

**INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND
EQUALITY SCHEME**
(SECTION 75 OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 1998)

December 2004 (Updated 2006)

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EQUALITY SCHEME FOR INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND

Statement by the Chairman and Chief Executive

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, New TSN and Human Rights. This Equality Scheme sets out how Invest NI proposes to fulfil those obligations.

The Scheme is important because it outlines a plan for more effective mainstreaming of equality issues, thus ensuring that they are central to the whole range of policy decision making within the recently formed organisation.

We will ensure that the Board and all staff members are fully aware of the need to implement the provisions of this scheme and will give the leadership within Invest NI to achieve this. *In particular we will provide the necessary resources (in terms of people and finance), the internal arrangements, and a planned programme of communication and training to ensure that Invest NI complies with its Section 75 equality duties.* The proposals contained in this Equality Scheme, while of key importance to us in the short-term, also mark the beginning of a longer term process to ensure that the issue of equality is an integral element of the overall thinking and decision making processes within Invest NI.

Stephen Kingon
CHAIRMAN

Leslie Morrison
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) is Northern Ireland's new economic development agency. Established in April 2002 under the Industrial Development Act (Northern Ireland) 2002, it is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) operating under a Board and is a body corporate. Invest NI performs the functions previously carried out separately 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 (NITB). Its sponsoring Department is the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI).
- 1.2 This Equality Scheme sets out how Invest NI proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Mission

- 1.3 Invest NI's mission is:

To accelerate economic development in Northern Ireland, applying expertise and resources to encourage innovation and achieve business success, increasing opportunity for all within a renewed culture of enterprise.

- 1.4 Invest NI is a new economic development agency and as such, differs from the previous arrangements laid out in 1.1 above. The organisation is made up essentially of the following four Groups: Innovation and Capability Development; Entrepreneurship and Enterprise; Business International and Corporate Services Groups.

1.5 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; and
- between persons with dependents and persons without.

The main groups relevant to these categories are set out in Annex A.

1.6 In addition, without prejudice to its obligation above, Invest NI in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, must have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

1.7 Schedule 9 of the NI Act requires Invest NI to set out, in an Equality Scheme, how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75. This document is Invest NI's public statement on:

- how it intends meeting its statutory requirements;
- how it carries out all its functions, powers and duties;
- its commitment to the allocation of necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) to ensure that the statutory duties are complied with and that the Scheme can be implemented effectively and on target;

- its commitment to ensuring effective internal arrangements are in place to ensure duties are effectively complied with and for monitoring and reviewing progress; and
- its commitment to the development and delivery of a planned programme of communication and training on the Scheme and equality obligations.

1.8 The Scheme and associated Implementation Plan will also be used internally as a working document for Invest NI to ensure compliance with the Section 75 duties.

1.9 *Finally, while Invest NI is legally obliged to prepare an Equality Scheme in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Equality Commission, it will also seek to use the document in a practical way to address any inequalities faced by Section 75 Groups.*

2.0 Arrangements for Assessing Compliance with Section 75 Duties

2.1 This Scheme will run from the date of approval by the Equality Commission until March 2005 when it will be subject to external review (see section 13). Invest NI is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 duties throughout all parts of the organisation. The statutory responsibility for the effective implementation of the scheme lies with Invest NI's Board and Chair. Overall management responsibility for taking forward matters relating to Section 75 issues lies within the Equality Unit of the Strategic Management and Planning Division of Invest NI, currently headed up by Damian McAuley. An organisation chart is provided at Annex C. (Invest NI will inform the Equality Commission and *any affected groups, where appropriate and relevant*, should there be a change to the structure or the named officer at Annex C.)

2.2 The Equality Unit has also responsibility for implementing a number of associated and linked initiatives relating to equality and rights, as follows:

- Implementation of Section 75 obligations;
- New TSN, ensuring that both these policies are co-ordinated to optimize their complementarity;
- Human Rights;
- Contribution to the development and implementation of Cross-Departmental Strategies on: Gender, Race, Victims, Age and Children.

2.3 Invest NI is a member of DETI's Equality and Diversity Working Group, which meets regularly to progress the range of equality related issues coordinated within the Department's Implementation Plan. In addition, Invest NI is also represented on the Department's Equality and Diversity Steering Group. The Steering Group meets regularly to monitor and review progress on Invest NI's Implementation Plan for the Equality Scheme and other related activity such as New TSN and Human Rights.

2.4 Actions, objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties contained in this Equality Scheme and its Implementation Plan will be included in Invest NI's future Corporate Plans, Annual Operating Plans and future Annual Reports. Officials will include implementation of the statutory duties in their annual personal performance and development plans, as appropriate to their role, to ensure the effective integration of equality issues throughout the organisation. Progress on meeting these targets will be reported at Senior Management Level on a quarterly basis. The point of contact for any queries related to this scheme is:

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2.5 Invest NI, through its Implementation Plan, will ensure that carrying out the Section 75 duties is supported with necessary resources (in terms of people, time and finance) so that statutory duties are complied with. It will inform and train staff on the requirements of the statutory obligations and how they can be efficiently implemented. Further details on training are given in Section 10 of this Scheme.

2.6 Invest NI is committed to consulting on how it carries out its statutory duties and for consultation to be timely, open and inclusive. The organisation is also aware of the requirement that the scheme be accessible and comprehensible to all stakeholders. Detailed arrangements for consultation are given in Section 8 of this Scheme.

2.7 Invest NI will also conduct an annual review of progress made in implementing the arrangements specified in this Equality Scheme and complying with the statutory duties. This review will then be forwarded to the Equality Commission and Invest NI will liaise with the Commission as appropriate.

3.0 **Functions and Policies**

3.1 Invest NI's business is to encourage economic development in Northern Ireland within the economic policy context determined by the Minister for Enterprise Trade and Investment and the framework of the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government. Invest NI will work in partnership with DETI to achieve its aims. Broadly, DETI's role is to formulate policy while that of Invest NI is to deliver policy. However, as the operational delivery vehicle, Invest NI has an important role in helping DETI shape economic development policy and in acting as a listening post for the concerns and needs of local businesses. Following the establishment of Invest NI, and the development and publication of the new Corporate Plans (2002-2005) for both DETI and Invest NI, it has been necessary to review the policies of the two organisations. Annex D tracks the original policies of the predecessor agencies and indicates how they have been addressed by DETI and Invest NI. The following paragraphs set out the revised Invest NI policy areas.

3.2 In the Invest NI approach to delivering its services, innovation permeates throughout the organisation. The three client facing groups; **Innovation and Capability Development**; **Entrepreneurship and Enterprise** and **Business International** work together with client customers and are supported by a **Corporate Services Group** whose corporate finance and appraisal functions also involve active client contact.

3.2.1 **Innovation and Capability Development**

This group delivers much of Invest NI's expertise in helping to develop a knowledge based economy.

3.2.2 Entrepreneurship and Enterprise

This group works mainly with indigenous companies to stimulate growth through sales, increased innovation and business improvement. In addition it focuses on increasing the overall number of business start-ups in Northern Ireland.

3.2.3 Business International

This group manages a portfolio of existing globally oriented companies within the manufacturing and international traded service sectors. Business International also seeks to attract new inward investment from external markets deploying an overseas network of sales executives to sell the Northern Ireland investment proposition to potential investors.

3.2.4 Corporate Services

This group provides the internal services required to make Invest NI commercially responsive and accountable to Government. These functions include strategic planning, corporate finance and other internal resource management.

3.3 Invest NI has developed and published its first Corporate Plan, describing its strategy for the period April 2002 - March 2005. The Plan is consistent with DETI's Corporate Plan for the same period and the economic priorities set out in the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government.

3.4 Invest NI works with partners in business, education, research organisations, local economic development bodies and others in the private and public sectors to tackle the economy's systematic weaknesses. In light of this, the organisation has identified for action, the following four objectives for developmental need namely: ***Innovation; Existing Business; Business Birth Rate and Inward Investment Objectives.***

3.5 **This Equality Scheme provides details of Invest NI’s policy areas which are aligned to the four objectives listed in 3.4 above. The policy areas are subsequently detailed in para 3.6.** Relevant policy areas associated with the predecessor agencies have now been incorporated into both the Invest NI Corporate Plan and this Equality Scheme.

3.6 Invest NI Policy Areas

(A) **Innovation – “to promote innovation in all its aspects, stimulate higher levels of R&D, design and improve knowledge transfer”.** The key actions within this objective include:

- stimulating higher levels of investment in R&D through Invest NI programmes
- increasing the number of companies performing R&D
- enhancing technological infrastructure
- promoting knowledge transfer
- promoting industrial design
- providing a range of analytical, testing and scientific services.

These actions will be delivered through a range of support mechanisms including programmes of assistance which encourage companies to attain their competitive advantage through product innovation, market exploitation, skills enhancement and international collaboration.

(B) Existing Business – “to achieve higher levels of growth by indigenous and externally-owned businesses”.

The key actions within this objective include:

- development of market sector strategies
- provision of direct company support
- encouraging companies to increase external sales
- encouraging first-time exporters
- encouraging companies to use ICT
- promotion of effective environmental management techniques
- promotion of effective people management techniques

These actions will be delivered through a wide range of support mechanisms including programmes, trade missions, seminars, awareness events and assistance for companies, aimed at enhancing competitive performance.

(C) Business Birth Rate – “to promote a more enterprising culture in Northern Ireland so as to raise the overall level and quality of business start-ups”.

The key actions within this objective include:

- delivering initiatives which promote higher levels of start-ups.

These actions will be delivered through the development of a Business Birth Rate Strategy, stimulating the level of new firm creation by creating more positive attitudes to enterprise and entrepreneurship. The strategy will also involve developing a range of business start-up programmes to target specific under-represented groups such as women and community enterprises, particularly in New TSN areas.

(D) **Inward Investment – “to attract high quality, knowledge-based investments from outside Northern Ireland”.**

The key actions within this objective include:

- marketing Northern Ireland as an investment location.

These actions will be delivered through targeting sectors such as ICT, health technologies and electronics for new inward investment. In addition Invest NI will focus on encouraging further investment by existing globally oriented companies and identifying new emerging sectors to which local opportunities lend themselves.

3.7 Section 75 creates duties in respect of assessing the likely impact of proposals for new policies and assessing the impact of existing policies on equality of opportunity. Invest NI acknowledges there are difficulties in defining policies as the term policy is used to refer to a wide range of activities and features, indeed:

- some policies cut across different functions and different departments or agencies, for example New TSN
- a programme or service may serve more than one policy
- no policy is discrete
- every policy is affected by, and affects other policies
- there are also different levels of policies eg EU policies, UK Government policies and local policies adopted by district councils.

Within Invest NI’s policies there are further schemes and programmes which are subject to a rolling 5-year assessment. It is Invest NI’s intention to carry out Equality Impact Assessments at that time.

- 3.8 Where Invest NI has lead responsibility for a policy which requires close co-operation with, or is operationalised by other organisations, (such as third party organisations or those working on behalf of Invest NI) it will ensure that these bodies are made aware of the Section 75 obligations where they may be required to provide information necessary for use in equality impact assessments. Similarly where Invest NI is implementing a policy, formulated elsewhere by DETI, it will work in partnership with DETI to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.
- 3.9 For the purposes of the NI Act, the following paragraphs detail Invest NI's policies which have been developed to carry out its functions. They are aligned to the four objectives highlighted in the 3.4 above which outline the main organisational development needs for Invest NI. In addition, each of these four areas will require the introduction of new strategies and the enhancement of existing approaches, all implemented in accordance with Invest NI's Equality principles.
- 3.10 While the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) has overall responsibility for procurement policies for NI departments, the procurement arrangements for Invest NI are under the auspices of a Service Level Agreement with the Procurement Service of DFP. Under this service level agreement, the Procurement Service has undertaken to comply with all relevant legislation, including the requirements of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

4.0 Equality Impact Assessments

- 4.1 This Invest NI Equality Scheme has incorporated all the relevant equality obligations associated with its predecessor agencies. Extensive consultation with DETI has led to a full review of the old policy areas to ensure their effective integration into both the new DETI and Invest NI schemes. Policies which were originally identified for impact assessment, pre-Invest NI, have therefore been rolled into the revised schemes. This will be the most effective method of meeting the statutory duty challenges placed on the new economic development organisation.
- 4.2 To identify which of the revised Invest NI policy areas should be subject to a detailed equality assessment, the impact of each of the policies at 3.6 above has been considered, in terms of the nine categories listed in Section 75, using the following screening criteria:
- (a) is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups within any of the nine categories?
 - (b) is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular main policy area?
 - (c) is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations by altering policy or working with others in Government or the community at large?
 - (d) have consultations with relevant representatives, organisations or individuals within groups indicated that particular policies create problems that are specific to them?

- If the answer to any of these questions was positive, then further consideration was given as to whether the policy should be equality impact assessed. Impact assessment is a detailed procedure involving consideration of all available data and research on a particular policy or service; assessment of any impact on equality of opportunity; consideration of measures which might mitigate any adverse impact or better achieve equality of opportunity; formal consultation and then decision by Invest NI on action to be taken.
- 4.3 On the basis of this screening process, Invest NI considers that it should include all its policy areas for equality impact assessment and has outlined these in the timetable set out at Annex B. As Invest NI is a new organisation, performing the functions previously carried out by the predecessor agencies (see para 1.1), it has also been necessary to show at Annex B, details of those programmes which have already been impact assessed as part of the remit of the predecessor agencies.
- 4.4 Where appropriate from an evaluation and assessment perspective, individual, but related, programmes within each policy area may be grouped together. Where relevant, an equality impact assessment will also include an annex on the promotion of good relations (without prejudice to the statutory obligation on equality of opportunity).
- 4.5 Equality impact assessments will involve detailed consideration of available data and the possible commission of new research to enable assessments to be carried out on the impact of policies on the Section 75 groups. Invest NI will consult with representative bodies to identify further sources of information during the assessment, alert the public and relevant groups about the policy being assessed and invite their comments and input to the exercise.
- 4.6 Invest NI will carry out equality impact assessments in accordance with the Equality Commission's Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessments published in 2001.

- 4.7 Before the introduction of any new policies Invest NI will carry out the screening exercise as set out in paragraph 4.2 at the early development stage to identify whether there would be any impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity or good relations, and whether greater equality of opportunity could be promoted and therefore be subject to a full impact assessment. Such an assessment will involve public consultation to draw together all available qualitative and quantitative data from both internal and external sources to inform the process.
- 4.8 Invest NI will consult on equality impact assessments with its list of consultees as at Annex E. It will include those directly affected by the policy, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest. All such consultations will be conducted in accordance with arrangements set out in Section 8 of this Scheme.
- 4.9 Northern Ireland Departments implement a range of policies which are developed and adopted at national and international levels. Northern Ireland Departments sometimes have the opportunity to contribute to the formulation of such policies. When Invest NI has an opportunity to influence the development of a national or international policy, it will use its screening process to identify any adverse impact on equality of opportunity or good relations and will advise the sponsoring department or organisation of its findings.
- 4.10 Annex B of this scheme provides a synopsis of each policy area identified during the screening process and indicates if the area should be included for impact assessment. In some instances where appropriate, a number of programmes/schemes/initiatives are clustered together under one policy area and may be assessed under one single impact assessment, *although caution will be exercised in any “grouping” of such programmes.*

5.0 Timetable

5.1 Over a period of 2 years from the submission of the scheme to the Equality Commission, Invest NI will carry out internal, or *on an exceptional basis*, commission external reviews of a number of the policy areas at 3.6, including EQIAs, as part of the process for the development of Invest NI's new Corporate Plan 2002-2005. In addition to the four areas listed at 3.6 an additional policy area will have to be included for review relating to internal services within Invest NI. The timetable is as follows:

- Policy A is scheduled for EQIA in Year 3 (April 2005-March 2006)
- Policy B is scheduled for EQIA in Year 2 (April 2004-March 2005)
- Policy C is scheduled for EQIA in Year 1 (April 2003-March 2004)
- Policy D has already undergone EQIA.
- Policy E (part of) scheduled for EQIA in current year (April 2002-March 2003)

5.2 Prioritisation for the completion of these impact assessments will be on the basis of those policies where Invest NI has greatest direct impact on its clients and also where they are perceived to have greatest impact on equality of opportunity.

5.3 The proposed timetable, at Annex B, will be revised yearly as part of the annual review statement to the Equality Commission. This will allow flexibility should particular priorities change.

6.0 Monitoring

6.1 Knowledge of the uptake of services provided by Invest NI and the impact of its policies on the different groups within the Section 75 categories will be important in assessing progress towards equality of opportunity. Invest NI has extended its monitoring regime, as part of its New TSN Action Plan, to gather information on some of the Section 75 groups. This, however, does not cover all of the groups.

6.2 Invest NI is currently undertaking a review of the extent of existing monitoring within each of the main policy areas and over the groups identified in the Act and taking action to extend it. These actions will consider:

- the value of any additional monitoring information or research to supplement this over each policy and for each group;
- the readiness of the business sector and the public to supply such information;
- the resource implications and availability of any proxy measures (eg postcode analysis);
- proposals for collection, maintenance and analysing of monitoring data;
- proposals for evaluating effectiveness of monitoring data.

As with all monitoring and research data, information collected through specific exercises will be taken into account in any review of the policy. Invest NI will inform affected Section 75 Groups of any relevant issues in its overall monitoring process.

6.3 Seeking such information on some groups may be difficult or sensitive. In some cases, the information may simply not be available. Invest NI will, therefore, work with the groups to consider how to best gain greater knowledge of the impact of its policies e.g. through discussion and consultation with relevant groups to identify experience and knowledge (both

quantitative and qualitative data) and also existing information from the groups own additional research. On completion of such a review Invest NI will have identified baseline positions and will develop a comprehensive monitoring plan to address gaps of knowledge over Invest NI's policy areas.

- 6.4 In some cases the equality impact assessment within the overall policy review may identify potential differential adverse impact on particular groups within the Section 75 categories. Where no alternative policy is considered feasible, Invest NI will consider how to mitigate any potential adverse impact and may arrange for specific research or additional monitoring to confirm the extent of the adverse impact and/or the success of any mitigating measures. As with all monitoring data, information collected through specific exercises would be taken into account in any review of the policy. A system will be established to monitor the impacts of policies in order to identify their effects on the relevant groups. If monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, then Invest NI will ensure the policy is revised and the results/outcomes published.
- 6.5 Invest NI will work closely with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) reviewing its existing monitoring arrangements and its consideration of special monitoring of anticipated adverse impacts.

7.0 **Publication of Equality Impact Assessments and Monitoring**

- 7.1 Invest NI will consult on the outcome of any equality impact assessment and of any monitoring undertaken in relation to Sections 5 and 6 above. This material will be placed on Invest NI's Internet website at www.investni.com and will also be available in printed form and in accessible formats e.g. Braille, large print, audio and minority ethnic languages from Invest NI, through a request to the contact details as at Section 2.4.

Invest NI will inform the general public about the availability of this material through press releases – including releases to specialist press. Specific consideration will also be given to how best this information can be communicated to young people and those with learning disabilities. It will also directly inform bodies listed at Annex E when this material is available.

- 7.2 Published documentation on an equality impact assessment of a particular policy will include:

- the aims of the policy to which the impact assessment relates
- associated available monitoring data both quantitative and qualitative, and including information from internal department sources, NISRA and from consultation with organisations representing Section 75 groups
- the details of consideration given to mitigate any adverse impact of the policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity

- the details of consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

7.3 In taking decisions on a current or proposed policy, Invest NI will take into account any relevant equality impact assessment, monitoring and the outcome of the associated public consultation process.

8.0 Consultation

8.1 The purpose of consultation, as a whole, will be to enable Invest NI to hear the views of those who may be affected by its activities and for these views to be considered as new policies are developed and existing ones are reviewed. Invest NI is committed to carrying out consultations in accordance with the Guiding Principles contained in the Equality Commission's "Guide to the Statutory Duties". As well as inviting written consultation exercises Invest NI will supplement this approach with other methods of obtaining feedback. This may include face-to-face meetings, advisory groups, surveys, consultative panels, internet discussions or other innovative ways of consulting as there will be different means of consultation for different groups and it will be important to establish the basis for dialogue and engagement during the life of the scheme and beyond. *Annex F outlines the comments received from consultees and Invest NI's response to these.*

8.2 While many best practice consultation methods will be appropriate for all, the various organisations within the main Section 75 groups, have different needs. To achieve an inclusive approach consideration will be given as to which consultation method is appropriate in each set of circumstances. Invest NI will therefore work with representative bodies of the Section 75 groups to identify how best to obtain members' views. This will include specific consideration of how to communicate with young people and those with learning disabilities.

8.3 Invest NI's consultation list is at Annex E and includes:

- The Equality Commission
- The Community Relations Council
- Voluntary Groups
- Community Groups
- Trade Union Groups

- The Small Business Community
- The General Public
- Local Authorities
- Organisations representing the various categories as listed in Section 75
- Other groups who have a particular interest in the work of Invest NI and/or the impact Invest NI's policies on Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations.

The list of consultees will be used by Invest NI in relation to all consultations, ie with regard to matters relating to the duties, the Equality Scheme, screening and equality impact assessments. The list will be amended in light of experience, should new organisations/associations be formed. Impact assessments will also be undertaken in accordance with Equality Commission Guidelines.

- 8.4 Invest NI's consultation list includes organisations representing specific Section 75 groups and broader umbrella organisations, all of which will wish to consult their members when considering proposals. Therefore, in all consultation exercises, Invest NI will provide a period for responses of at least eight weeks, unless there are exceptional circumstances when this timescale may not be possible. These instances will be monitored closely, kept under review, and will be reported on Invest NI's annual review to the Equality Commission.
- 8.5 In order to remove any barriers to the consultation process, it will be important that the language and formats used for any consultation are fully accessible. As noted in Section 9 of this Scheme, Invest NI proposes to review its arrangements for providing information, so that it is available during consultation with the affected groups. This will ensure the highest level of inclusivity in any policy making decision. A system will be put in place to ensure that information is available in accessible formats in a timely fashion. Where appropriate, Invest NI will also utilise existing relationships with organisations where it is currently represented on steering committees.

In the meantime anyone wishing information in accessible formats such as Braille, disc, audio cassette or in minority ethnic language should contact Joanne Stewart (**contact details as at paragraph 2.4**) above and appropriate arrangements will be made as quickly as possible. Any consultees using alternative formats will be entitled to the same length of consultation as those using conventional methods.

- 8.6 In organising consultation meetings, Invest NI will aim to ensure full participation by considering the implications for such groups in relation to how the meeting is run and also the time, venue, accessibility, provision of childcare or signing etc for such meetings. Consultations with groups and individuals will begin as early as possible to enable all involved in the process to devote adequate time to considering the issues in question.
- 8.7 To ensure that all consultations are meaningful it is important that appropriate information is available to all groups and individuals to consider the full implications to the proposals. To facilitate this, Invest NI will take steps to ensure the appropriate and timely release of all relevant quantitative and qualitative data and other documentation including consultants' reports. In addition specific training will be given to staff engaged in the consultation process.

9.0 **Public Access to Information and Services**

9.1 Invest NI wishes to communicate effectively with the public and will work with DETI on the preparation of a best practice communications guide. The objective of the guide is to ensure that the information it disseminates and the services it provides are made accessible and equitable. When drafting this guide Invest NI (and DETI) will consider:

- the statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- the likely demand for information in such formats across all its policy areas listed Annex B;
- resource implications; and, in particular, the recommendations of the cross-departmental Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) working groups on minority ethnic people and on access to information, which will report in 2003-2004;
- the need to consider specific outreach measures;
- resource implications;
- existing provision of information/services in accessible formats such as braille, audio, large print, minority ethnic languages.

Invest NI will consult with representative groups, as it carries out this assessment, and on the findings and recommendations of the assessment prior to implementation. In ongoing discussions with key representative groups, Invest NI will monitor annually its communication strategy regarding access to information and services. Invest NI will also monitor access to information and services to ensure equality of opportunity.

9.2 Invest NI will ensure that information will be made available in consultation with the affected groups, to ensure the highest level of inclusivity in any policy decision making.

- 9.3 In disseminating information through the local press, Invest NI will ensure that press statements and public advertisements are carried by all three Belfast daily newspapers including the North West version of the Belfast Telegraph. Where press statements or public advertisements are aimed at a particular geographical area within Northern Ireland, Invest NI will ensure that the information is available through at least two local newspapers circulating in that area. Invest NI will also ensure that specialist press receive copies of press releases to disseminate, as they consider appropriate, to their particular readership.
- 9.4 In reviewing the location of its offices, Invest NI will ensure that no section of the community is deterred from visiting and all offices will maintain a welcoming and harmonious environment. Invest NI will adhere to the relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 9.5 Invest NI's commitments on equality of opportunity in accessing information, are without prejudice to any rights to information in the current "Code of Practice" on Open Government or, in the new "Freedom of Information Legislation".

10.0 Training and Awareness Raising

- 10.1 Invest NI is committed to integrating equal opportunities knowledge, understanding and good practice into the day-to-day working of the organisation. A substantial amount of training has already been carried out through the work of the predecessor agencies. Invest NI intends building on these foundations and, in conjunction with its Human Resources division, is currently developing appropriate training for staff throughout the new agency.
- 10.2 The predecessor agencies have, therefore, already made progress on the inward working aspects of equality of opportunity, knowledge, understanding and practice. However, more remains to be done, in relation to the obligations introduced by Section 75, with those staff who are outward or client facing, to ensure permeation of the equality ethos from staff to external customers.
- 10.3 Invest NI will conduct an evaluation of the overall training which has taken place to date to identify the extent to which knowledge, understanding and practice have been developed and appropriate staff behaviour reinforced.
- 10.4 In respect of the Section 75 obligations, Invest NI will ensure that all staff involved in the implementation of the Scheme receives an appropriate programme of training on these obligations and other current antidiscrimination legislation. The equality duties and their implications for staff will be reported to the Equality Commission on an annual basis. To ensure effectiveness, this training will be tailored to make it appropriate to the different grades and responsibilities of staff.
- 10.5 Equality training/awareness will continue to be highly prioritised in Invest NI's training plan. This will mean that all managers should make sure their equality training needs, and that of staff, are accommodated. Staff will agree Personal Development Plans annually, identifying specific training needs including those in the area of equality and human rights.

10.6 Invest NI's strategy is to place particular emphasis on those staff whose role is outward facing. Its assessment is that these colleagues have the greatest leverage to bring about change in the way the work of Invest NI impacts upon its clients. Invest NI staff are enablers of the process of integrating the provisions of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (and other equality/human rights provisions) into the daily work of Invest NI. As such they become an important resource for other staff members.

10.7 To develop this resource, Invest NI is making a careful assessment of the need for more specific "focused" training for specialist staff (particularly those with an outward facing role) throughout the Department. Those staff involved in research and data collection, policy development, legislation, service design, monitoring and evaluation need to have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out the following effectively:

- screen policies and legislation;
- undertake Equality Impact Assessments;
- investigate and monitor complaints; and
- monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Scheme.

Some of this training has already commenced.

10.8 For staff involved in consultation exercises, we will ensure that they have the wherewithal to communicate effectively with, listen to and understand the needs of all the Section 75 groups. Communication needs will differ from one group to another, and also within groups, and Invest NI will continue to work with representative groups and appropriate external specialists to identify how their needs can best be addressed. As a result any necessary training will initially be targeted at staff expected to deal with marginalized groups, and will be extended more widely as needs are identified.

10.9 Underpinning these specific training actions, training of a more generic nature will also be provided. Specifically:

- Formal induction training for all new staff in this Scheme and their obligations under Section 75.
- Training for all staff newly appointed to management grades as part of core management development programmes.
- Training for middle and senior managers as an integral part of more advanced management development programmes.
- All staff involved in the implementation of the Scheme.

10.10 Invest NI's training programme is in the final stages of development. Equality training will be incorporated into the overall programme with the aim of mainstreaming the equality agenda into the daily operational activities of staff.

10.11 In addition to formal training, Invest NI will undertake awareness raising on the Section 75 statutory duty, the Scheme itself and other equality and diversity issues through articles in staff briefings, guidance leaflets, e-mail, and website. It will continue to use this means of ensuring increased awareness of equality issues throughout the ongoing day to day work of Invest NI.

10.12 Staff within the Equality Unit of Invest NI will provide advice to all staff on general Section 75 issues, and on individual equality impact assessments.

10.13 A copy of this final Equality Scheme will be placed on Invest NI's internal Intranet for the information of all staff. Staff will also receive a summary of the Scheme once available. Top level involvement in the implementation of the Scheme will be ongoing in the work outlined in relation to the planned assessments, individual equality impact assessments and the Training Plan.

10.14 The intention of Invest NI is to create and sustain genuine organizational change. It will, therefore, conduct periodic evaluations to assess the effectiveness of its Implementation Plan and the extent of integration of Section 75 obligations into the day-to-day management and policy development and operations of Invest NI. The outcome of these evaluations will be included in Invest NI's annual review of the implementation progress and will be forwarded to the Commission.

11.0 **Complaints**

When a person believes that he/she has been adversely affected by a failure of Invest NI to comply with this scheme, he/she should, in the first instance, bring or have their complaint brought to the attention of Joanne Stewart (details as at paragraph).

- 11.1 The Equality Unit will carry out an initial internal investigation of the complaint and will respond to the complainant within one month. In setting out Invest NI's response to the complainant (in the format preferred by the complainant), the Unit will inform him/her of the procedure for pursuing the complaint further, if necessary, with the Equality Commission, as set out in para 10 of Schedule 9 to the Act.
- 11.2 If the Equality Commission decides to investigate any complaint, or any other matter falling within paragraph 11(1)(b) of Schedule 9 of the Act, Invest NI will co-operate fully, providing access to relevant information which the Commission may require.

12.0 **Publication of the Scheme**

12.1 The final Equality Scheme, as approved by the Equality Commission, will be available in print form, free on request from:

E-mail: nicola.gordon@investni.com

It will also be placed on the organisation's website at www.investni.com.

Invest NI will put systems in place to ensure that the scheme is available in accessible formats and in a timely fashion, whilst specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate the scheme to young people and people with learning disabilities.

12.2 Invest NI will also

- issue a press release, and place a prominent advertisement in the press regarding the Final Equality Scheme once it is approved by the Equality Commission
- place a copy of the Scheme in all public libraries
- send a copy of the Scheme to those named at Annex E who responded or commented on the Scheme.

12.3 An Executive Summary will also be produced and be made available as outlined above.

13.0 **Review of the Scheme**

13.1 Invest NI will arrange for an external review of the operation of this Scheme by July 2008. This review, which will be published, will include an assessment of how Invest NI has complied with its Section 75 obligations in implementing all aspects of the Equality Scheme, and how equality of opportunity and good relations have been advanced in relation to the main policy areas.

13.2 Consultations will take place with groups from Annex E (amended if additional groups are added) as part of the review prior to submission of the review report to the Equality Commission. The review will comply with any guidelines issued in due course by the Equality Commission.

**MAIN GROUPS IDENTIFIED BY THE EQUALITY UNIT AS RELEVANT
TO THE SECTION 75 CATEGORIES
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND PURPOSES**

Category	Main Groups
Religious belief	Protestants; Catholics; people of other religious belief; people of no religious belief
Political opinion	Unionists generally; Nationalists generally; members/supporters of any political party
Racial group	White people; Chinese; Travellers; Indians, Pakistanis; Black people
'Men and women generally'	Men (including boys); women (including girls); <i>trans-gendered people</i>
Marital status	Married people; unmarried people; divorced or separated people; widowed people
Age	Children under 16; people of working age (16/65); people over 65

'Persons with a disability'

Persons with a physical, sensory, learning disability and persons with *mental ill health* as defined in Sections 1 and 2 and Schedules 1 and 2 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

'Persons with dependants'

Persons with primary responsibility for the care of a child; persons with personal responsibility for the care of a person with a disability; persons with primary responsibility for the care of a dependant elderly person

Sexual orientation

Heterosexual people; homosexual people; bisexual people

TIMETABLE FOR REVIEWS AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Policy Area	Elements within Policy Area	Comment	Recommendation
(A) Innovation-“to promote innovation, higher levels of R&D and design and improve knowledge transfer”.	For businesses, this involves stimulating higher levels of investment in R&D through Invest NI programmes; increasing the number of companies performing R&D; enhancing the technological infrastructure; promoting industrial design and providing effective business information services.	These initiatives have included: the Start Programme and the Compete Programme. Companies can also access e-business and IT support along with programmes which promote resource efficient business practices in client companies.	EQIA required on a range of programmes and initiatives associated with this policy area. (Start April 2005)
(A) continued	START Programme and COMPETE Programme	EQIA conducted in 2001.	Invest NI will review the recommendations outlined in the EQIA to ensure relevant changes are actioned.

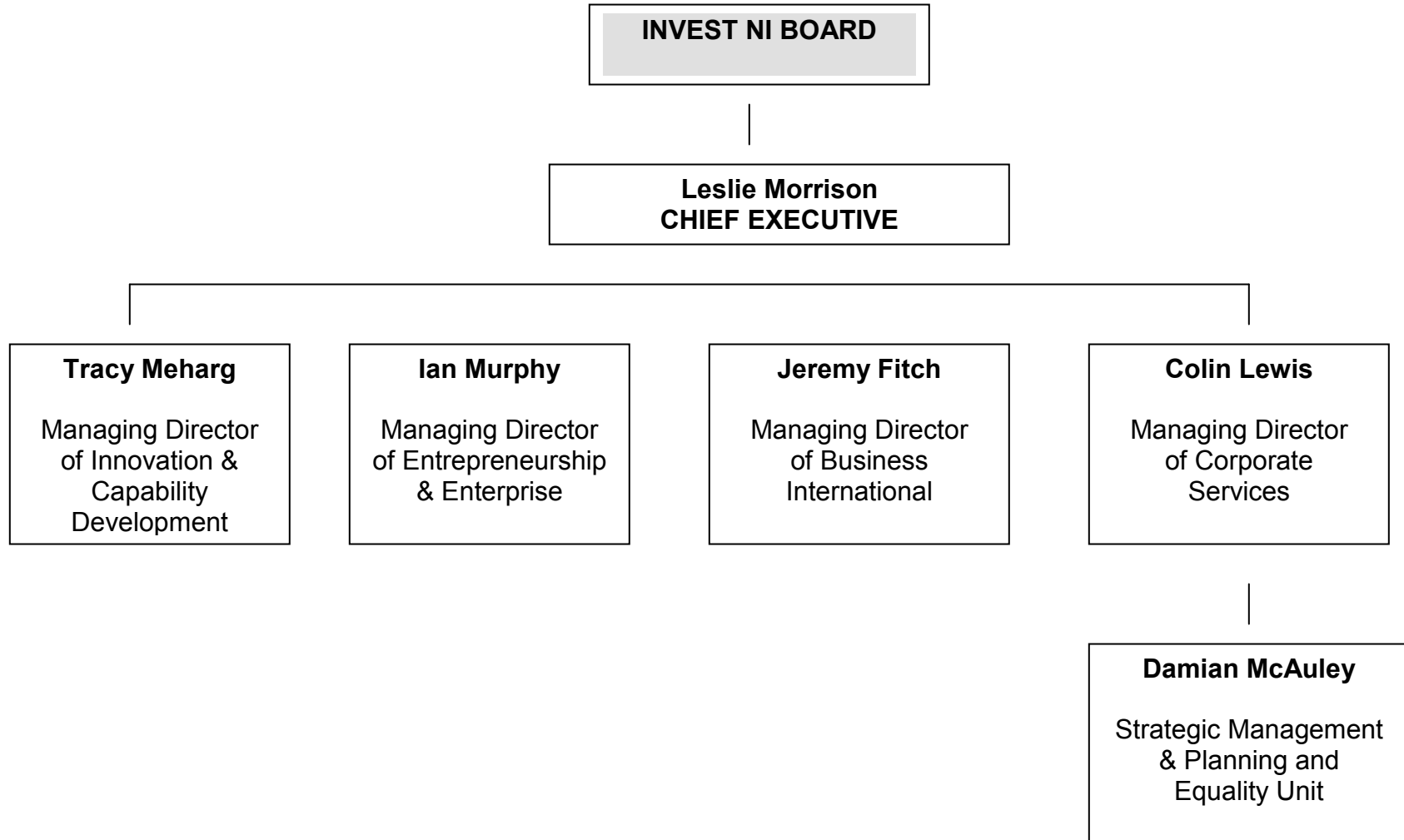
Policy Area	Elements within Policy Area	Comment	Recommendation
(A) continued	PR activity to highlight R&D initiatives available.	EQIA conducted in 2001	Invest NI will review the recommendations outlined in the EQIA to ensure relevant changes are actioned.
(B) Existing Business- “to achieve higher levels of growth by indigenous and externally-owned businesses”.	Direct support, via selective financial assistance, aimed at enhancing business performance.	EQIA conducted in 2001	Invest NI will review the recommendations outlined in the EQIA to ensure relevant changes are actioned.
(B) continued	Development of appropriate sectoral strategies for NI business base.	A range of sectoral strategies currently being developed in context of new organisation.	During the development stage each sectoral strategy will undergo a detailed equality screening process, the result of which will indicate if an equality impact assessment is necessary. Screening will take place in the year 2002-2003.

Policy Area	Elements within Policy Area	Comment	Recommendation
(B) continued	Support for companies directed at activities which will improve the company's export performance.	EQIA carried out in 2001.	Invest NI will review the recommendations outlined in the EQIA to ensure relevant changes are actioned.
(B) continued	Encourage business growth by facilitating business improvement activities. This is actioned through a substantial portfolio of programmes aimed at developing client company performance through improved business processes and better people management.	EQIA conducted in 2001 on the Company Development Programme and the Explorers Programme.	EQIA required on remaining programmes. (Start April 2005)

Policy Area	Elements within Policy Area	Comment	Recommendation
<p>(C) Business Birth Rate-“to promote a more enterprising culture so as to raise the overall level and quality of business starts”.</p>	<p>Deliver a range of programmes and initiatives to promote higher levels of start-ups. Programmes include :</p> <p>NI Business Start Programme; Home Start Programme; Growth Start programme; Along with a wide range of regional initiatives targeted at specific sectors (ie Products Into Practice and Business Innovation Link).</p>	<p>EQIA Carried out on NI Business Start Programme (NIBSP) in 2001.</p> <p>(Please note that this is different from the START programme detailed above in policy area A)</p>	<p>EQIA required on range of start-up initiatives including Growth and Home Start Programmes.</p> <p>(April 2003-March 2004).</p>
<p>(C) continued</p>	<p>Achieve greater start-up rates through the development and implementation of a Business Birth Rate Strategy. The main aim of which is to promote a more entrepreneurial society.</p>	<p>Business Birth Rate Strategy currently under development.</p>	<p>As part of its development, the strategy will undergo a detailed equality screening process, the result of which will indicate if an equality impact assessment is necessary. Screening will take place in the year 2002-2003.</p>

Policy Area	Elements within Policy Area	Comment	Recommendation
(D) Inward Investment “to attract new high quality knowledge based investment from outside NI”.	Market Northern Ireland as an investment opportunity through inward investment projects.	EQIA conducted in 2001.	Invest NI will review the recommendations outlined in the EQIA on a regular basis to ensure relevant changes are actioned.
(E) Internal Services- “to provide critical internal services required to make Invest NI commercially responsive and accountable to government”.	Recruitment and Selection		EQIA required -Invest NI is about to conduct a review of its current recruitment and selection policies, procedures and practices. A key element of this will be the equality impact of these policies. The EQIA will commence in late 2003 and will be complete early 2004.
	Procurement		EQIA required. This will be undertaken in line with that of NI Civil Service.

INVEST NI ORGANISATION CHART



INVEST NI POLICIES FROM FIRST DETI EQUALITY SCHEME

First DETI Equality Scheme	Current Position
<i>(B) To encourage greater, sustainable growth by locally and externally owned international competitive companies in the manufacturing and internationally tradeable service sectors (IDB).</i>	This policy has been subjected to an EQIA which was published in October 2002.
<i>(C) To attract new inward investment which will offer opportunities for enhanced job quality, paying particular attention to areas designated as being disadvantaged (IDB).</i>	This policy has been subjected to an EQIA which was published in October 2002.
<i>(D) To maintain a flexible property policy to support existing and new companies through the development of partnerships with private developers, district councils and other relevant economic development groups (IDB).</i>	This Policy will be included in Invest NI's Equality Scheme.
<i>(E) To raise the level of research and development activity in companies to increase overall competitiveness (IRTU).</i>	This policy has been subjected to an EQIA which was published in October 2002.
<i>(F) To increase the use of new technologies in companies to increase overall competitiveness (IRTU).</i>	This policy has been subjected to an EQIA which was published in October 2002.
<i>(G) To assist companies to increase international competitiveness by promoting management development and encouraging employers to develop the skills and versatility of those in employment (BSD).</i>	This policy has been subjected to an EQIA which was published in October 2002.

ORGANISATION NAME

Gingerbread NI
 Co-operation Ireland
 Counteract
 Cara-Friend
 New Social Economy Agency (NI)
 Disability Action
 NI Volunteer Development Agency
 Age Concern
 NI Consumer Committee for Electricity
 NI Council for Voluntary Action
 Prince's Youth Business Trust
 Women's Resource & Development Agency
 Community Relations Council
 Indian Community Centre
 Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
 NI Voluntary Trust
 Traveller Movement (NI)
 Belfast Centre for the Unemployed
 NI Council for Ethnic Minorities
 Chinese Welfare Association Ltd
 Business in the Community NI
 Presbyterian Church in Ireland
 Belfast Hebrew Congregation
 Church of Ireland
 Methodist Church in Ireland
 Baha'i Office for Northern Ireland
 Sikh Cultural Centre
 Northern Ireland Islamic Centre
 East Belfast Community Development Agency
 West Belfast Economic Forum
 Bar Council
 NUS/USI
 Youth Council for Northern Ireland
 Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSo)
 NIGRA
 Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Organisations
 NIACRO
 Children's Law Centre
 Law Centre (NI)
 POBAL
 Rural Development Council
 Ulster Scots Heritage Council
 Belfast Traveller Education and Development Group
 NI Women's European Platform
 Women's Forum
 INCORE Conflict Resolutions Ltd
 Greater Shankill Partnership
 Press for Change
 Enterprise Ulster

Training for Women Network Ltd
General Consumer Council for NI
Christian Action Research & Education (CARE)
Organisation for the Unemployed Northern Ireland
Queen's University
Belfast City Centre Management
Association of Independent Advice Centres
Chief Executive's Forum
City Partnership Board
Civic Forum
Creggan Enterprises Ltd
Forum for Community Work NI
Greater Belfast Community Network
Greater East Belfast Partnership Board
Larne Development Forum
Larne District Partnership Board
NI Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux
Lurgan Council for Voluntary Action
North City Business Centre
North Belfast Partnership Board
NI Centre for Competitiveness
NI Partnership Board
West Belfast Partnership Board
University of Ulster at Coleraine
Women Mean Business
University of Ulster at Jordanstown
Civic Forum
Antrim Borough Council
Ards Borough Council
Armagh City & District Council
Ballymena Borough Council
Ballymoney Borough Council
Banbridge District Council
Strabane District Council
Carrickfergus Borough Council
Castlereagh Borough Council
Coleraine Borough Council
Cookstown District Council
Craigavon Borough Council
Derry City Council
Down District Council
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
Fermanagh District Council
Larne Borough Council
Limavady Borough Council
Belfast City Council
Lisburn Borough Council
Magherafelt District Council
Moyle District Council
Newry & Mourne District Council
Newtownabbey Borough Council
North Down Borough Council

Omagh District Council
ATGWU
AMICUS-AEEU
Communication Workers' Union (CWU)
Engineers and Managers Association (EMA)
GMB
Institution of Professionals, Managers & Specialists
Manufacturing Science Finance (MSF)
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)
Public Commerce Services Union (PCS)
Services Industrial Professional Technical Union
UCATT
UNISON
Union of Shop, Distributive & Allied Workers (USDAW)
NIC/ICTU
Antrim Enterprise Agency Ltd
Ards Business Centre Ltd
Argyle Business Centre Ltd
Armagh Business Centre Ltd
Ballymena Business Development Centre Ltd
Banbridge Enterprise Centre
Belcoo Enterprise Ltd
Brookfield Business Centre Ltd
Carrickfergus Enterprise Agency Ltd
Castleberg & District Enterprises Co Ltd
Castleberg Enterprises Ltd
Coalisland & District Development Association
Coleraine Enterprise Agency Ltd
Cookstown Enterprise Centre Ltd
Craigavon Industrial Development Org Ltd
Crossmaglen Community Enterprises Ltd
Down Business Centre
Dungannon Enterprise Centre Ltd
East Belfast Enterprise Park Ltd
Eurocentre West Ltd
Farget Enterprise Park Ltd
Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd
Glenwood Enterprises Ltd
Keady Business Centre Ltd
Kesh Development Association Charitable Trust
Larne Enterprise Development Co Ltd
Lisburn Enterprise Organisation Ltd
Moyle Enterprise Co Ltd
Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency
Mallusk Enterprise Park
North City Business Centre Ltd
North Down Development Organisation Ltd
Omagh Enterprise Co Ltd
Ormeau Enterprises Ltd
Roe Valley Enterprises Ltd
Roslea Enterprises Ltd
South West Fermanagh Development Organisation Ltd

Strabane Industrial Properties Ltd
Townsend Enterprise Park Ltd
West Belfast Development Trust Ltd
Westlink Enterprise Ltd
Workspace
Equality Commission for NI
NI Human Rights Commission
Committee on the Administration of Justice
Confederation of British Industry
NI Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Institute of Directors (NI Division)
NI Economic Research Centre
NI Economic Council
Federation of Small Businesses
Head of Civil Service
National Energy Action Charity (NEA NI)
MENCAP
NI Association of Mental Health
NI Anti-Poverty Network
Foyle Women's Information Network
Women Together for Peace
Women's Information Group
Women's Support Network
Carers National Association NI
NW Community Network
Falls Community Council
Rural Community Network
Employers' Forum on Disability
Equality Forum NI
Community Relations Training/Learning Consortium
British Deaf Association (NI)
RNIB (NI)
RNID (NI)
Cedar Foundation
Fermanagh Women's Network
NI Women's Aid Federation
The Blind Centre
NSPCC
Relate
Child Poverty Action Group (NI)
Help the Aged, Northern Ireland
First Minister
Deputy First Minister
All MLA's & MPs
Department of Education
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment
Department of the Environment
Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure
Department of Finance & Personnel
Department of Employment & Learning
Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Department of Social Development

Department of Regional Development
Department of Health & Social Services & Public Safety
Sinn Fein
PUP
SDLP
UK Unionist Party
NI Women's Coalition
Alliance Party
DUP
Ulster Unionist Party
NI Unionist Party
United Unionist Assembly Party
The Workers Party
Labour Party
Democratic Left

1. This Annex outlines the background to the consultation exercise on the revised Equality Scheme and addresses the comments received on the scheme generally and on Invest NI policy areas.
2. The draft Equality Scheme was issued on 28 November 2002 for a consultation period of 8 weeks, although this date was later extended for a further 4 weeks to allow additional time for consultation meetings to be held with a number of Section 75 representative groups which availed of this facility. Over 300 copies were circulated to organisations and groups listed at Annex E.
3. Three organisations provided written comments and meetings held with the following groups/organisations as part of the consultation process:

Belfast Travellers Education and Development Organisation

Coalition on Sexual Orientation

Equality Commission for NI

MENCAP

Multi-cultural Resource Centre

Travellers Movement

Women's Research and Development Agency

Equality Coalition (attended by representatives from Committee on Administration of Justice (CAJ), NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), NI Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) and West Belfast Economic Forum (WBEF)

4. The comments received were both helpful and constructive in the revision of the Scheme. The substance of comments received to the consultation exercise and Invest NI's response is set out below.

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES TO INVEST NI'S EQUALITY SCHEME

ORGANISATION	COMMENTS	RESPONSES
<p>Business In The Community (BITC)</p>	<p>BITC suggests that a statement on the “promotion of effective Human Resource management techniques, to include the provision and promotion of equal opportunities” should be added to Invest NI’s key actions list.</p> <p>BITC asks how Invest NI intends making third party organisations, working on its behalf, aware of their Section 75 equality obligations.</p> <p>BITC brings to Invest NI’s attention the substantial amount of time (and resources) involved in responding to equality schemes.</p>	<p>Currently in Invest NI, the promotion of effective Human Resource management techniques (including that of promoting equal opportunities) is an integral part of the direct support given to client companies. Indeed through its new strategic initiative, “People Excellence”, Invest NI promotes effective people management techniques to clients. We will ensure that this is encapsulated in our scheme within the key actions section.</p> <p>It is agreed that those third party organizations working on Invest NI’s behalf are made aware of the Section 75 obligations. This has been typified through Invest NI’s work on the Northern Ireland Business Start Programme. Invest NI has been instrumental in developing and organising equality training for programme deliverers to ensure that the equality ethos is communicated effectively to those working on its behalf.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

ORGANISATION	COMMENTS	RESPONSES
	<p>BITC queries how Invest NI intends to appraise staff (with a specific reference to managers) in relation to their overall equality commitments.</p>	<p>As stated in para 10.5 of the scheme, equality training has been highly prioritised in Invest NI's training plan. Through the development of this comprehensive plan, Invest NI is currently taking into account the most effective way of managing and appraising staff commitment to equality.</p>
<p>Disability Action</p>	<p>Disability Action requests that if a consultee wishes to receive a full copy of the scheme in an alternative format, that will be provided and that Invest NI has ensured that its website is fully accessible to people with disabilities.</p> <p>Disability Action requests that in the Chairman and Chief Executive's statement, a fuller reference is made to the training, development and provision of resources to Section 75 issues within Invest NI.</p>	<p>Invest NI has made the commitment that an Executive Summary will be provided, in alternative formats, on request. Where there is the need to provide the full scheme in alternative formats, Invest NI will work with the organization in order to satisfy the necessary requirements. Invest NI is currently developing its website and will ensure that the site is made fully accessible to people with disabilities.</p> <p>Accepted- The Chairman and Chief Executive's Statement has been amended accordingly.</p>

ORGANISATION	COMMENTS	RESPONSES
	<p>Disability Action agrees that Invest NI should give the commitment to inform the affected groups in terms of any changes in structure or in the named officer as at paragraph 2.1 of the scheme.</p> <p>Disability Action stresses the importance of all Invest NI staff having equality issues included in their personal development plans.</p> <p>Disability Action suggests that, in relation to personnel and procurement issues, where any part of these Invest NI policies differ from those of DFP, then Invest NI has an obligation to impact assess them.</p> <p>Disability Action agrees that, where appropriate, individual programmes within each policy area may be grouped together, it believes that it is easier to identify equality issues at an individual programme level.</p>	<p>Noted – Amended as at para 2.1-Invest NI will endeavour to inform affected groups where appropriate and relevant.</p> <p>As stated at para 10.5 of the scheme, equality training has been highly prioritised Invest NI’s training plan. The Equality Unit is currently working with the Human Resources Team to ensure that all Invest NI staff are appropriately trained with respect to the Section 75 obligations. This will be reflected in their personal development plans as appropriate to staff roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Noted and agreed.</p> <p>Accepted-amended as at para 4.10.</p>

ORGANISATION	COMMENTS	RESPONSES
	<p>Disability Action advises that the best way to discover any equality issues is for Invest NI to carry out its own EQIAs.</p> <p>Disability Action has stated that it cannot comment on the EQIA timetable as an explanation of each individual programme is not contained within the scheme.</p> <p>Disability Action believes that both the <u>direct</u> impact of Invest NI on its clients and the <u>indirect</u> effects of such client support (on stakeholders, locations and influencers) is important.</p> <p>Disability Action believes that affected groups should be represented at all levels in any monitoring systems.</p> <p>Disability Action requests if Invest NI has a policy available on accessible formats and languages.</p>	<p>Accepted –amended as at para 5.1.</p> <p>Invest NI has, on the basis of its screening process, decided to include all of its policy areas for Equality Impact Assessment (apart from those having undergone recent EQIAs as part of the legacy agency remit). Due to the large number of programmes and initiatives incorporated within the individual policy areas (identified at para 3.6) it has not been possible to outline all of these in the scheme.</p> <p>Noted and agreed.</p> <p>Noted – amended as at para 6.2.</p> <p>As stated at para 8.5 Invest NI has outlined its commitment to providing information in accessible formats. If organisations request information in formats other than those listed in the scheme, Invest NI will endeavour to meet these requests as and when they arise.</p>

ORGANISATION	COMMENTS	RESPONSES
	<p>Disability Action welcomes Invest NI's commitment to working with affected groups on consultation methods and strongly advocates a consultation period of <u>no less</u> than 8 weeks.</p> <p>Disability Action advises that a statement should be added that consultees using alternative formats should be given the same length of consultation period as those using conventional methods.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed as at para 8.4.</p> <p>Amended as at para 8.5.</p>
Carers Association	<p>The Carers Association has highlighted the issue of Carers being able to return to the workforce and set up their own business. In addition the need was stressed for enterprise programmes to facilitate those wishing to start up in business, on a part-time basis as well as at a full-time level.</p>	<p>The Northern Ireland Business Start Programme, run by Invest NI and its local Enterprise Partners, has been set up to help people interested in starting-up in business. The programme actively encourages those who want to do so on a part-time basis.</p>

ORGANISATION	COMMENTS	RESPONSES
	<p>Invest NI should be able to influence local companies to consider family friendly measures in business practice.</p> <p>Carers Association is keen on raising the profile of disabled access in relation to tourist attractions. In addition they wish to highlight ease of access, to these attractions, for both people with disabilities and the elderly.</p>	<p>Invest NI, through its Business Improvement Services Team, helps client companies develop good people management practices. In this way companies can motivate staff to perform at their best, resulting in excellent customer service levels. In turn this gives the companies a long term competitive advantage in the marketplace. For example Invest NI recently supported Action Mental Health towards the design and delivery of a “Work-Life Balance Programme”. This was specifically designed for senior managers interested in introducing innovative work-life balance policies into their own organisations.</p> <p>Invest NI, as stated in its Corporate Plan, is committed to creating a successful economy with opportunities for all. For example Invest NI currently supports Disability Action through the sponsorship of the its “Business Support Scheme”. This programme, run by Disability Action, assists companies in their approach towards good practice on disability issues. The scheme offers businesses the opportunity to coordinate workplace disability management and create mutual benefit for both companies and people with disabilities.</p>

ORGANISATION	COMMENTS	RESPONSES
Belfast Travellers Education and Development Group and the Belfast Travellers Movement	The Health Action Zone Education, Training and Employment Sub-Group (HAZETE), in which Mr Noonan is involved, has produced an Economic Development Strategy. This Strategy has a number of action points which may require Invest NI input.	Invest NI is to ensure that the liaison between HAZETE and Invest NI is maintained in order to help develop the HAZETE Economic Development Strategy and ensure that relevant Invest NI programmes are accessible to the Travellers.
Women’s Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)	<p>Main comments are highlighted as follows:</p> <p>WRDA would encourage lifting the barriers between the business and community sectors;</p> <p>WRDA wants more effective and higher level ICT training for women;</p> <p>WRDA stresses the importance of better networking for women in general.</p>	Through Invest NI’s “Women Into Enterprise Strategy” widespread consultation and networking has taken place with a large number of womens’ organisations, women entrepreneurs and those women thinking of starting up in business. This consultation process has led to the development of an overall strategy encouraging local women, from all backgrounds, to become more entrepreneurial and helping those currently in business, expand their existing operations.
Multicultural Resource Centre (MCRC)	MCRC expressed their desire for organizations to document why (other than for legislative reasons) equality schemes are necessary.	Accepted – amended and new paragraph inserted at 1.9

ORGANISATION	COMMENTS	RESPONSES
<p>Northern Ireland Committee – Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC.ICTU)</p>	<p>NIC.ICTU request that any change to the structure or the named officer at Annex C of Invest NI schemes should be sent to those listed at Annex E as well as to the Equality Commission.</p> <p>NIC.ICTU has queried if Invest NI has synchronised its EQIA timetable with that of DETI.</p> <p>NIC.ICTU requests that Invest NI should mention in its scheme that “policies include written as well as unwritten policies” as stated in the Equality Commission Guidance.</p> <p>NIC.ICTU has noted that where Invest NI is implementing a policy formulated by DETI it will work with DETI to ensure the promotion of equality and good relations – it would ask Invest NI to clarify if it will be carrying out EQIAs on these policies.</p>	<p>Invest NI will endeavour to inform organizations of any changes to the structure or the named officer as at Annex C where appropriate.</p> <p>The two organisations have worked closely together since the inception of Invest NI to ensure the effective integration of both Invest NI and DETI policies.</p> <p>This will be considered as individual EQIAs are taken forward.</p> <p>As at para 4.3 Invest NI has made the commitment to ensure that all its policy areas stated therein are impact assessed. It will continue to work in conjunction with DETI to ensure the ongoing appropriate impact assessment of policies.</p>

ORGANISATION	COMMENTS	RESPONSES
	<p>NIC.ICTU states that Invest NI has a responsibility to ensure that all those in receipt of financial support meet the criteria in respect of Section 75 and that the provision of grants should be equality proofed.</p> <p>NIC.ICTU believes that if Invest NI implements any policy then it should ensure that the policies are screened and impact assessed if applicable.</p> <p>NIC.ICTU has noted that Invest NI has included all its revised policy areas for impact assessment – it queries if the screening process covers written and unwritten policies.</p> <p>NIC.ICTU has requested if Invest NI will give a commitment to consulting on the screening process.</p>	<p>Invest NI, through the general conditions of its Financial Assistance Agreements and its Letters of Offer, to clients, requests that clients comply with the statutory provisions governing discrimination in employment in Northern Ireland. In addition Invest NI has been instrumental in organising equality training for programme deliverers on the Northern Ireland Business Start Programme to ensure that those working on Invest NI’s behalf are aware of its equality ethos.</p> <p>Accepted – as stated at para 4.7 of the scheme.</p> <p>All Invest NI policy areas will be screened before undergoing impact assessment.</p> <p>Invest NI will consult with the Section 75 groups on the screening of new policies, where appropriate.</p>

ORGANISATION	COMMENTS	RESPONSES
	<p>NIC.ICTU queries the issue of staff training and whether all existing staff (not only those involved in the implementation of the scheme) have had training on the scheme.</p> <p>NIC.ICTU queries how Invest NI will address the good relations duty.</p> <p>NIC.ICTU has queried examples of the circumstances in which Invest NI may not be able to adhere to the consultation timetable.</p> <p>In the “Main Groups Identified Section” NIC.ICTU has queried that there is no mention of transgender and that they would ask that “mental ill health” be included in the “Persons with a Disability” list.</p>	<p>As at para 10.4 all existing staff have undergone equality training as part of the legacy agency remit. In addition all new Invest NI staff, as part of their induction programme, are given appropriate training in Equality, NTSN and Human Rights.</p> <p>Invest NI will be working closely with DETI to take the good relations duty forward.</p> <p>Invest NI will provide the required consultation response period of eight weeks as a minimum.</p> <p>Accepted – amended as at Annex A.</p>
<p>Equality Coalition (CAJ, WBEF, NICEM & NICVA)</p>	<p>CAJ has queried the complaints procedure, requesting that organisations are allowed to bring complaints on behalf of individuals.</p> <p>NICEM have requested that application forms are made as simple as possible in order for ease of completion by ethnic groups.</p>	<p>Invest NI is required to work within the bounds of the current legislation. This issue should be raised with the Equality Commission.</p> <p>Noted and agreed. Invest NI will work to ensure that the application forms relating to all its programmes are user friendly and readily accessible in alternative formats.</p>

ORGANISATION	COMMENTS	RESPONSES
	<p>NICVA requested a 12-week consultation period as opposed to an 8-week period.</p> <p>CAJ were concerned with the equality implications of the amalgamation of organisations to form Invest NI.</p> <p>CAJ were also concerned with the geographic impact of the new organisation.</p>	<p>Invest NI will provide the required consultation response period of eight weeks as a minimum.</p> <p>Through its inter-team approach the new organisation will ensure that all the equality obligations, arising from the legacy agencies, are carried forward in the Invest NI remit.</p> <p>Invest NI has recently opened up a further 3 offices in Craigavon, Coleraine and Enniskillen. This is in addition to its five existing local offices in Belfast, Newry, Ballymena, Londonderry and Omagh.</p>
COSO	<p>Invest NI Staff should receive training on sexual orientation and that Invest NI should make use of COSO's experience and expertise of working with the LGBT community.</p> <p>COSO would stress the importance of working with Invest NI to achieve maximum mutual benefit for both organisations.</p>	<p>Invest NI's training on equal opportunities covers all aspects of harassment. However, when appropriate, it will work with COSO to ensure an effective approach.</p> <p>Noted and Agreed.</p>

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