The Life and Health Science Business Navigator Programme (LHS BDP) is a pilot hybrid Life and Health Science Commercialisation support programme aimed at “C” level/potential “C” level executives in NI’s LHS SME’s. professionals. It is proposed that Invest NI support the pilot, six-month programme for up to 20 entrepreneurs providing financial support for programme participation £7,212.50 totalling £144,250k.

**Programme aims** for participants are to: 1. Increase commercial skills and knowledge, specific to the LHS sector. 2. Develop networks with fellow participants in NI’s LHS sector, and particularly strong sub-sector links through peer-to-peer networking. 3. Develop effective networks between participants and KOL and LHS market specialists tin NI, GB and US. 4. Increased knowledge of the commercial dynamics of the US market and improved understanding of how to enter and operate successfully in that market. 5. To develop a Business Growth Action Plan. 6. Improve success in Business Development activities. 7. Increased engagement in additional LHS ecosystem initiatives

**Learning outcomes** for participants include: 1. Commercialisation and strategic business planning skills. 2.Effective sector networking. 3. Export marketing. 4.Business Development activities including pitching/bid writing

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

Business Navigator Life & Health Sciences Pilot Programme

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

x

Developing a Policy Strategy Plan

Adopting a Policy Strategy Plan

Implementing a Policy Strategy Plan

Revising a Policy Strategy Plan Designing a Public Service

Delivering a Public Service

1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Business Navigator Life & Health Sciences Pilot Programme.

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Invest Northern Ireland

A Guide to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities

*(Revised) April 2018*

Appendix 1 - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

Template

1A. Name of Public Authority.

**SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016**

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N/A

*Reasons why a definition of ‘rural’ is not applicable.*

N/A

*Rationale for using alternative definition of ‘rural’.*

N/A

*Details of alternative definition of ‘rural’ used.*

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition). Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

A definition of ‘rural’ is not applicable.

x

1F. What definition of ‘rural’ is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

#

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2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas *differently* from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

X

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

**SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

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The proposed Business Navigator for Life & Health Sciences Programme will be open to applicants from anywhere in Northern Ireland and is therefore unlikely to impact people in rural areas in any negative way.

There will be sessions held online. This will allow for all applications in rural areas to access the programme easily.

If rural businesses experience any issues accessing online Invest NI resources, they can call our Business Support Team or the Programme Management Team who can provide suitable alternatives, such as hard copy application forms.

2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

Rural Businesses Rural Tourism Rural Housing

Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas Education or Training in Rural Areas

Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas

Poverty in Rural Areas Deprivation in Rural Areas

Rural Crime or Community Safety Rural Development

Agri-Environment

Other (Please state)

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

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3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders Published Statistics Consultation with Other Organisations Research Papers Surveys or Questionnaires Other Publications

Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

X

3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

**SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

The Programme is not aimed at any specific geographical areas, but rather at representatives of NI Industry Life Science technical specialists. Now working in the commercial sector as part of a scaling SME and key leadership team members within scaling life Science SMEs.

With the above in mind, **no** actions were taken to identify additional social and economic needs beyond those established in RNIA guidance. However, we considered the following:

* Is appropriate infrastructure in place to enable businesses/ dwellers in rural areas to access the service**? Yes, currently many rural based people and businesses successfully access INI support already.**
* Will people in more remote rural areas be able to access the service? **Yes**, **however most of the course is held in QUB in their Belfast campus.**
* Could there be a disproportionate effect on people in rural areas who rely on public transport services? **No**
* Could there be a disproportionate effect on people in rural areas who don’t have access to high quality broadband? **No as we will offer alternative means of application if required.**
* Could there be a disproportionate effect on people in rural areas whose access to mobile communications is variable or limited in areas**? No as we will offer alternative means of application if required.**
* Could there be a disproportionate effect on people operating businesses in rural areas**? No**
* Could there be a disproportionate effect on people in rural areas who require access to childcare facilities? **No**
* Will the policy, strategy, plan or public service affect certain groups of people in rural areas disproportionally e.g. seasonal workers, farmers and farm families or older people, younger people or people with disabilities who do not have access to transport? **No**
* Are there pockets of hidden poverty or deprivation within rural areas which need to be taken account of in determining the effects of the policy, strategy, plan or public service on people in rural areas? **No**.

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3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

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**Consideration given to the Application Process:**

As outlined in Section 3E, The Business Navigator for Life & Health Sciences Programme will be accessible to all businesses in urban and rural areas.

**Consideration given to Eligibility Criteria:**

The programme has been designed for Life Science companies – 2+ years established. Now working in the commercial sector as part of a scaling SME, Key leadership team members within scaling life Science SMEs

Therefore, representatives from any of these groups, regardless of their location in Northern Ireland, are welcome to apply to the programme.

**Consideration given to Financial Assistance:**

1. The grant offered to eligible Life Science companies rather than by their location.
2. The amount of grant offered to each participant will be the same regardless of geographical location.
3. The rate of Grant offered to each participant will be the same regardless of geographical location.

**Consideration given to the promotion of the Programme:**

The Programme will be promoted through Invest NI social media channels, our Regional Offices, our partnerships and key stakeholder engagement across NI including the 11 Councils, QUB and HIRANI.

**Consideration given to monitoring:**

The pilot LHS Business Navigator programme will be reviewed post-completion to determine the effectiveness and success of the programme. The post-project evaluation will be used to inform decision making if the question of taking another cohort through the course arises or if any post – programme activity is being considered.

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

**SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

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If the response to Section 5A was YES GO TO Section 6A.

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

Yes No If the response is NO GO TO Section 5C.

x

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

**SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

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*(Revised) April 2018*

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:

Anne Trainor

Position/Grade:

Client Executive

Division/Branch

AME & Life and Health Sciences team

Signature:

A.Trainor

Date:

31/10/2024

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:

Pamela Marron

Position/Grade:

Equality Manager

Division/Branch:

PCC

Signature:

Pamela Marron

Date:

21/10/24

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.

X

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

**SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording**

Promoting Places and Partnerships Regional balance - The LHS Business Navigator Programme will be promoted across NI through Invest NI, QUB and HIRANI social channels, by Client Executives in both the LHS sector team and regional offices. It should be noted that 80% of LHS employment is based outside Belfast.

5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.