of the Team, you will help ensure



the organisations financial sustainability and supporting the delivery of its charitable objectives. You will also support the Directors of Biosphere Enterprises Ltd in the financial management and growth of trading activity that will further benefit the charity.

You should be familiar with working in a third-sector environment and used to dealing with a complex range of funders with a variety of reporting requirements. As finance officer you liaise directly with the organisations accountants, assisting in the production of annual audits, accounts and reports to OSCR. You should be familiar with the use of online accounting software preferably Xero.

Applications

Closing Date for Applications is Midday Monday 29th September 2025.

Proposed interview dates for the two-stage interview are;

Stage 1 Monday 6th October 2025 (online)

Stage 2 Monday 13th October 2025 (in person)

Application forms must be completed although you are welcome to also submit a covering letter and CV.

All applications to be submitted electronically; as PDF documents.

Please save each file in the following ;

YourNameApplicationForm.pdf

YourNameCV.pdf

YourNameCoveringLetter.pdf

Applications emailed to: info@gsabiosphere.org.uk

For more information or to arrange a time to discuss the role please contact;

Ed Forrest

Director Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere

ed@gsabiosphere.org.uk

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title	Finance Officer
Base	Biosphere Offices, Newton Stewart
Reporting to	Biosphere Director
Responsible For	n/a
Gross Salary	£35,227 to £37,498 p.a.
Pension Contribution	Employer contribution of 8% of salary
Contract Period	Permanent
Contract Hours	Preferred Full-time (37.5 hours per week) but open to discussion for a shorter working week with salary pro rata.

Job Purpose

The post holder will be responsible for co-ordinating the financial management of the organisation, helping to ensure strong financial governance, robust budgeting, effective financial reporting, and compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. You will support the senior management team in both core and project funding applications and reporting to both funders and Trustees. As a key member of the Team, you will help ensure the organisations financial sustainability and supporting the delivery of its charitable objectives. You will also support the Directors of Biosphere Enterprises Ltd in the financial management and growth of trading activity that will further benefit the charity.

Principal Duties:

Financial Leadership & Strategy

- Lead financial planning and forecasting for both the SCIO and trading company.
- Provide clear financial guidance to the Director, Staff and Trustees.
- Maintain strong financial controls, systems, and procedures.
- Prepare and present timely financial reports to the Director, Trustees, and funders.
- Contribute to strategy development and business planning.

Financial Management & Compliance

- Support annual budgeting and ongoing budget monitoring.
- Produce management accounts, cash flow forecasts, and variance reports.
- Support budget holders to build financial awareness and accountability.
- Manage restricted and unrestricted funds to ensure correct allocation and reporting.
- Ensure compliance with OSCR, and other legal requirements.
- Oversee statutory accounts preparation, audit processes, and relevant financial policies.
- Ensure compliance with VAT, Gift Aid, and related tax matters.

Operational Finance

- Processing of income and expense transactions in Xero, ensuring they are allocated to the appropriate tracking category
- Completing bank reconciliations
- Project reporting within Xero to ensure everything is on track and recorded appropriately for budgets
- Proficient in Xero



- Use of Microsoft Excel for manipulating reports ahead of management meetings
- Oversee payroll, pensions, and staff expenses
- Manage banking, financial transactions, invoicing, and debtor management.
- Act as Company Secretary if required.
- Support the development of new income generation opportunities.

The office base is 37 Queen Street, Newton Stewart DG8 6JR, where the successful candidate is expected to work for at least two days each month as well as attending team meetings from time to time. Aside from this the candidate will be able to work from home.

We strive to offer a flexible working environment and are open to discussion on specific situations.

No Job Description can be entirely comprehensive and the post holder will be expected to carry out other duties from time to time that are commensurate with the above responsibilities and determined by the Partnership Board.

Finance Officer Person Specification

Requirements <i>Essential (E) or Desirable (D)</i>	
1. Experience	
Familiarity with XERO (or similar) Accounting	E
Financial Management	E
Managing Payroll / Pensions etc	D
Grant funding applications and claims	E
Working in the Third Sector	E
Cash flow and Budget forecasting	E
OSCR Reporting	D
HMRC Reporting	D
Managing databases	D
Working with key stakeholders, public agencies, businesses and community groups	D
Working to deadlines	E
2. Education and Training	
Degree level qualification or <u>3+</u> years experience in Financial Management	E
Management or Accountancy qualification	D
Ongoing commitment to CPD	D
Membership of an appropriate professional body (if available)	D
3. Knowledge	
Charity/ business finance	E
Payroll / HMRC etc	D
An understanding of current issues facing rural communities including economic, social and cultural issues.	D
Strong understanding of the charity sector	D

Requirements <i>Essential (E) or Desirable (D)</i>	
4. Skills and Abilities	
Xero / (or similar) Accounting Software	E
Microsoft packages	E
Good written communication skills	E
Good record keeping/organisational skills	E
Good verbal communication skills	E
Good relationship-building skills	E
Good attention to detail	E
5. Personality Factors	
Good interpersonal skills	E
Supportive team player	E
Attention to detail	E
Reliable	E
Self-motivated	E
Able to work under pressure	E
6. Other Requirements	
Flexible approach to work duties	E
Observe requirements for confidentiality	E
Driving License and willingness to drive	E
Works well independently and as part of a team	E

Terms and Conditions

Pension

All staff will be automatically enrolled into a suitable Workplace Pension Scheme if eligible. The employer will contribute 8% to the Workplace Pension Scheme provider, which is dependent on a minimum 5% contribution from the employee.

Annual Leave

All staff will receive 25 days annual leave rising after three years to 30 days.

Bank Holidays

All staff will receive 4 floating bank holiday days which are added to their annual leave entitlement.

All staff will receive 4 fixed days bank holiday days covering Christmas and New Year.

Overtime

There is no paid overtime available however “time off in lieu” is given for working outside regular office hours.

Notice and Probation

All new staff are required to complete a three months’ probationary period during which time 1 weeks’ notice to terminate employment can be given by either side and/or the probationary period extended.

At the end of the probationary period a minimum of one month’s notice, in writing is required from either employee or employer. This will increase by one week’s notice per full year worked after four years’ service up to a maximum of 12 weeks.

Mileage

Access to a vehicle is required with business mileage available for eligible travel within the Biosphere boundary at currently £0.45/mile, in line with HMRC guidance.