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| **INITIAL EQUALITY SCREENING FORM** |
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| DIVISION**:** | Technology & Services | **TEAM:** | Entrepreneurship Team |
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| **Name of Policy/Decision/Practice to be Equality Screened** |
| Founder Labs Accelerator Programme |
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| **Is it New or Revised?** | New |
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| **Who Does the Policy Effect, e.g Service Users/Staff:** | Start-Up Businesses |
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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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| The overarching aim of Invest NI’s new Accelerator programme, Founder Labs, is to provide support to early stage, technology based Innovation Driven Enterprises (IDEs) that have high growth potential. It will provide opportunities for founder teams from all areas throughout Northern Ireland. The programme will help achieve DfE’s Economic Mission by boosting productivity and growth in the economy The new programme will build upon the learnings from the previous Invest NI Accelerator programme (Ignite) which was discontinued in 2021 due to budgetary constraints. Founder Labs will run four programmes with 10 starts-ups in each, supporting a total of 40 early stage IDEs over the next four years. |
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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.) |  |
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| If no go to Question 6 – Good Relations. | If yes please continue. |
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| Only in terms of positive impact for high potential start ups . |
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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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| The Business Case for the new Accelerator (dated 23 September 2023) provides evidence to support the need for the programme. It highlighted the need to make the programme open and accessible for all potential funders who meet the programme criteria.  |

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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 | L | The programme will provide opportunities for founder teams across all areas. | None | It is anticipated that the programme will have no specific impact on good relation, however, it will be promoted and delivered across all areas. |
| Racial/Ethnic Group | L | As above | Minor  | May promote good relations to racial groupings to a minor degree as cohorts 2-4 of the programme are open to international teams who will share workspace and peer to peer leanings with the NI based teams. . |
| Political Opinion | L | As above | None | It is anticipated that the programme will have no specific impact on good relation, however, it will be promoted and delivered across all areas |
| Age | L | As above | - |       |
| Gender | M | Generally females have been underrepresented in previous accelerator programmes. There will be active promotion (eg female role models) to encourage females to apply. | - |       |
| Marital Status | L | The programme will provide opportunities for founder teams but with no specific impact on this S75 group. | - |       |
| Sexual Orientation | L | As above | - |       |
| Disability | L | As above | - |       |
| Dependants | L | As Above | - |       |
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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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| The programme will be promoted throughout NI and internationally using a wide range of mediums which will reach all of the Section 75 groups.As mentioned above, we will continue to use female role models to try and encourage greater female uptake. |
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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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| No such opportunity has been identified |

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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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| As part of the Five Point Business Case that was undertaken for the new Accelerator extensive consultation was carried out both within Invest NI and with key external stakeholders in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. The Equality Manager was also consulted. |
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| **Question 8** – In light of the above should the be |
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| [ ]  | Screened Out – No Equality Issues – Please provide rationale for this decision. |
|      No negative impact on S75 groups is anticipated, however, an opportunity to promote female entrepreneurship is likely. |
| [ ]  | 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: | Alison Reid | Date: | 22/03/24 |
|  | Policy /Programme Owner |  |  |
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| Approved | Pamela Marron | Date: | 26/04/24 |
|  | Equality Manager |  |  |
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| Modifications made. | Date: |       |
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| Date: |       |
| Approved by Equality Manager |  |  |