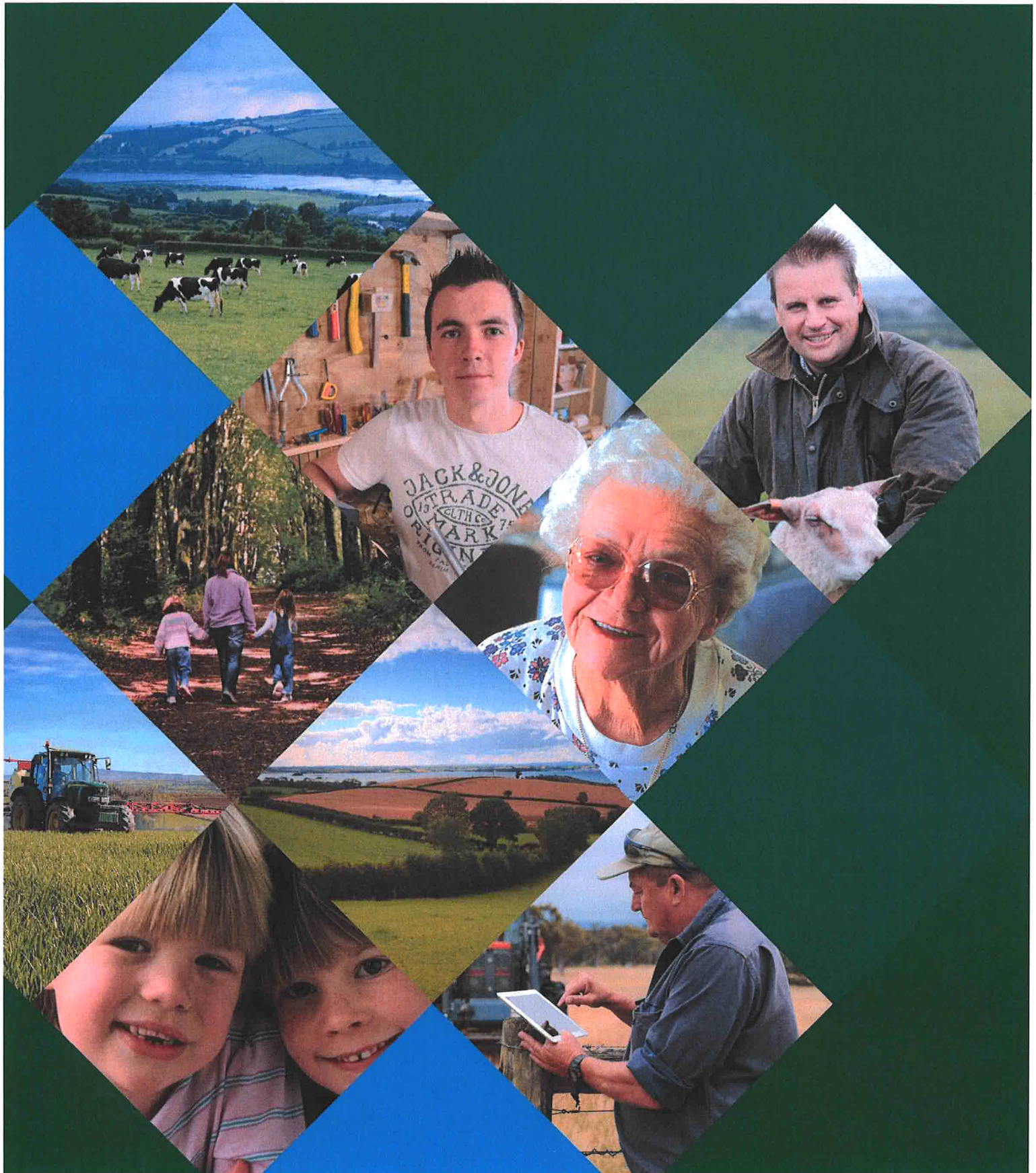


Rural Needs Impact Assessment





Title of Strategy, Policy, Plan or Public Service:

Name of Organisation:

Invest Northern Ireland

Title of Strategy, Policy, Plan or Public Service:

Innovation Accreditation

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?*

This new approach will involve the introduction to Northern Ireland of an internationally recognised innovation accreditation, directly mapped to all existing public and private sector innovation related support programmes. The Accrediting Body appointed, will be responsible for mapping innovation support to the accreditation and for managing and awarding of the accreditation to qualifying companies. All programmes have already been identified as have the companies who have previously received support from those programmes in the years 2015/16 and 2016/17. These companies will already be eligible for recognition within the internationally recognised innovation Accreditation.

One objective will be to educate the non-innovators to start innovating and the innovators who don't know they are innovating to recognise innovation within their business and to further encourage these companies to be successful in achieving the internationally recognised accreditation. Central to achieving this objective, will be the delivery of a marketing campaign aimed at the Northern Ireland business base, building awareness of the accreditation and driving sufficient enquiry volumes. This in turn will help to enhance the level of innovation within Northern Ireland businesses.

This collective approach will augment the current innovation messaging, bringing innovation into main stream business operations and mind-set and will have a direct impact in achieving the desired outcome of improving Northern Ireland's position in the UK innovation ranking.

This programme is available to the entire NI business base, including all sectors.

Step 2: Understand the situation

Key questions to consider:

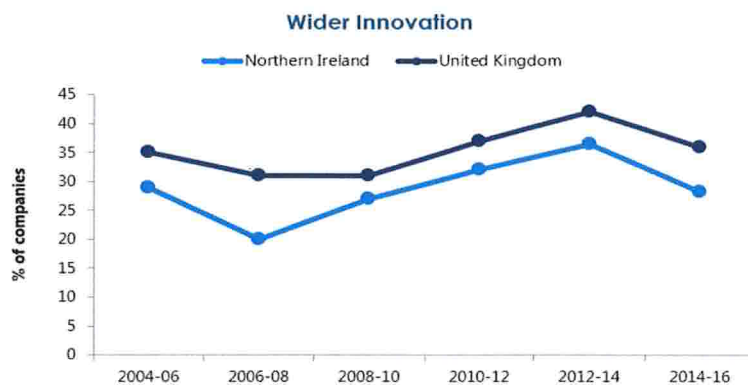
- *What is the current situation in rural areas?*
- *What evidence (statistics, data, research, stakeholder advice) do you have about the position in rural areas?*
- *If the relevant evidence is not available, can this be sourced?*
- *Do you have access to the views of rural stakeholders about the likely impact of the*

39 per cent of Northern Ireland's (NI) firms are actively engaged in innovation, the second lowest rate of the 12 UK regions.

After dropping to its lowest recorded level of 27 per cent in 2008-10, the rate of innovation had been climbing steadily. However, over the last period we have seen a decrease of about 6 per cent and now only 39 per cent are actively involved in Innovation. For comparative purposes, the UK average also fell over the same period by four points from 53 per cent to 49 per cent.

Companies are defined as innovation active if they are engaged in one of the following:

- Introduction of new or significantly improved products (goods and/or services) or processes
- Engagement in innovation projects not yet complete or abandoned
- new and significantly improved forms of organisation, business structures or practices and marketing concepts or strategies.



There is no granular breakdown into NI regions. Rural stakeholders such as councils and colleges have been engaged. They both recognise the low levels of innovation in their respective rural areas and see this programme as a way of increasing innovation capabilities.

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?*

The spread of customers and referrals demonstrates there are no barriers to delivery in rural areas.

The only additional cost for delivery in rural areas may be additional mileage expenses incurred by the team.

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?*

The programme is a DfE initiative and all DfE stakeholders will be involved. This includes councils, colleges, universities, Intertrade Ireland.

The above stakeholders will promote the programme to their client base across the whole of NI.

All stakeholders have been briefed and are engaged to assist in delivering the programme.

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 service 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.

Metrics for availability and uptake will continue to be monitored, 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 evaluated and reviewed on an ongoing basis, in particular taking into account levels of participation and feedback from participants. The needs of rural dwellers, for example in the timing and location of workshops, are considered in conjunction with invest NI colleagues and customers in a rural setting.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Michael Johnston
Position:	Innovation Development Executive
Signature:	
Date completed:	14/05/2019

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Signature:	
Date completed:	03/06/19

