

The logo for TVAS Ireland Ltd features the letters 'T V A S' in a bold, black, sans-serif font at the top. Below this, the word 'IRELAND' is written in a similar font, with a blue wavy line passing through the letters. At the bottom, 'LTD' is written in the same bold, black, sans-serif font. The entire logo is framed by a light blue horizontal bar at the top and another at the bottom.

T V A S
I R E L A N D
L T D

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Archaeological Consultants

The Secretary
The Labour Court
Landsdowne House
Landsdowne Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4
D04 A3A8

4th March 2026

Re: Submission by Unite to the Labour Court for a SEO for archaeological employment

To whom it may concern

TVAS (Ireland) Ltd is a medium-sized archaeological consultancy (currently 14 employees). We have been aware for a number of years of the intention by Unite to apply to the court for consideration of a Sectoral Employment Order for the commercial archaeology sector and have attended several meetings and information sessions regarding the matter.

The company is pleased to affirm broad support for the proposal. We agree that an SEO would benefit the entire sector, providing a level playing field for tendering and hence allowing salaries for all grades of staff to be increased. We, like all archaeological companies, are experiencing difficulties in attracting graduates to the profession and retaining workers in the field, which has an impact on our ability to provide quality services to the construction sector. This is a situation we anticipate will only deteriorate in coming years as levels of development continue to increase at the same time as the number of archaeology graduates declines. We hope some of these issues would be ameliorated by improved pay and certainty, demonstrating that that archaeology is a worthwhile career path.

The proposed minimum rate of €22.50/hour is a reasonable starting level of pay for a highly skilled graduate profession and we would welcome this rate being adopted by the court.

We have two commercial issues that we hope the Court can address in its ruling:

- 1) Legacy contracts – Large-scale development projects, particularly state-funded infrastructure such as road, rail and gas pipelines, involve long-term archaeological contracts that can run for several years, with rates determined at tender stage. Should there be a substantial increase in salary costs as a result of the SEO, considerably above anticipated inflation, it will prove impossible to complete these contracts without significant financial losses. Ideally direction

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would be given to these state bodies requiring reasonable renegotiation of existing contracts that overlap with the introduction of the SEO.

- 2) Staggered introduction of the SEO rate – The proposed minimum rate is approximately a 25% increase on entry level archaeologists on our current pay scale. Although the SEO may only be binding on new projects, it is not feasible for staff to be paid different salaries on different projects, so the increase will apply across the board. Given the consequent increases that will be necessary for all grades of staff, this will equate to a 25% increase in salary costs, including taxes and pension contributions. Implementing this increase in a single overnight step would have severe financial implications. We request that the court consider implementation of the proposed base rate of €22.50 on a staggered basis, with an initial rate of perhaps €20.00 increasing in increments to €22.50 over a 12 or 18 month period. This staggered approach, with a clearly signposted schedule of rate increases, would allow tender prices to be increased so that by the time projects take place, the tendered prices would be sufficient to cover salaries.

With these two issues taken into consideration we are fully supportive of the proposed SEO, including the rate, and would ask that the court proceed with its implementation.

Yours sincerely



Kate Taylor and Graham Hull
Directors