



invest 
Northern
Ireland
Building Locally
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2nd Progress Report on Invest NI's Recruitment and Selection Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

August 2007

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

INTRODUCTION

Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) was established as a corporate body under the Industrial Development Act 2002 to work in partnership with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) to stimulate and encourage economic development in Northern Ireland.

Invest NI undertakes the activities previously delivered 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 and Investment and the business support functions of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

BACKGROUND

Invest NI has an Equality Scheme in place which sets out its commitment to the Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties and contains a timetable for undertaking a series of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs). The Equality Scheme was ratified by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 19 November 2003.

In line with the EQIA timetable, Invest NI has carried out an EQIA of its Recruitment and Selection Policy. The aim of this Policy is:

“to recruit and select staff using fair and equitable procedures that promote equality of opportunity and ensure that the most suitable person is appointed or promoted.”

The draft EQIA went out for a 12 week consultation period on 10 September 2004. Following the close of this consultation a final report was published in September 2005. This final report outlined the actions/recommendations which Invest NI committed to take forward and to monitor on an annual basis. In 2006 the first annual progress report was completed.

CURRENT POSITION

Invest NI has now undertaken a further review of the actions/recommendations contained in the final report and would like to highlight the process made to date against each recommendation. The table below outlines progress made up to July 2007:

No	Action	Progress up to 31/07/07
1	We will continue to ensure that recruitment and selections are open, transparent and relevant, and that these provide equality of opportunity for all applicants.	We will continue to ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are open, transparent and relevant and that these provide equality of opportunity for all applicants. The process has been open and transparent since the organisation's inception in 2002.
2	Advertisements for all posts to state that applications are available in alternative formats and how they may be obtained.	A statement stating that applications are available in alternative formats is included in all advertisements.
3	Staff on duty to be notified of all vacancies via email. Vacancies will be placed on the website and Intranet and in newspapers as appropriate and any member of staff who is not on duty can check daily newspapers for advertisements.	On an ongoing basis staff are notified of vacancies via e-mail. Vacancies are placed on the Invest NI website and Intranet and in newspapers as appropriate. Line managers are also encouraged to bring vacancies to the attention of staff not on duty.
4	Where appropriate and lawful, affirmative and/or positive action advertising to be used. At this time we will specifically welcome applicants from minority racial groups, persons with a disability and, for Senior Management posts applications from females.	At present, in its general recruitment advertising, Invest NI specifically welcomes applications from minority racial groups and people with disabilities. Since November 2005, we have also welcomed applications from females for senior management posts.
5	We will advertise jobs widely but in an effective manner. The current practice of advertising in the Irish News, Belfast Telegraph and News Letter will continue for the next six months. The effectiveness and impact of advertising will then be assessed and reviewed.	The practice of advertising in the Irish News, the Belfast Telegraph, the News Letter, Invest NI's website and recruitment sites will continue. This will be reviewed on an annual basis to monitor the effectiveness of each media.

6	Internal trawls for posts will only operate in limited circumstances and normally where this action may avoid a potential redundancy or in situations of restructuring or redeployment within the existing Invest NI headcount.	The decision to run recruitment trawls externally or internally will be made prior to the commencement of each recruitment exercise. The decision will be based on headcount constraints and the composition of the potential applicant pool.
7	We will ensure that the Knowledge, Skills, Experience and job specific Competences (KSEC's) Assessment framework which is being developed is non-discriminatory, transparent, promote equality of opportunity and be objective where possible. Staff will be fully briefed about any changes before it takes place.	Prior to advertising, all proposed selection criteria are assessed to ensure that they are strictly job related, objective, non-discriminatory and promote equality of opportunity.
8	We will prepare improved guidelines for all applicants to help them understand criterion-based selection. We will also provide clarity as to the skills, knowledge and behaviours which are considered essential and desirable criteria for shortlisting and make these explicit to candidates.	The Information for Applicants Pack issued to all applicants provides a comprehensive outline. It outlines the specific skills knowledge and behaviours which are essential for the role and guidance on how the application form should be completed. Since January 2007, Invest NI no longer uses "Desirable Criteria". An additional annex was added to the Information for Applicants Pack in January 2007 providing advice and guidance on Criterion Based interviews.
9	The scoring framework will be reviewed to provide consistency across each selection exercise.	The scoring framework has been reviewed to ensure consistency across each selection exercise.
10	A consistent approach will be adopted to contact all candidates, whether internal or external.	All candidates are contacted by letter to their home address. Candidates who are at the same stage of the process are contacted in the same manner and at the same time.

11	Our Recruitment and Selection website job board will be linked to the Intranet; vacancies will also be posted on appropriate jobsites.	Jobs are posted on Invest NI's own website and on Nijobs since 2005. From April 2006 the job board section of the Invest NI website has been linked to the Intranet.
12	Standard letter templates will be developed for each stage of the recruitment process.	Standard letter templates for each stage of the recruitment process are now in place and used consistently.
13	The information pack for candidates will include a summary of Invest NI's Equal Opportunities Policy, a description of the role and of the skills, expertise and qualifications required. We will also endeavour to give best estimates of recruitment and selection timescales to applicants.	Since 2002, the Information for Applicants pack has included a description of the role, the skills, expertise and qualifications required. Since November 2005, we have also included a summary of Invest NI's Equal Opportunities Policy. From January 2007 this has been located on opening page of text. From January 2007 we have included specific dates for the various stages of the selection process in the Information for Applicants pack. Where this is not possible, approximate dates are provided.
14	We will include within the Information for Applicants pack for each vacancy an explanation as to how evidence of past convictions will be assessed. Our recruitment and selection training will be modified to cover this and provide selection panel members and HR staff with the necessary legal knowledge. We will adapt our Recruitment and Selection policy by including a statement of non-discrimination to ensure treatment for those who have disclosed details of criminal convictions.	The information for applicants pack issued for each vacancy contains an outline on how past convictions will be assessed. Recruitment and selection training has been updated to include how convictions are assessed during the selection process. The recruitment and selection policy is currently under review and will include a statement of non discrimination in relation to convictions.
15	Applicants requesting specific feedback on their performance against the selection criteria for a particular post will be provided with this.	The provision of feedback is ongoing through the use of the standard template introduced in 2002. Internal staff are offered face to face meetings.

16	A comprehensive monitoring and data management system, tracking applicants from application through to appointment, will be applied and will cover all nine Section 75 dimensions.	An upgrade to the data management system has been applied and Invest NI now monitors all applicants through to appointment. Invest NI currently monitors and reports on applicants as per our legal requirements.
17	At this time we will continue to monitor the success rates of older candidates to identify and remove any barriers to fair selection.	We have implemented good practice guidelines in line with the Age legislation changes in October 2006. We will monitor the success rates of older candidates on an ongoing basis.
18	All selection panel members will have to attend training and refresher courses. Refresher courses will normally be held within two years of initial training. This training will include reference to section 75 and associated legislation and will be tailored to our procedures.	All selection panel members undergo a briefing session with the HR representative on the interview panel. Selection panel members will also attend refresher training every two years.
19	Where external consultants are employed, we will ensure selection techniques are valid and reliable.	On an ongoing basis where external consultants are engaged, the tender process requires all those tendering to demonstrate that selection techniques are valid and reliable.
20	At least one representative of the Human Resources department will be in attendance at all of our selection panels.	This has been a formal requirement since December 2005.
21	The Human Resources Director will set the starting salary for a successful candidate and apply any recommendations of the current equal pay review programme.	On an ongoing basis the Human Resources Director has overall responsibility for ensuring that starting salaries for successful candidates are appropriate, based on the job role and ensuring pay equality.
22	We will prepare a policy statement on the use of reserve lists. The Human Resources department will make clear how it will choose from candidates with the same scores.	At present, reserve lists remain live for up to 6 months following the selection decision as per guidance from the Equality Commission, with the option to extend for a further 6 month period if appropriate. The JNCC Policy Group prepared a policy statement in relation to the use of reserve lists. Written guidelines now state that,

		where candidates have been awarded the same score, the selection panel reviews and reconsiders the scores awarded during the relevant part of the selection process. The scores are then revised according to merit, with the end result that no two candidates have the same score.
23	We will include a text phone number on all correspondence. Guidelines are currently being drafted to make information more accessible. This Policy will include communication protocols on the use of the text phone. In the interim, HR will amend Recruitment and Selection procedures as necessary.	A text phone was installed in March 2006 and the number has been included on all recruitment advertisements since April 2006. Text phone details will be incorporated into all applicant information packs with effect from May 2006. Text phone details are also included on other correspondence.
24	We will work closely with the Equality Commission during 2005-2006 to implement an appropriate programme of action to address under representation issues that may be identified.	Following the analysis of the Article 55 report, a decision will be taken on whether action is required to address any representation issues which may be identified. Should further action be necessary, we will work closely with the Equality Commission.
25	Establish a system to monitor the impact on relevant groups by the Section 75 dimensions, and annually review the information. Widely and openly publish the results, and take appropriate action to ensure equality of opportunity as required.	A system to monitor the impact on the relevant equality groupings is in place for Invest NI.

INFORMATION

If you would like to view the draft Recruitment and Selection EQIA or the Recruitment and Selection EQIA Final Report or 1st year Progress Report, you can do so by accessing the Invest NI website at:

www.investni.com/equality

Alternatively, you can obtain a hard copy of the reports by contacting:

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