



Invest
Northern
Ireland

Building Locally
Competing Globally

2nd Progress Report on Invest NI's Accelerating Entrepreneurship Strategy Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

July 2008

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 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 Accelerating Entrepreneurship Policy during July 2005. The aim of this Policy is to:

- Create a culture and an environment through education and promotional campaigns that supports and encourages entrepreneurs;
- Segment businesses into three categories (global; export; local) based on the markets in which they will operate and the value added to the Northern Ireland economy;
- Develop clear support structures for each market segment and ensure the businesses can seamlessly progress from one segment to another;
- Use electronic media, to provide accessible world-class levels of support for entrepreneurs;
- Ensure support is provided in an integrated and effective way through a partnership of public, private and voluntary sectors.

The draft EQIA went out for a 12 week consultation period in July 2005. Following the close of this consultation a final report was published in May 2006. The final report outlined the actions/recommendations which Invest NI committed to take forward and to monitor on an annual basis. In July 2007 the first annual progress report was completed.

CURRENT POSITION

Invest NI has now undertaken another 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 July 2008:

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRESS TABLE

Point	Recommendation	Progress up to 31/07/08
1	Put in place a systematic monitoring strategy and associated procedures for all AES programmes. This will consider realistic and appropriate methods for gathering Section 75 data from those companies seeking AES assistance.	Invest NI have now put in place an action plan which will review the monitoring process during 2008, with a view to producing reports in April 2009. The aim is to achieve a comprehensive body of equality data across all Invest NI programmes.
2	Clearly define and set out the selection criteria used for each AES programme. Any potential adverse impacts associated with these criteria will be considered.	Eligibility criteria are now set out on the website for each AES programme. Any potential adverse impacts associated with these criteria have been considered and all future programmes will continue to be screened.
3	Where any AES programme deliberately targets certain groups then the rationale for this targeting should be made transparent.	The targeting of specific groups within the AES reflects their current under-representation amongst the entrepreneurial population. The rationale for this targeting is based on NI survey data (the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor) and international best practice in Entrepreneurship Policy. This information is made available on the Invest NI website.
4	Positive action measures in relation to training of women and those aged over 50, in particular, will be considered under AES.	AES has intensified its promotion of female entrepreneurs as role models and now provides a range of training opportunities specifically aimed at developing women in business. A new pilot initiative (PRIME) has also been launched providing tailored support for those (men and women) aged 50+ who are interested in self employment.

5	Review the network of AES Points of Presence across Northern Ireland to ensure an even distribution.	Independent consultants concluded the current network of Points of Presence, provides sufficient access to all. There is no intention at this stage to expand or extend the current network.
6	Ensure that the distribution of delivery agents for the Social Entrepreneurship Programme affords reasonable access for all communities across Northern Ireland.	Phase I of the Social Entrepreneurship Programme has now closed to new entrants and is being independently evaluated with the intention of launching Phase II of the Programme later in 2008.
7	Ensure that the criteria for the Social Entrepreneurship Programme in designated disadvantaged NTSN areas do not discriminate on grounds of race or religion.	The new Social Entrepreneurship Programme will continue to offer access to all regardless of race or religious background.
8	Ensure that the Prince's Trust and LiveWIRE programmes continue to monitor and reflect on the age ranges that they cater for and provide a sound rationale for their targeting procedures. Ensure that the Prince's Trust and LiveWIRE programmes consider any affirmative action and outreach measures that may be appropriate for equality of opportunity for under-represented groups.	Both PTNI and Advantage NI obtained funding for their programmes from April 2007 – March 2010. Their programmes 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 regular basis.
9	Ensure that the auditing of each new Point of Presence in the Start A Business Programme is formalised to ensure that all buildings, locations and venues enjoy equal access for those with special needs.	Points of Presence is now operational with all sites meeting requirements around equal access. There are no plans to add any additional points to the network in the near future.

10	Make all materials for each programme available in alternative formats on request, and consider the marketing of the programmes (through Go For It) using alternatives to the written word.	Ongoing. The GFI Marketing Campaign is having an impact using alternatives to the written word such as TV and Radio.
11	Format all AES application forms using clear fonts, layout and colours which are accessible to those with special needs.	All applications meet with corporate guidelines.

INFORMATION

If you would like to view the draft Accelerating Entrepreneurship EQIA or the Accelerating Entrepreneurship EQIA Final Report or first year progress report, you can do so by accessing the Invest NI website at:

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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