



**Invest
Northern
Ireland**
Building Locally
Competing Globally

**2nd Progress Report on Invest NI's
Corporate Plan 2008-2011
Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)**

August 2010

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998



INTRODUCTION

Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) was established as a corporate body under the Industrial Development Act 2002 to work in partnership with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) to stimulate and encourage economic development in Northern Ireland.

Invest NI undertakes the activities previously delivered by the Industrial Development Board (IDB), the Local Enterprise Development Unit (LEDU), the Industrial Research and Technology Unit (IRTU), the Business Support Division of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the business support functions of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

BACKGROUND

Invest NI has an Equality Scheme in place which sets out its commitment to the Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties and contains a timetable for undertaking a series of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs). The Equality Scheme was ratified by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 19 November 2003.

In line with the EQIA timetable, Invest NI has carried out an EQIA of its Corporate Plan 2008-2011. The aim of this Plan is to:

- “increase business productivity, the means by which wealth can be created for the benefit of the whole community”.

The draft EQIA went out for an eight week consultation period at the end of February 2008. Following the close of this consultation a final report was published in August 2008. The final report outlined the actions/recommendations which Invest NI committed to take forward and to monitor on an annual basis. In August 2009 the first Progress Report was completed to detail progress made against recommendations.

CURRENT POSITION

Invest NI has now undertaken a further review of the actions/recommendations contained in the final report and would like to highlight the progress made to date against each recommendation. The table below outlines progress made to July 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRESS TABLE

Point	Recommendation	Progress up to 31/07/10
1	Work increasingly closely with DETI and DEL and the voluntary and community sector in a responsive manner to contribute towards addressing existing and emerging inequalities in the Northern Ireland labour market, within our remit.	The Social Entrepreneurship Fund is now operational and offers access regardless of race or religious background, within the criteria specific to the programme support mechanisms. Other programmes under our Accelerating Entrepreneurship Strategy also continue to reflect the need for equality of opportunity for under-represented groups and contain measures to ensure that these groups are reached. This is captured and monitored on a regular basis.
2	Work in conjunction with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, to embed an appropriate methodology for monitoring clients and support services with regard to the Section 75 grounds. The new Client Monitoring Strategy will be operational by April 2008.	<p>The equality monitoring strategy is now in place and we have collected data and run reports for programmes dealing with individuals for 2008/09 and 2009/10. Monitoring forms were also issued to all companies who received assistance in the 08/09 financial year and we are working on finalising the data for the reports at present.</p> <p>Letters have now also gone out to companies who have received assistance in the 09/10 financial year and we will work to collate this data over the coming months.</p>
3	Remain responsive to emerging equality issues associated with the labour market and in particular among its private sector clients. By way of example, projects are already addressing the needs of migrant workers and their families, older workers, female entrepreneurs, and raising awareness of childcare voucher schemes among SME clients.	Over the past year we have worked in conjunction with Business in the Community to sponsor their Diversity award for business. The aim of the awards was to raise awareness around corporate social responsibility and encourage companies to think of innovative ways in which to embrace diversity within their organisations.

Point	Recommendation	Progress up to 31/07/10
4	In line with the Equality Commission's newly published Guide to Promoting Good Relations, develop a good relations strategy during 2008 and consider positive action measures to support this strategy. For example, how best to market Invest NI's programmes and services, where relevant, among minority communities.	A good relations strategy is now in place and the monitoring reports which are currently being run on our services will enable us to more fully develop this and the areas we need to target in the future.
5	Ensure ongoing training of all staff in relation to equality of opportunity and Section 75 responsibilities remains a corporate priority. Where external agents or consultants work alongside Invest NI their contractual responsibilities to meet our obligations under Section 75 will also be made clear.	Staff have received specific training this year on equality screening and monitoring. There has been ongoing equality and diversity training for all new staff coming into the organisation. We are now also arranging further training on screening to accommodate the recent changes emanating from the Equality Commission guidance.
6	Ensure the selection criteria which apply to any support scheme or programme operated by Invest NI will continue to encourage equality of opportunity. Where additional criteria are introduced, for example to target an industrial sector or geographical area, then these will be clearly defined and set out, and any adverse potential impacts associated with these criteria will be considered.	All programmes operated by Invest NI are subject to a thorough screening process in the first instance. Should these programmes introduce any changes to criteria then they are re-screened to ensure that they are not adversely impacting on any of the Section 75 groupings. If necessary an EQIA will be conducted.
7	Ensure each programme makes explicit, in all documentation, that materials can be made available in alternative formats where necessary and on request for those who are not able to access written English.	All corporate publications carry a statement explaining that the documentation is available in alternative formats on request.

Point	Recommendation	Progress up to 31/07/10
8	Build on our 2007 Disability Action Plan and subsequent consultation period, and continue to take forward the Plan through informed interventions.	The Invest NI Disability Action Plan was reviewed in 2008 to run in conjunction with our Corporate Plan 2008-2011. We have also met with the Equality Commission to garner ways in which we can further enhance the plan and will weave this in to the new plan we will produce in tandem with our Corporate Plan 2011-2014.

INFORMATION

If you would like to view the Corporate Plan 2008-2011 EQIA, the Corporate Plan EQIA Results Report or the 1st Year Progress Report, you can do so by accessing the Invest NI website at:

www.investni.com/equality

Alternatively, you can obtain a hard copy of these reports by contacting:

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If you have any queries about this document and/or its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk, audio cassette or in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English), then please contact the Equality Team at the above mentioned address.



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