



Invest 
Northern
Ireland
Building Locally
Competing Globally

Executive Summary

Draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on Invest Northern Ireland's Business Development Solutions Programmes

June 2007

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Within Invest Northern Ireland's Equality Scheme, approved by the Equality Commission in November 2003, we gave a commitment to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on our Business Development Solutions (BDS) portfolio of products.

Invest NI is committed to fully complying with its equality duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This impact assessment is evidence of this commitment. The assessment has been based on the practical guidance for carrying out EQIAs issued by the Equality Commission in April 2001.

A copy of the full EQIA is available on our website at **www.investni.com/equality** or can be requested from Invest NI's Equality Unit on **028 9069 8390**.

Policy Aim

Our Corporate Plan 2005 - 2008, outlines the following BDS actions:

- Assist our clients to become more competitive, encouraging them to be more entrepreneurial, innovative and internationally focused.
- Defining our clients more clearly, in effect, those companies which offer greatest potential to have a positive impact on the Northern Ireland economy; focusing our efforts on working with these clients.
- Continue the shift from assisting projects that increase capacity to those that build value added, innovation and entrepreneurial capability.
- Encourage the continued move from grant support to the use of repayable forms of assistance and private sources of finance.
- Increase the emphasis on attracting financial services and software development projects, for which Northern Ireland offers good opportunities.
- Prepare for the likely impact of the European Union's Review of Regional Aid.

Operating within the context of our mission and strategic objectives, the primary aim of Invest NI's Business Development Solutions Strategy is:

'To help companies grow by focusing on capability-building factors which will contribute to increasing competitiveness, international expansion and investing in research and development.'

Consideration of Available Data and Research

This assessment takes account of a wide range of data and research findings including:

- 2004 Monitoring Report No. 15:
A Profile of the Northern Ireland Workforce.
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.
www.equalityni.org/uploads/pdf/MonRepNo15P1.pdf
- Labour Market Bulletins 13 - 19.
Department of Employment and Learning.
www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-stats/labour-market-bulletin.htm
- National Statistics Local Area Labour Force Surveys 2000 - 2003.
www.statistics.gov.uk/lfs
- The BDS Brochure
- Invest NI Corporate Plan 2005 - 2008
- Invest NI Staff Profile Data
- 2001 Census and 2005 mid-year estimates Data
- Our in-house BDS programme assistance and investment information

Preliminary Recommendations

The following BDS programmes and schemes have been considered in this assessment:

- **Strategic Development**
 - Strategy Development Programme
 - Design Service
 - Property Solutions
 - Business Information Services
 - European Information Centre
- **People Development**
 - People Excellence Diagnosis
 - Business Improvement Training Programme (formerly Company Development Programme)
 - Other Capability Support Measures
- **Technology and Process Development**
 - Management Information Scheme
 - Broadband Initiative
 - ICT Advisors
 - E-Process
 - E-Solutions Demo Centre Advisory Services
 - Process Excellence
- **Technical and Sustainable Development**
 - Carbon Trust Energy Programme
 - Environmental Awareness Programme
 - Green Technology Initiative
 - Technical Advisory Unit
 - CE Marking Programme
 - Business Innovation Link
 - Technical Information Services
- **Research and Development**
 - IRTD Centres of Excellence
 - Proof of Concept
 - START
 - Foresight
 - EU Framework Programme
 - NITECH Fund
 - Compete
 - Product/Process Development Programme
 - SMART
 - Higher Education Innovation Fund
 - Knowledge Transfer Partnership (aka Teaching Company Scheme)
 - Defence Diversification Agency
 - RTD Networking
 - Innovation Relay Centre
- **Passport to Export**
 - Export Skills and Knowledge
 - Graduate Placement Programmes

As a result of this EQIA the following recommendations have been proposed:

1. Assess the most appropriate way of setting up an effective equality monitoring strategy in conjunction with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.
2. Where a programme or scheme has introduced additional criteria to the established requirements then these should be clearly defined and set out and any potential adverse impacts associated with these must be considered.
3. Where any BDS programme deliberately targets certain groups then the rationale for this must be clear. A review of programme accessibility will also be undertaken to ensure consistency.
4. Ongoing training of front line staff and in particular Client Executives in s75 is essential.

Where external consultants are employed then their responsibilities under s75 must also be made clear and include any training requirements.

5. Each programme must make clear in all documentation that materials can be made available in alternative formats where necessary and on request.
6. Marketing of BDS programmes and services among minority communities will be considered as part of a broader positive action programme.
7. All application forms must use a format with clear fonts, layout, and colours etc. that are accessible to those with special needs.

These measures, when implemented, should further equality of opportunity generally, in compliance with Invest NI's obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Formal Consultation

Invest NI wishes to consult as widely as possible on the findings included in this EQIA, together with the preliminary recommendations offered above. The following actions are proposed:

- This executive summary will be issued to all consultees listed in our Equality Scheme and to any members of the public on request.
- A prominent advertisement will be placed in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and Newsletter inviting the public to comment on this matter in accordance with normal practice.
- A copy will be posted on Invest NI's website and on the intranet.
- Individual consultation meetings will be arranged with staff on request and with representatives of particular interest groups if required.

The arrangements for consultation are being coordinated by the Equality Unit to whom all enquiries should be made:

Pamela Marron / Lynsay McConnell
The Equality Unit
3rd Floor, Bedford Square
Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7ES

T : 028 9069 8390
F : 028 9043 6536
Textphone : 028 9069 8585
E-mail : equality@investni.com

**The closing date for responses
is 12th October 2007.**

Decision by the Public Authority

Following the formal consultation period and consideration of the findings from the consultation, Invest NI will reach a decision in terms of the EQIA process and the final BDS policies and will ensure that such decisions are implemented.

Publication of Results of Equality Impact Assessment

The outcomes of this EQIA will be published in the press and will also be posted on Invest NI's website. It will be made available in different formats on request where appropriate.

If you require this brochure in an alternative format (including Braille, disk, audio cassette or in minority languages to meet the needs of those whose first language is not English) then please contact:

Invest NI's Equality Team

T : 028 9069 8390

Textphone : 028 9069 8585

E-mail : equality@investni.com

A copy of the full EQIA is available on our website at www.investni.com/equality or can be requested from **Invest NI's Equality Team**.



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