

Vacancy for a Commissioner

***Are you looking to play an active part in your community?
Do you take an active interest in developing countries and development aid?
Are you able to evaluate grant requests to make balanced and fair decisions?***

Introduction

The Overseas Aid & Development Commission (the Commission) is inviting applications for Islanders interested in serving as a Commissioner. The Commission will have one vacancy from 1st February, 2024 following one of the current Commissioners standing down as they are leaving the Island.

Appointment to the Commission is made by the States of Deliberation on the recommendation of the Commission and would be for the remainder of a four year term expiring on 31st July, 2026 (but with the possibility of serving another term). This is an unpaid role but one which is both interesting and rewarding and provides an opportunity to make decisions that will have a real and enduring impact on the lives of some of the world's poorest communities.

The Commissioners' role is to apply their experience of development aid and professional knowledge to help ensure that the annual grant the Commission receives from the States (£3.85 million for 2023) is used to support projects that will offer a sustainable improvement of the basic needs of those living in poverty in the world's least developed countries.

The Role of Commissioner

The role of Commissioner includes doing preparatory work in advance of meetings by reading the papers provided, undertaking any research they consider necessary, and taking an active part in the deliberations and decision-making. **The role is unpaid and does not involve overseas travel.**

The Commission meets regularly (typically once a month), generally on Wednesday afternoons (typically between 4.00pm and 6.00pm). These meetings include:

- Five or six funding meetings (generally held between April and July) to consider applications for charities for grant aid awards;
- Ad hoc meetings to consider requests for disaster and emergency relief awards in response to natural disasters or humanitarian crisis;
- Meetings with local organisations seeking matched funding from the Commission to support development aid projects;
- Meeting/s to review and approve the Commission's annual report

- Ad hoc meetings with representatives of development aid charities to hear about the progress of supported projects and their plans for future work.

Commissioners are required to review and evaluate applications for funding against the Commission's published funding criteria. This includes reading and assessing the applications prior to a meeting and then, during the meeting, discussing the merits of the applications with the other Commissioners and reaching agreement whether or not to support a particular request for funding. Each year the Commission receives around 200 individual applications for grant aid funding and these are considered in batches of between 50 and 60 applications per funding meeting. In addition, the Commission receives around 10 to 15 emergency and disaster relief requests, and up to 10 community partnership funding requests, and there also are a small number of meetings with charities.

The majority of the Commissioners' work is undertaken at home reading and assessing the many applications for funding, reading the project reports submitted by the charities that receive funding from the Commission and generally keeping themselves abreast of matters relating to development aid.

This is a real opportunity to contribute positively not only to our local community but also to improve the lives of some of the world's poorest communities. As well as considering applications, the Commissioners will also have the opportunity to consider and support new overseas aid initiatives. This includes providing guidance and putting forward ideas based on their own knowledge of least developed countries and development aid, as well as their professional expertise.

This is an interesting and exciting role for any local residents with an active interest in the developing world issues, especially development aid. The current Commissioners bring a large range of skills to the Commission's work including direct experience of working in a least developed country, professional experience in medicine, water, tertiary and health education and legal matters, active participation with an established development aid charity and expertise in project management and good governance.

The Commission would be particularly interested in applications from local residents with development aid experience in one or more the following areas:

- Medicine
- Education, especially within primary or secondary schools
- Micro-finance and community savings programmes
- Engineering, especially in relation to solar power and hydrology
- Climate change and mitigation of its impact;
- Legal matters

Life as a Commissioner

To assist you in deciding whether this may be a role for you, the current Commissioners have this to say about the Commission's work and their role:

Judy Moore (Vice President), a qualified physiotherapist and former Academic Lead for Teaching and Learning at the Institute for Health Studies, says,

“Having worked on Overseas Aid Projects in Sri Lanka and Dominica, I feel that being a Commissioner has enabled me to use my experience to guide the decisions made in relation to the distribution of Guernsey's aid budget on behalf of the Island population. When I was first interviewed for the role I suggested that ‘cynicism and realism’ would be valuable assets and I still feel these are still essential qualities to be able to judge one apparently worthwhile project against another. Opportunities to discuss projects with my fellow Commissioners and to meet representatives of local and national charities, combined with research into the areas we have been asked to support, have enabled me to develop my understanding of the needs and priorities of communities less fortunate than ourselves. It has been a privilege to contribute towards improving the lives of people in some of the least developed counties in the world.”

Bryan Pill, former Mission Aviation Fellowship pilot for many years, says,

“One of the delights of this role has been how enjoyable it has been working with such a great team, under excellent leadership. Everyone brings something different to the table, all are heard, united by a common purpose to make the most of the resources we have been given.”

Further information

Interested?

Looking for more information about the Commission's work?

Further information about the Commission's work, including details of its grant aid and disaster and emergency relief policies, can be found on its website – www.gov.gg/overseasaid. The Commission's annual reports (downloadable from the Commission's website) include updates on projects the Commission has supported through its grants and statistics about the number, type and location of projects funded by the Commission.

If you have any questions or would like further information including details of the role please do not hesitate to contact David Way, the Commission's Principal Officer, (telephone 223404 or email overseasaid@gov.gg).

Applications should be made by submitting a letter of application.

Deadline for applications: Noon on Thursday 19th October 2023.