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| **INITIAL EQUALITY SCREENING FORM** |
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| DIVISION**:** | Regional Business Group | **TEAM:** | EU & Partner Delivery / Innovate NI |
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| **Name of Policy/Decision/Practice to be Equality Screened** |
| Business Innovation Grant (BIG) |
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| **Is it New or Revised?** | New |
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| **Who Does the Policy Effect, e.g Service Users/Staff:** | Service Users |
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| **Question 1** – Define the aim of the Programme or . What is it trying to achieve? (Intended aims/outcomes) |
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| Programme overviewInvest Northern Ireland is launching a new grant scheme to support innovation in NI businesses called the Business Innovation Grant (BIG). BIG proposes to deliver grant support to the wider business base in NI, enabling them to complete the essential innovation activities needed to either start their innovation journey or to successfully progress their existing one. The innovation support delivered through BIG will also enable businesses to progress along the four stages of the Innovate NI Innovation Framework. BIG is designed to attract a spread of applications from throughout all areas of Northern Ireland. The proposed budget for the Programme is based on issuing 150-200 grant offers (between 5-20k) through an open call, with grants offering 70% support of eligible costs. BIG will be managed and administered by Invest NI Partner Delivery Team (within RBG) in partnership with Innovate NI. EligibilityBIG is aimed at Start ups, Micro, Small to Medium Enterprises based in Northern Ireland who are not currently active Invest NI clients. This includes sole traders, partnerships, limited companies and those businesses at pre-trading stage. Applicants must also have an HMRC Unique Taxpayer Reference number. Invest NI is looking to support businesses with a novel idea that will lead to the development of a new or improved product, service, business model or process which will create value in their business/sector.This scheme is only open to businesses that are not currently Invest NI customers, that have not had any letter of offers from Invest NI in the last 5 years (aside from specific Covid support) nor owe any outstanding liabilities to Invest NI. Businesses that have previously received an offer of support under any Invest NI scheme (not including Covid-19 emergency support measures or Innovation Vouchers) can apply as long as no Invest NI grant payments have been made to the Company within the last 5 years, subject to all other criteria being met. Businesses must meet all of the following criteria:* The business must be based in Northern Ireland, with Directors based in NI
* The business must have a HMRC Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR)
* The business must have a novel idea that will lead to the development of a new or improved product, service, business model or process which will create value in their business/sector.
* The business must be an SME [SME definition (europa.eu)](https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-definition_en)
* The business must be able to demonstrate that it is a viable business and will remain so for the duration of the project, with evidence that the business has sufficient resources to meet the match funding requirement
* The proposed business activity must be a strategic fit with Invest NI’s plan - [invest-northern-ireland-business-plan-2021-22.pdf (investni.com)](https://www.investni.com/sites/default/files/2021-10/invest-northern-ireland-business-plan-2021-22.pdf) – page 17 and aligned to the DfE 10X Vision
* The Business must accept the completion of Invest NI Customer Due Diligence checks on the business, including a credit check.

**Full details of the Business Innovation Grant programme can be found** [**here.**](https://www.investni.com/support-for-business/ambition-to-grow) TO ADD LINK TO GUIDANCE NOTES  |
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| **Question 2** – Does the Programme or have the potential to have an impact on the promotion of equality impact for any of the Section 75 groupings? (See Question 4 for list of equality groups.) | No |
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| If no go to Question 6 – Good Relations. | If yes please continue. |
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| **Consideration of Available Date/Research** |
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| **Question 3** – What  is there available – statistics or perception – to help you decide who the Programme or might affect the most? i.e. What evidence, qualitative or quantitative, have you gathered to inform your decision making process? |
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| **Assessment of Impact** |
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| **Question 4** – Explain if what you plan to do is likely to be perceived as having a high, medium or low impact upon the 9 Equality groupings according to their needs. Also if what you are planning to do is likely to be perceived as having a positive or negative effect upon the 3 different groups in relation to the promotion of good relations. |
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| **9 Equality Groups** | **Perceived Impact****High – (H)****Medium - (M)****Low – (L)** | **Why this rating?** | **Promotion of Good Relations****(Yes/No)** | **Why this rating?** |
| Religious Belief |       |       |  |       |
| Racial/Ethnic Group |       |       |  |       |
| Political Opinion |       |       |  |       |
| Age |       |       | - |       |
| Gender |       |       | - |       |
| Marital Status |       |       | - |       |
| Sexual Orientation |       |       | - |       |
| Disability |       |       | - |       |
| Dependants |       |       | - |       |
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| **Opportunities to better promote Equality of Opportunity** |
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| **Question 5** – Are there steps which could be taken to reduce any adverse impact upon the Section 75 groups as identified in Question 4? |
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| **Good Relations** |
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| **Question 6** – Is there an opportunity in what you are trying to do to better promote Good Relations between the groups relating to Religious Belief or Racial/Ethnic Group or Political Opinion? |
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| It is unlikely there will be an opportunity to directly impact on Good Relations. |

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| **Consultation** |
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| **Question 7** – Tell us about who have talked to about your proposals internally or externally to help you decide if the needs further or no further equality investigation. |
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| Internally discussions on the proposed scheme have taken place with and input gained from colleagues from the following teams:* Performance, Compliance & Co-ordination (Equality Manager)
* Economist Team
* Regional Business Group
* Offers & Claims Team
* Finance, Risk & Assurance Team
* Business Support Team
* Business Improvement Team
* Regional Business Managers
* Invest NI Equality Unit
* Invest NI Executive Leadership Team Representative
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| **Question 8** – In light of the above should the be |
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| [x]  | Screened Out – No Equality Issues – Please provide rationale for this decision. |
| We do not consider that the BIG programme will impact negatively on any Section 75 group. The Programme will be promoted through our key partners and stakeholders including local Councils across NI. The opportunity to apply will be available for all eligible businesses across NI and support will be offered to those participants who require any reasonable adjustment or alternative application formats on request. |
| [ ]  | Screened Out with some adjustments. – What adjustments have you made? |
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| [ ]  | Screened In for a deeper level of analysis of what is being considered or intended to be undertaken. (EQIA) – Please provide rationale for this decision. |
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| Signed: | *K.Finlay, Paul O Callaghan* | Date: | 19/01/2024 |
|  | Policy /Programme Owners |  |  |
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| Approved | Pamela Marron | Date: | 19/01/24 |
|  | Equality Manager |  |  |
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| Modifications made. | Date: |       |
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| Date: |       |
| Approved by Equality Manager |  |  |