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| **INITIAL EQUALITY SCREENING FORM** |
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| DIVISION**:** | Regional Business Group | **TEAM:** | Regional Development Team |
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| **Name of Policy/Decision/Practice to be Equality Screened** |
| Regional Economic Recovery Action Plan (ERAP) Initiatives |
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| **Is it New or Revised?** | New |
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| **Who Does the Policy Effect, e.g Service Users/Staff:** | Service Users, Staff |
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| **Question 1** – Define the aim of the Programme. What is it trying to achieve? (Intended aims/outcomes) |
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| The programme encompasses a proposed range of short-term and medium term regionally focussed actions to support the recovery and rebuilding of the NI Economy following the profound impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.The primary strategic aims of the regionally focused ERAP interventions (Regional ERAP) are to help protect and stabilise employment, increase levels of innovation within small and micro businesses, build a high skilled and agile workforce, pursue and deliver better jobs, and create a more regionally balanced and greener economy.  |
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| **Question 2** – Does the Programme 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 9 – Rationale for Decision. | If yes please continue. |
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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 restrictions imposed to help mitigate against the health impacts of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic have had a considerable economic impact on the NI economy and its businesses. To protect lives, large sections of NI’s economy were required to cease or limit normal trading. At the height of “lockdown” approximately one third of local businesses had temporarily ceased trading.The economic shock has not been felt evenly across all sectors. The drop in turnover has been more severe for customer facing and close contact services, such as recreational and personal services, tourism, accommodation and non-essential retail. Many businesses in these sectors experienced a reduction in sales of between 50 and 80%. The “circuit break” restrictions which followed subdued economic recovery, particularly for the hospitality, close personal services and retail sectors, further impacted the economic shock felt by these sectors. The economic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to result in both an immediate and more medium-term contraction in NI’s economic growth.In anticipation of the restrictions being eased and lifted, the NI Executive’s focus shifted to the recovery phase and to rebuilding NI’s economy. As such, the Department for the Economy (DfE) developed a framework ‘Rebuilding a Stronger Economy’ and brought forward an Economic Recovery Action Plan[[1]](#footnote-1) to define and drive its rebuilding agenda.DfE sought to identify and deploy appropriate actions that would protect, stabilise and support businesses and the wider local economy to position for the economic recovery. As proposals were identified and considered holistically, clear themes for support to promote sustainable economic recovery started to emerge with additional resources sought and secured to maximize impact against each.The ‘Rebuilding a Stronger Economy’ document has since been built on by DfE’s ‘A 10X Economy’ policy document, which outlines the Department’s longer term economic vision for Northern Ireland, with 10 identified Guiding Principles to help deliver a positive impact on Northern Ireland’s economic, societal and environmental well-being.Independent business case appraisal of the proposed interventions is required to fully address equality and rural needs consideration and where issues are identified this screening will be modified accordingly. |

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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 support is open to both rural and urban businesses across NI and a rural needs assessment has also been completed in order to assess any disproportionate impact on rural communities.  | No | While these measures aim to improve economic prosperity, they do not target specifically address Good Relations. |
| Racial/Ethnic Group | L | The support is open to both rural and urban businesses across NI and a rural needs assessment has also been completed in order to assess any disproportionate impact on rural communities.  | No | While these measures aim to improve economic prosperity, they do not target specifically address Good Relations. |
| Political Opinion | L | The support is open to both rural and urban businesses across NI and a rural needs assessment has also been completed in order to assess any disproportionate impact on rural communities. . | No | While these measures aim to improve economic prosperity, they do not target specifically address Good Relations. |
| Age | M | The support is open to both rural and urban businesses across NI and a rural needs assessment has also been completed in order to assess any disproportionate impact on rural communities. There will be promotion of proposed interventions to Youth | - |       |
| Gender | M | The support is open to both rural and urban businesses across NI and a rural needs assessment has also been completed in order to assess any disproportionate impact on rural communities. There will be promotion of proposed interventions to Women | - |       |
| Marital Status | L | The support is open to both rural and urban businesses across NI and a rural needs assessment has also been completed in order to assess any disproportionate impact on rural communities.  | - |       |
| Sexual Orientation | L | The support is open to both rural and urban businesses across NI and a rural needs assessment has also been completed in order to assess any disproportionate impact on rural communities | - |       |
| Disability | L | The support is open to both rural and urban businesses across NI and a rural needs assessment has also been completed in order to assess any disproportionate impact on rural communities. Consideration will be given to ensure accessibility for any people with disabilities. | - |       |
| Dependants | L | The support is open to both rural and urban businesses across NI and a rural needs assessment has also been completed in order to assess any disproportionate impact on rural communities. | - |       |
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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 promotion of proposed interventions to Women, Youth, part-time workers will be positive, rather than adverse. |
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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 3 groupings as identified in Question 4? |
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| No |

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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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| Internally, discussions on the proposed interventions have taken place with colleagues from the following teams;Regional Business, Strategy, Comms, Digital, Offers and Claims, Finance, IT, Technology Solutions, Compliance and New Programme Development, Energy & Resource Efficiency & Power, State AID etcExternally, discussions have taken place with representatives from SOLACE, and the independent business case appraisal will also include consultations with DfE, 11 Councils, Enterprise NI, Colleges NI, NI Chamber of Commerce, and FSB |
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| **Question 8** – In light of the above should the be |
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| [x]  | Screened Out – No Equality Issues – Please provide rationale for this decision. |
| A number of positive actions are being considered as part of the Regional Economic Recovery Plan in order to assist NI businesses, including the provision of funding to c1000 locally focussed businesses at the start of their innovation journey, provision of funding to support Councils in undertaking research into the wider economic outlook in their specific sub-region, the development and implementation of a strong ‘Green Economy’ Marketing and Communications strategy and action plan and the development of a Marketing and Communications Strategy and Action Plan, the focus of which will be to promote Entrepreneurship in particular to Youth, Females and Part-time Workers.Specific programmes or policies which are developed under the above strands will be subject to separate equality screening.  |
| [ ]  | 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: |  | Date: | 23/06/21 |
|  | Policy /Programme Owner |  |  |
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| Approved | Pamela Marron | Date: | 31/08/21 |
|  | Equality Manager |  |  |
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| Modifications made. | Date: |       |
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|  |
| Date: |       |
| Approved by Equality Manager |  |  |

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)