The River Dart Catchment Partnership CIC

Dart Project Lead

Job Description

Working hours: 37.5 / week.

Contract duration: 2 years initially with scope to extend.

Salary: in the region of £50,000 p.a.

7% employer pension contribution.

This role would also suit a secondment from an allied organisation.

Location: hybrid working between home and an office at Sharpham House near Totnes.

Responsible to: the CIC Board of Directors.

Responsible for: the Admin Assistant, the Comms Lead and contractors.

Timetable

Closing date for applications: 13 January 2027

Online interviews: 22 January

In person interviews for final shortlist: 29 January, Sharpham House, Totnes

About the role

No river in England has ever been restored to full ecological health. We intend the Dart to be the first. In 2023 the counter at Totnes Weir logged 59 salmon. In 1987 the estuary nets took more than 2,300. By 2050 we want the river restored from Dartmoor to the sea, and the salmon running again. This is the aim of the Dart Project.

The Duchy of Cornwall is one of the project's initial funders, alongside other trusts and private donors. The Duchy is the river's largest landowner - the Dart rises on the Duchy's moor and runs out to sea across its mud - and the Duke of Cornwall has given the restoration his public backing.

The River Dart Catchment Partnership was established in 2023, bringing together over 20 organisations working in the catchment on and around the River Dart. Since then, we've been developing an ambitious Action Plan to restore the river to excellent ecological health.

We formed the River Dart Catchment Partnership CIC in summer 2026 to help raise and channel funding to partners and to better coordinate work on the ground. We are now moving into Phase One, where we will refine the Action Plan and carry out some "quick win" ecological restoration in parallel.

We are looking for a full-time Dart Project Lead to run this work. You'll have experience in managing complex environmental projects that involve multiple stakeholders and delivering these on time and to budget. You'll need to be an excellent communicator who can bring farmers, landowners, charities, businesses and public bodies together to reach agreement.

You will be supported by a part-time Admin Assistant who will help run the partnership, handle paperwork and keep the books. One of the CIC Directors will have a specific role to line manage, mentor and advise you, whilst the whole Board will be a resource of skills and expertise to support you. You'll also work closely with the Comms Lead, an independent consultant, who will be managing the CIC's communications and supporting partners to align their communications with the partnership's goals.

As the plan develops, you will help coordinate and co-design partners' existing and planned work with the emerging plan, ensure that funded programmes are evidence-led, and include tracking progress towards key milestones, measurable outcomes and an appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework.

You'll commission and manage a team of specialists (some of whom may be employed by partner organisations) who will deliver the eight different workstreams that we envisage in the Development Phase. Your role will be to develop the briefs for this work, make sure the specialists deliver what's needed, and see that they work closely with each other, because the workstreams depend heavily on one another.

You'll also work with partners to identify the capital works we want to deliver during this 2-year period and ensure these are carried out well.

Main purpose of the role

To manage the Dart Project through the two-year first phase of detailed action plan development, together with commissioning a programme of associated interventions on the ground (typically via partner organisations) to deliver initial project actions and milestones.

Key Responsibilities and Objectives

1. Coordinate closely with catchment partners and other stakeholders, integrating their work fully with the Action Plan ● Meet partners and understand their plans ● Feed back to them the work of the specialist teams ● Help them adapt their existing plans to fit the over-arching plan where possible ● Keep open and transparent communication flowing ● Build trust by being a reliable, consistent partner
2. Contract specialists / partners to refine the Action Plan and deliver the eight workstreams ● Develop briefs, in consultation with partners and establish a process for awarding contacts for the specialist commissions: o System Analysis o River Restoration / Fish Recovery

- Peat restoration
- Landowners and tenant engagement
- Water Resources
- Community engagement
- Research and Monitoring
- Funding

- Manage the contracts and maintain oversight of the way all the different workstreams interact, ensuring constant information flow between specialists and that the results feed effectively into the Outline Design Plan
- Summarise and report to the CIC Directors, the Partnership and wider stakeholders on progress

3. Oversee the delivery of a capital programme

- Invite partners to put forward candidate projects
- Develop a selection framework and contract awarding process
- Implement this process and award contracts and funding to successful partners / landowners/managers
- Oversee their delivery on the ground and secure good value for money
- Report to the CIC, the Partnership, the Duchy of Cornwall and other funders on outcomes

4. Support the Partnership

- Organise quarterly meetings of the Partnership, prepare agendas, circulate minutes
- Support Working Groups that are formed by the Partnership, ensuring good information sharing and reporting
- Liaise closely with Partners to maintain their support and engagement with the Partnership

5. Support the CIC

- Organise and attend CIC meetings as needed, prepare agendas and progress reports, circulate minutes
- Support the Directors to meet Companies House, HMRC, CIC Regulator requirements
- Develop policies and procedures as required
- Liaise with the CIC accountant to provide management accounts to the Directors quarterly, and financial reports to funders / stakeholders as required

6. Team supervision

- Manage the Admin Assistant, ensuring their effectiveness and coordinating their work
- Manage the Comms Lead (external consultant), so that people across the catchment know about the project and back it
- Supervise other roles should they join the team

7. Project impact

- Produce a public-facing annual impact report in liaison with the Comms Lead
- Support the Directors in engaging with senior decision-makers and funders at regional and national level
- Develop the project's potential as a recovery model for other rivers by collecting insights, codifying our processes and reporting to partners.

Person Specification		
	Essential	Desirable
QUALIFICATIONS	● Full driving licence	● Conservation and environmental management ● Project management
EXPERIENCE	● Managing complex projects with multiple stakeholders ● Delivering environmental projects ● Commissioning contractors / specialists ● Programme delivery ● Grant applications and/or managing tender processes	● River restoration ● Catchment management
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE	● Working at landscape/river catchment scale in the South West of England ● Nature-based solutions ● Excellent communication skills ● Ability to manage complexity and create consensus ● IT skills	● In depth knowledge of the River Dart and its communities ● Staff line management ● GIS
OTHER	● Willingness to work unsocial hours occasionally	