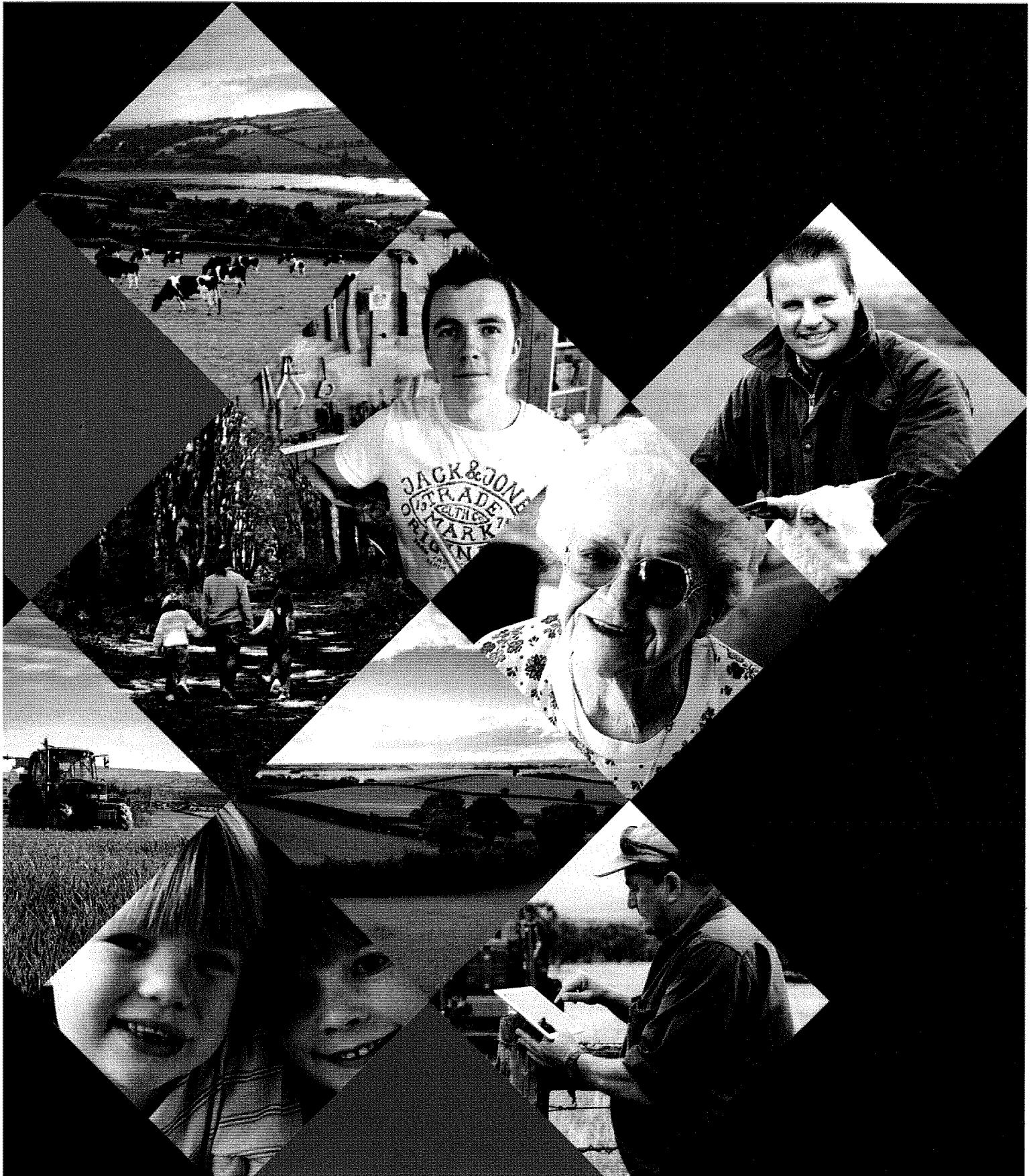


Rural Needs Impact Assessment



Title of Strategy, Policy, Plan or Public Service:

Name of Organisation:

Invest Northern Ireland

Title of Strategy, Policy, Plan or Public Service:

Energy Efficiency Finance

Step 1: Define the Issue

Key questions to consider:

- *What are the objectives of the strategy, policy plan or service?*
- *What impact do you intend it to have in rural areas?*
- *How is 'rural' defined for the purposes of this policy/strategy/service/plan?*
- *What would constitute a fair rural outcome in this case?*

The EEF support will enable businesses to implement cost savings through energy efficiency, by providing access to finance through a hybrid loan-grant fund. The hybrid grant-loan fund will support eligible project costs between £4,000 and £400,000, initially on a 20% grant - 80% interest free loan basis.

The objective of the EEF support is to enable businesses to invest in energy efficient equipment and/or renewable technologies covering a range of technologies, such as, lighting, heating, air conditioning, compressed air, process heating & cooling, solar PV, building control systems. The EEF will be available to the entire NI business base, including all sectors.

In addition to enabling businesses to invest in energy efficient measures, the EEF will provide wider benefits such as carbon and greenhouse gas abatement, improved productivity and market stimulation for energy efficiency solutions.

Step 2: Understand the situation

Key questions to consider:

- *What is the current situation in rural areas?*
- *What evidence (statistics, data, research, stakeholder advice) do you have about the position in rural areas?*
- *If the relevant evidence is not available, can this be sourced?*
- *Do you have access to the views of rural stakeholders about the likely impact of the policy?*
- *Are there existing design features or mitigations already in place to take account of rural needs?*

The EEF support has evolved from the Energy Efficiency Loan Fund (EELF) which was a strand of the previous programme– the Sustainable Development Support Programme (SDSP).

The hybrid grant-loan fund will be open to the wider business base and will be easily accessible for businesses through application.

The Evaluation of the previous programme noted 93% business satisfaction and determined that market failure still exists to deliver these services to NI businesses.

There is no granular breakdown into NI regions, however previous fund data shows the spread of support in council areas. This has been collated from the available data on CRM, and shows 38% of interventions delivered in rural areas.

| District Councils | Client Council Area (Oct 2015-present) | % |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----|
| Antrim And Newtownabbey | 14 | 6% |
| Ards And North Down | 16 | 7% |
| Armagh City, Banbridge And Craigavon | 25 | 11% |
| Belfast | 34 | 15% |
| Causeway Coast And Glens | 22 | 9% |
| Derry City And Strabane | 18 | 8% |
| Fermanagh And Omagh | 23 | 10% |
| Lisburn And Castlereagh | 17 | 7% |
| Mid And East Antrim | 15 | 6% |
| Mid Ulster | 31 | 13% |
| Newry, Mourne And Down | 19 | 8% |
| Total | 234 | |

| Urban /Rural | | |
|--------------|------------|-----|
| Urban | 146 | 62% |
| Rural | 88 | 38% |
| Total | 234 | |

Rural stakeholders such as councils, Invest NI regional offices and Invest NI client Executives have been engaged and the programme team will continue with this engagement for the EEF.

Step 3: Develop and appraise options

Key questions to consider:

- *Are there barriers to delivery in rural areas?*
- *If so, how can these be overcome or mitigated?*
- *Will it cost more to deliver in rural areas?*
- *What steps can be taken to achieve fair rural outcomes?*

The spread of interventions, with a 38% rural uptake, demonstrates there are no barriers to delivery in rural areas and there are further opportunities to expand uptake.

The only additional cost for delivery in rural areas may be additional mileage expenses incurred by the programme team, whilst procurement requires bidders to account for this in their pricing.

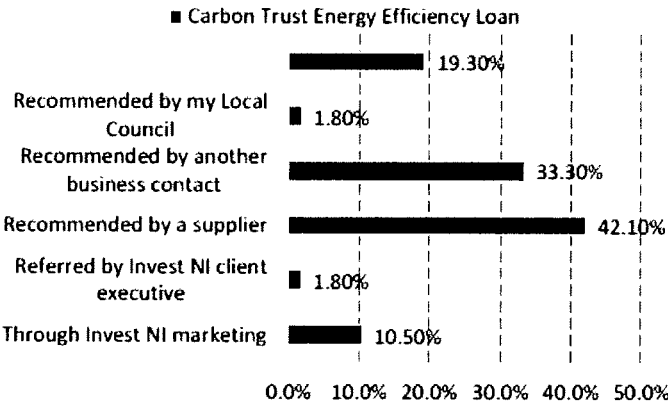
Step 4: Prepare for Delivery

Key questions to consider:

- Do the necessary delivery mechanisms exist in rural areas?
- Have you considered alternative delivery mechanisms?
- What action has been taken to ensure fair rural outcomes?
- Is there flexibility for local delivery bodies to find local solutions?
- Are different solutions required in different areas?

The programme will be promoted to the entire NI business base and rural stakeholders will continue to be engaged to assist in the marketing of the programme.

The previous programme Evaluation conducted a quantitative survey and the table below shows how businesses found out about EELF support. A large proportion is through supplier recommendation and business contacts. Invest NI marketing is also noted, whose platforms are open to the entire NI business base.



Source: Regeneris Consulting, summarising INI SDSP data provided by BMG July 2018. N-57. At a 95% confidence level the margin error on a 50% response is plus or minus 14%

Step 5: Implementation & Monitoring

Key questions to consider:

- *Have you set any rural specific indicators or targets to monitor?*
- *How will the outcomes be measured in rural areas?*
- *Are there any statistics or data that you will collect to monitor rural needs and impacts?*

The EEF will be available to the entire NI business base across a range of regional locations used throughout Northern Ireland, ensuring accessibility for participants irrespective of location. Any events or presentations over the course of the programme will be delivered throughout NI.


Metrics for availability and uptake will continue to be monitored via CRM, these will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to identify if any corrective action is required.

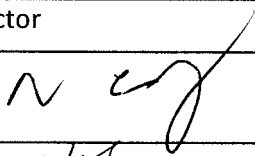
Step 6: Evaluation & Review

Key questions to consider:

- What processes are in place to evaluate and review the implementation of the policy, strategy, plan or service?
- Have rural needs been factored into the evaluation process?
- How will lessons learned in relation to rural outcomes be used to inform future policy

The programme is reviewed on an ongoing basis and through a mid-term evaluation, in particular taking into account levels of participation and feedback from participants. Adjustments, for example in the timing and location of events are considered in conjunction with Invest NI colleagues, relevant stakeholders and customers in a rural setting.

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| Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by: | Rachel Sankannawar |
| Position: | Energy and Resource Efficiency Manager |
| Signature: |  |
| Date completed: | 24/10/2019 |

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|---|---|
| Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by: | Niall Casey |
| Position: | Director |
| Signature: |  |
| Date completed: | 24/10/19 |

