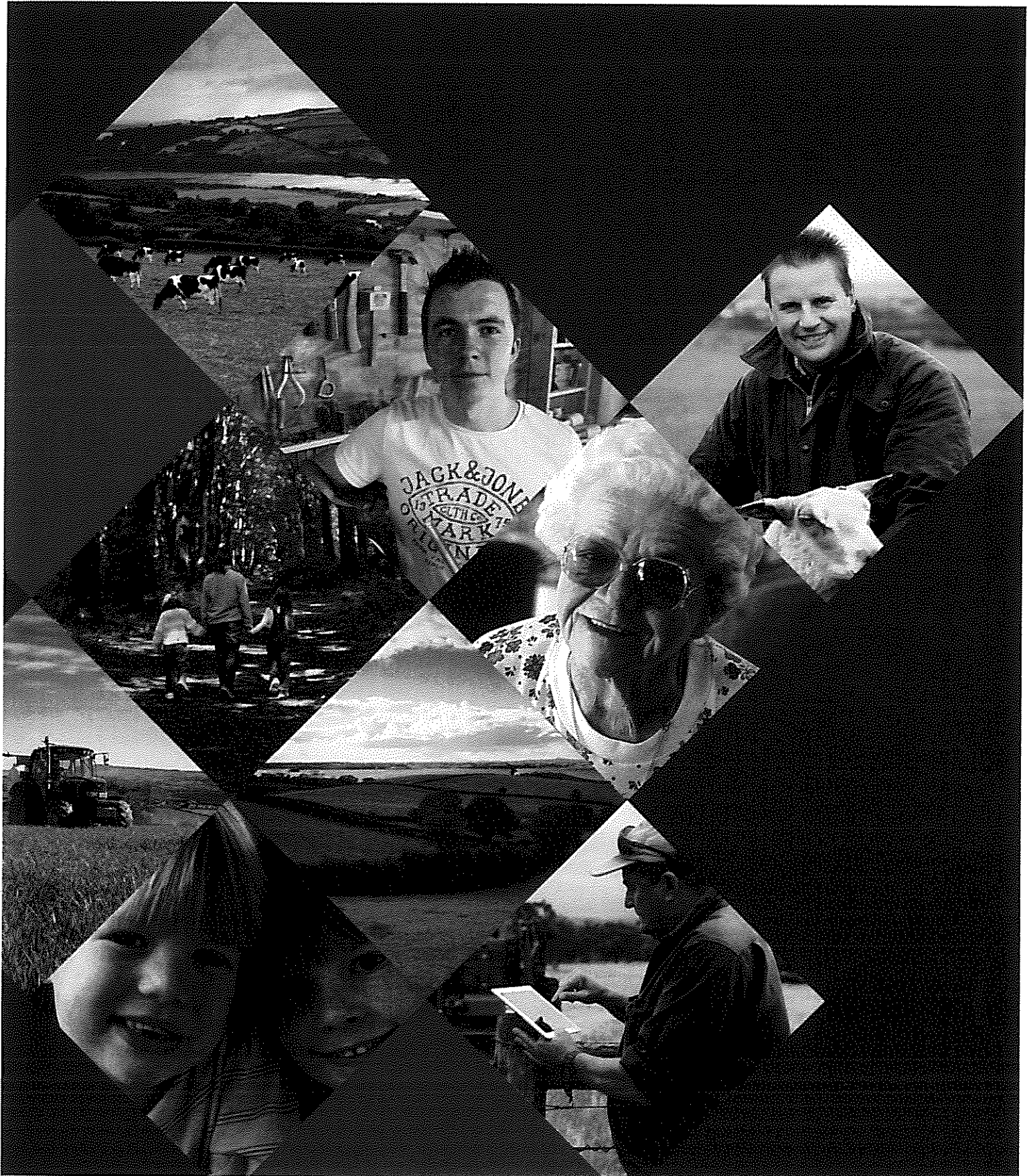


Rural Needs Impact Assessment



Title of Strategy, Policy, Plan or Public Service:

Name of Organisation:

Invest NI

Title of Strategy, Policy, Plan or Public Service:

Accelerating Growth Programme

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 Accelerating Growth Programme is targeted primarily at owner-managers of Invest NI SME regional customers who aspire to grow their business and would derive benefit from and can commit to, a strategic and structured approach to doing so. The overarching aim of the AGP is to accelerate the growth and development of selected Invest NI customers by providing a structured program to help address key skills areas which may otherwise inhibit growth.

The Accelerating Growth Programme will focus on enabling SME client businesses to adopt a strategic approach to growing their business, determining the future direction of their business and enhancing their knowledge, skills and capabilities to drive growth, including export growth, where possible. Through the combination of a Growth diagnostic, capability-building workshop programme and Growth Action Plan, AGP aims to provide a holistic approach to developing smaller clients, with each component offering specific benefits to the client company and is consistent with Invest NI's approach to customer management.

AGP aims to improve the management and leadership capability of the owner-manager as the main driver of participating companies by providing exposure to best practice in key capability development areas including strategy development, planning and innovation, selling, marketing and exporting, financial management, leadership and people management and business plan implementation.

By running Accelerating Growth Programme cohorts regionally throughout Northern Ireland it is intended to make the programme accessible to participants irrespective of location.

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 Accelerating Growth Programme has previously held cohorts regionally throughout Northern Ireland including Belfast, L/Derry, Omagh, Ballymena & Newry.

The programme achieved an overall satisfaction level of 92%.

It is intended to continue this approach.

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?*

As it is planned to run Accelerating Growth Programme cohorts regionally throughout Northern Ireland and to make the programme accessible to participants irrespective of location, it is not envisaged that there are any barriers to delivery.

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 has previously been successfully delivered in regional locations, with high satisfaction levels amongst programme participants.

It is planned to continue with this approach.

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?*

It is planned that the programme will be delivered in a range of regional locations throughout Northern Ireland, ensuring accessibility for participants irrespective of location.

Programme outcomes will be measured for each cohort of the programme.

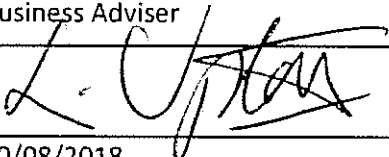
Programme implementation and delivery will be evaluated and reviewed on an ongoing basis for each cohort of the programme in conjunction with Invest NI Regional office colleagues.

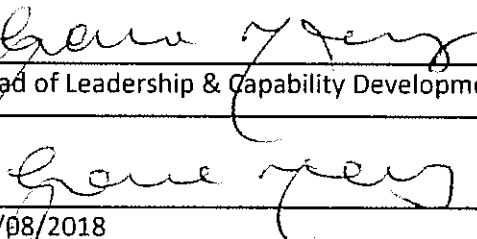
Step 6: Evaluation & Review

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 making and delivery?

The programme is evaluated and reviewed on an ongoing basis, in particular taking into account levels of participation and feedback from participants. Reasonable adjustments, for example in the timing and location of workshops are considered in conjunction with Invest NI Regional office colleagues.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Laurence Upton
Position:	Business Adviser
Signature:	
Date completed:	30/08/2018

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Grainne McCurry
Position:	Head of Leadership & Capability Development
Signature:	
Date completed:	30/08/2018

