

## **Corporate Plan 2011-2015 EQIA** **Second Progress Report**

During 2012 Invest NI produced its second Equality Scheme and Action Plan which was approved by the Equality Commission. This scheme aids Invest NI in meeting its obligations under Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Act requires Invest NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation and also between men and women, persons with or without a disability and persons with or without dependents.

Further to the statutory duties contained within the Act, Invest NI is committed to carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) on each policy or group of co-joined policies, where screening has indicated that there may be significant implications in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions.

We completed the EQIA on our 2011-2015 Corporate Plan in 2012 and as required our Progress Report in 2013. We have now reviewed this report and are publishing our second Progress Report.

# Corporate Plan 2011 – 15

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Report

Recommendation	Progress to 31/08/14
<p>Invest NI will continue to work in partnership with other government agencies and departments, including DETI and DEL, and the private sector in a responsive manner to contribute towards addressing existing and emerging inequalities in the Northern Ireland labour market</p>	<p>Our Social Entrepreneurship programme offers support regardless of race or religious background, within the criteria specific to the programme support mechanisms. Other programmes under our Business Start programme continue to reflect the need for equality of opportunity for under-represented groups, such as women and young people not in employment or training and contain measures to ensure that these groups are reached. This is captured and monitored on an annual basis and thus allows us to identify any emerging inequalities. Our Jobs Fund Programme is also active in promoting employment amongst young people not in Employment or Training (NEET) and in areas of targeted social need. Please contact the Equality Unit for more information on these programmes. Screening reports for all programmes are also available on our website or by contacting our Equality Unit.</p>
<p>Having established an appropriate methodology for monitoring its clients and support services, Invest will continue to monitor its services by appropriate Section 75 grounds and will keep its methodology under review.</p>	<p>Our equality monitoring strategy is in place and we have collected data for programmes dealing with individuals and companies. This information is available on request from the Equality Unit.</p>

<p>Remain responsive to emerging equality of opportunity 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 young people not in employment or training, people with disabilities, older workers, female entrepreneurs and raising awareness of childcare voucher schemes among SME clients.</p>	<p>In September 2011 and December 2012 we held Working for Me seminars in conjunction with Disability Action, with the aim of supporting entrepreneurship amongst people with disabilities. In 2011 this was held in Belfast, in 2013 it was held in our regional office in Newry. In 2014 this was held once again in Belfast and was very well attended and received by delegates.</p> <p>As an organisation we have focused on supporting youth entrepreneurship via liaison with schools and the hosting of a series of Step N Zones events throughout Northern Ireland as part of Global Enterprise Week in November 2013.</p> <p>We also continue to support Women in Business, assisting through mentoring and support networks and also through sponsorship.</p> <p>We continue to raise awareness of the Child Care Voucher scheme amongst SME's via our Client Executives and also provide this scheme internally amongst Invest NI staff.</p>
<p>Invest NI will implement its Good Relations Plan in full. For example, how best to market Invest NI's programmes and services, where relevant, among minority communities.</p>	<p>A good relations strategy is 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.</p>
<p>Ongoing training of all staff in relation to equality of opportunity and Section 75 responsibilities will remain a corporate priority. Where external agents or consultants work alongside Invest NI then their contractual responsibilities to meet our obligations under Section 75 will also be made clear.</p>	<p>Staff joining the organisation have received training this year on equality and diversity. Refresher training for existing staff has also been rolled out and this will continue across the entire organisation until October 2014.</p>

<p>The selection criteria that will continue to 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 potential adverse impacts associated with these criteria will be considered.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Each programme will make 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</p>	<p>All corporate publications carry this statement on the inside of the cover.</p>
<p>Building on our Disability Action Plan and subsequent consultations / feedback, we will continue to take forward the Plan through informed interventions.</p>	<p>We revised the Disability Action Plan in 2011 to run in conjunction with Corporate Plan. It has now been fully revised in 2014. All actions within the plan are being carried out and we will continue to review and revise the plan internally each year to ensure it is still effectively addressing specific needs.</p>