



**Invest Northern Ireland**  
Building Locally  
Competing Globally

**1<sup>st</sup> Progress Report on Invest NI's  
Corporate Plan 2008-2011 Equality  
Impact Assessment (EQIA)**

**August 2009**

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, Trade 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 Corporate Plan 2008-2011. The aim of this Plan is to:

- “increase business productivity, the means by which wealth can be created for the benefit of the whole community”.

The draft EQIA went out for an eight week consultation period at the end of February 2008. Following the close of this consultation a final report was published in August 2008. The final report outlined the actions/recommendations which Invest NI committed to take forward and to monitor on an annual basis.

## **CURRENT POSITION**

Invest NI has now undertaken a review of the actions/recommendations contained in the final report and would like to highlight the progress made to date against each recommendation. The table below outlines progress made up to August 2009:

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRESS TABLE

Point	Recommendation	Progress up to 31/08/09
1	<p>Work increasingly closely with DETI and DEL and the private and voluntary and community sector in a responsive manner to contribute towards addressing existing and emerging inequalities in the Northern Ireland labour market, within our remit.</p>	<p>The Social Entrepreneurship Fund is now operational and offers access regardless of race or religious background, within the criteria specific to the programme support mechanisms. Other programmes under our Accelerating Entrepreneurship Strategy including Princes Trust NI and Advantage NI continue to reflect the need for equality of opportunity for under-represented groups and contain measures to ensure that these groups are reached. This is captured and monitored on a regular basis.</p> <p>We anticipate that our monitoring strategy will now allow us to analyse participation in our programmes both at individual and company level and thus identify any emerging inequalities.</p>
2	<p>Work in conjunction with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, to embed an appropriate methodology for monitoring clients and support services with regard to Section 75 grounds. The new Client Monitoring Strategy will be operational by April 2008.</p>	<p>The equality monitoring strategy is now in place and we have collected data and run reports for programmes dealing with individuals. Monitoring forms were also issued to companies who received assistance in the 08/09 financial year and this will be collated and reports run in August/September 2009.</p>

3	<p>Remain responsive to emerging equality of opportunity issues associated with the labour market and in particular among its private sector clients. By way of example, projects are already addressing the needs of migrant workers and their families, older workers, female entrepreneurs, and raising awareness of childcare voucher schemes among SME clients.</p>	<p>In August 2008 we held an Engaging Ethnic Minority Enterprise Seminar in conjunction with NICEM. We have also highlighted International Women's Day in March 2009 through the hosting of an exhibition in the foyer in conjunction with the women's networks. Staff have also had the opportunity to take part in training delivered by the Participation Network around consultation with children and young people.</p>
4	<p>In line with the Equality Commission's newly published Guide to Promoting Good Relations, develop a good relations strategy during 2008 and consider positive action measures to support this strategy. For example, how best to market Invest NI's programmes and services, where relevant, among minority communities.</p>	<p>A good relations strategy is in place and the monitoring reports which are currently being run on our services will enable us to more fully develop this and the areas we need to target in the future.</p>
5	<p>Ensure ongoing training of all staff in relation to equality of opportunity and Section 75 responsibilities remains a corporate priority. Where external agents or consultants work alongside Invest NI their contractual responsibilities to meet our obligations under Section 75 will also be made clear.</p>	<p>Staff have received specific training this year on equality screening and monitoring. There has been ongoing equality and diversity training for all new staff coming into the organisation as well as the Participation Network training which was held in March 2009.</p>

6	<p>Ensure the selection criteria which apply to any support scheme or programme operated by Invest NI will continue to encourage equality of opportunity. Where additional criteria are introduced, for example to target an industrial sector or geographical area, then these will be clearly defined and set out, and any potential adverse impacts associated with these criteria will be considered.</p>	<p>All programmes operated by Invest NI are subject to a thorough screening process in the first instance. Should these programmes introduce any changes to criteria then they are re-screened to ensure that they are not adversely impacting on any of the Section 75 groupings. If necessary an EQIA will be conducted.</p>
7	<p>Ensure each programme makes explicit, in all documentation, that materials can be made available in alternative formats where necessary and on request for those who are not able to access written English.</p>	<p>All corporate publications carry a statement explaining that the documentation is available in alternative formats on request.</p>
8	<p>Build on our 2007 Disability Action Plan and subsequent consultation period, and continue to take forward the Plan through informed interventions.</p>	<p>We revised the Invest NI Disability Action Plan in 2008 to run in conjunction with the 2008-2011 Corporate Plan. All actions within the plan are being carried out and we will continue to review and revise the plan each year to ensure it is still effectively addressing specific needs.</p>

## **INFORMATION**

If you would like to view the Corporate Plan 2008-2011 EQIA or the Corporate Plan EQIA Results Report, you can do so by accessing the Invest NI website at:

[www.investni.com/equality](http://www.investni.com/equality)

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

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If you have any queries about this document and/or its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk, audio cassette or in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English), then please contact the Equality Team at the above mentioned address.



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