

Invest NI Section 75 Screening

Summary of Policy Proforma Invest NI TITLE: Innovation Vouchers Programme

Invest NI is committed to achieving a successful economy in Northern Ireland which will provide equal opportunities for all. It is fully mindful of its responsibilities across the spectrum of Equality, Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy and Human Rights.

Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 requires Invest NI, in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties, relating to Northern Ireland, 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;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without
 - to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people,
 - to encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
- between persons with dependents and persons without.

<p>What does this policy/programme aim to achieve for the customer? (who does it mainly affect)?</p>	<p>The Innovation Vouchers Programme aims to increase the level of innovation in small enterprises in NI. The programme is targeted at small registered companies with less than 50 employees and an annual turnover and/or balance sheet of less than 10m euros. Transport and Agricultural sectors are excluded in line with EU State Aid legislation. All other sectors are eligible to apply for the programme including both Invest NI client companies and the wider business community. The programme seeks to encourage collaboration between small enterprises and the knowledge base ie 38 knowledge providers (universities, colleges and other publicly funded research organisations) both in the North and South of Ireland via the offer of a £4000 voucher. It should be noted that the 38 providers is an inclusive listing of publicly funded knowledge organisations and is not open to private sector inclusion.</p>
<p>What does this policy/programme aim to achieve for Invest NI? (provide</p>	<p>The following actions, which specifically relate to the Innovation Voucher Initiative, are highlighted in the Invest NI Corporate Plan 2008 — 2011. It states:</p>

<p>the main objectives).</p>	<p>Over the next three years, we will increase by one third our expenditure on innovation programmes and will place a greater emphasis on 'hands-on' support and advice. We will seek to promote and imbed an innovation culture in our clients and will rationalise our innovation support programmes under the five themes of capability, product, process, export and investment, with potential actions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplifying and increasing the flexibility of our research, development and innovation programmes; • Increasing awareness of the benefits of innovation through role models and case studies; • Appointing a number of Innovation Advisers; and • Introducing an Innovation Voucher Scheme, jointly managed with Enterprise Ireland.
<p>Where did the policy/programme originate? (ie is this solely an Invest NI programme or are we working in partnership with any other department/ organisation ?)</p>	<p>A one year pilot programme was launched in June 2008 in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland. The pilot programme built upon the success of the existing Southern Ireland programme which in turn had been influenced by a Dutch model. Following an evaluation and independent economic appraisal, Ministerial approval has been given to run a 3 year Innovation Voucher programme commencing September 2009. This will be a NI programme funded and managed by Invest NI. Collaboration with Enterprise Ireland will continue in terms of sharing of information and best practice.</p>
<p>How is this policy /programme delivered or implemented?(ie by delivery agents, client executives, senior management, other agencies?)</p>	<p>The programme is managed by an Invest NI Programme Manager and 1 full time administrator based in the Technical Advisory Unit. The 38 Knowledge Providers (KPs) are the universities, colleges and other publicly funded research bodies throughout NI and the Republic of Ireland. Each Knowledge Provider has appointed an Innovation Voucher co-ordinator who is responsible for liaison with Invest NI in terms of project terms of reference etc.</p> <p>An assessment panel comprising Invest NI staff assesses all applications using a scoring matrix. The panel comprises Technical Advisors, ICT advisor and Innovation Voucher Programme Manager and administrator. All panel members have received Equality training. Decisions are recorded and companies not awarded a voucher receive written feedback. They are also offered the opportunity to receive additional feedback and where possible, are signposted to alternative sources of support.</p>

<p>What are the constraints on this policy/programme? (budgetary, legislative, EU directives etc).</p>	<p>The programme is open only to registered small enterprises in line with the Enterprise Ireland Programme. This avoids a lottery approach. Transport and agricultural sectors are ineligible in line with EU State Aid Legislation. A company can apply for up to three vouchers but can only have one 'live' voucher at a time.</p>
<p>How does Invest NI monitor the delivery of this policy/programme?</p>	<p>Invest NI have ongoing contact with the Knowledge Providers. Prior to the commencement of a voucher project, the KP and company agree a project terms of reference which must be approved by Invest NI. Where necessary, Invest NI will provide challenge to ensure value for money. On completion of all projects, Invest NI will examine the final project report and again will provide challenge where necessary before payment to the KP is approved. It should be noted that the company selects an appropriate KP based on need and the decision on who to appoint is not imposed by Invest NI.</p> <p>In addition the Invest NI Equality Unit will monitor the breakdown of those participating in the programme via the Equality Monitoring strategy. We will analyse participation on the basis of the company's employment records and look at gender, community background, race, and disability.</p>
<p>What other feedback, research, consultation or additional information is available to assess and screen the impact of this policy/programme? (ie consultative reports, evaluations, surveys, complaints ,monitoring etc).</p>	<p>ISO 9001 has been achieved and this involves set processes and procedures. It includes a survey of 30% of companies involved in the initiative. Feedback is obtained from both voucher recipients and companies who were not awarded a voucher.</p> <p>The pilot programme was subject to an evaluation and independent economic appraisal. Both involved wide consultation with key stakeholders including companies, knowledge providers etc and the new programme structure was developed as a result.</p>
<p>Are any groups specifically targeted through this policy/programme? If so please detail which groups (e.g. young men, older people or people from ethnic minority backgrounds etc).</p>	<p>The programme is targeted at small registered enterprises in Northern Ireland. It is also open to the wider business community and not exclusively to Invest NI client companies. The programme is also open to social enterprises. The only sectors that are not eligible to apply are agricultural and transport. This is in line with EU State Aid legislation.</p>

Equality Evidence Matrix

1. Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?

	Yes (please specify)	No	Not known
Religious belief			X
Political opinion			X
Racial group			X
Age			X
Marital status			X
Sexual orientation			X
Gender			X
Disability			X
Dependency			X

Please Comment:

There is no evidence to suggest any higher or lower participation or uptake by any of the different groupings.

2. Is there evidence or indications that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this policy issue?

	Yes (please specify)	No	Not known
Religious belief		X	
Political opinion		X	
Racial group		X	
Age		X	
Marital status		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender		X	
Disability		X	
Dependency		X	

Please Comment:

As above, the programme is targeted at small registered enterprises.

3. Have consultations/research with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that policies of this type create problems that are specific to them? (The user engagement guide and protocol provide useful support.)

	Yes (please specify)	No
Religious belief		X
Political opinion		X
Racial group		X
Age		X
Marital status		X
Sexual orientation		X
Gender		X
Disability		X
Dependency		X

Please Comment:

As above.

a) List the organizations/groups/individuals both internal and external, that you contacted during the development of the policy

Following the one year pilot programme which was launched in May 2008, the programme was subject to an evaluation and independent Green Book Economic Appraisal. Both the evaluation and appraisal proposal involved widespread consultation with companies, KPs, Enterprise Ireland and Regional Development Authorities, Invest NI departments and other stakeholders and the new programme structure took this feedback into account.

b) Specify how comments were incorporated into the final draft policy

Feedback received as a result of both the evaluation and economic appraisal processes was assessed and the new programme structure took this into account. The appraisal considered a number of alternative options for example extending the programme to include all small enterprises including sole traders and partnerships. This option was discounted on the basis that it would result in a lottery approach to deal with volume.

c) If ideas from groups weren't included please indicate why not

A number of options were considered and scored resulting in the best choice option for the programme going forward.

4. In relation to implementing this policy, is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations by altering the policy or by working with others in Government or in the larger community?

Yes

No

If Yes, please comment:

5. Have you identified opportunities to:

a) promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;

b) encourage participation by disabled people in public life?

Please Specify:

We will ensure that literature related to the programme is available in alternative formats on request.

6. Monitoring Information: What data will be required to ensure effective monitoring of the policy following implementation?

ISO 9001 processes and procedures are in place for monitoring. A spreadsheet will be maintained to capture all information relating to the programme and activity will be monitored on an ongoing basis. 30% of companies involved with the programme will be surveyed and feedback obtained and acted upon where necessary.

7. Have you any other comments on the policy and/or screening exercise?

Information will be included on the website and promotional flyer to highlight the fact that alternative formats of the application form can be made available if necessary.

Summary of Screening

Section 75 Category	Is there any evidence of potential under-representation of any Section 75 groups in this policy/programme?	Is there any evidence that people from any S75 groups have any issues / difficulties /problems with this policy/programme?	In your assessment is any further additional action required to address any under representation or problems associated with this policy/programme?	If yes, is an Equality Impact Assessment required to further assess the impact of the policy/programme on this group? Give reasons for your answer
Religion	NO	NO	NO	
Political Opinion	NO	NO	NO	
Age	NO	NO	NO	
Gender	NO	NO	NO	
Disability	NO	NO	NO	
Sexual Orientation	NO	NO	NO	
Dependants	NO	NO	NO	
Marital Status	NO	NO	NO	
Racial Group	NO	NO	NO	

Human Rights Impact Assessment

Articles as identified by European Convention of Human Rights.

- Article 2 - Right to life
- Article 3 - Prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment
- Article 4 - Prohibition of slavery and forced labour
- Article 5 - Right to liberty and security
- Article 6 - Right to fair and public trial
- Article 7 - Right to no punishment with law
- Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence
- Article 9 - Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 10 - Right to freedom of expression
- Article 11 - Rights to freedom of assembly and association
- Article 12 – Right to marry and to found a family
- Article 14 – The prohibition of discrimination
- Protocol 1 Article 1 – Protection of Property
- Protocol 1 Article 2 - Right to education

Definitions of degree of risk of infringement of each article:

High risk – It is foreseeable that this policy is very likely to breach this Article.

Medium risk – This policy is likely, in certain circumstances, to breach this Article.

Low risk – It is possible, though very unlikely, that this policy will breach this Article.

1. Indicate any potential Human Rights implications associated with this policy, the perceived degree of risk (see above) and who the victim may be.

	Has this policy the potential to infringe the rights (Please Tick)		If yes indicate here the degree of risk – High, Medium or Low (See definitions above)	If yes indicate here who the potential victim(s) would be
	Yes	No		
Article 2		X		
Article 3		X		
Article 5		X		
Article 6		X		
Article 8		X		
Article 9		X		
Article 10		X		
Article 11		X		
Article 12		X		
Article 14*		X		
Article 1 of Protocol 1		X		
Article 2 of Protocol 1		X		

Finally are there any other ways in which Invest NI might be able to improve this policy/programme area in terms of improving the equality of opportunity? (ie conducting any further consultations, gathering monitoring data, liaising with other departments or organisations etc.)

-
Summary of Decision

Name(s) of Screening Personnel:	Claire Herron
Role:	Innovation Vouchers Programme Manager
Decision to Conduct Equality Impact Assessment: YES / NO:	No
Date:	02/10/2009
Signed: (Screening Personnel):	
Approved: (Director):	