

DOE SECTION 75 EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY SCREENING ANALYSIS FORM

Section 1

Introduction

This form is intended to help you to consider whether a new policy (either internal or external) or legislation will require a full equality impact assessment (EQIA). Those policies identified as having significant implications for equality of opportunity must be subject to full EQIA.

The form will provide a record of the factors taken into account if a policy is screened out, or excluded for EQIA. It will provide a basis for consultation on the outcome of the screening exercise and will be referenced in the Annual Report to the Equality Commission. Copies of completed forms should be retained on file within business areas (**and a copy sent to the Equality Unit**) and reference should be made to the outcome of the screening exercise and subsequent consultation in any submission made to the Minister.

Background

The Legal Background

Under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department is required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

The main groups within each of the nine categories, highlighted above, are identified at Appendix 1.

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Department is also required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group.

Advice on Completion of the Screening Form

It is important that the screening form is completed carefully and thoughtfully. Your Divisional or Agency Equality Officer and the Department's Equality Unit in room 413A Clarence Court (ext 40203/40813) will be happy to assist with all aspects of the screening process and will help with the completion of the form, if required.

Further advice on the screening process can be accessed at Section 4 of the Equality Commission's Guide to the Statutory Duties.

Policies included for EQIA

If, after screening, it is decided that a policy will require a full EQIA, a decision will be required on the priority and timing of the assessment. The screening form should be noted accordingly, signed off and copied to the Equality Unit for inclusion in the EQIA programme.

Policies excluded for EQIA

If a decision is taken to screen out the policy or where there is ambiguity about the equality implication of the proposal, the screening form should be signed off by a senior officer responsible for the policy and a copy sent to the Equality Unit. Copies of all screening out forms will be placed on the Department's website.

Section 2 – Policy to be Screened

Definition of Policy

There have been some difficulties in defining what constitutes a policy in the context of Section 75. To be on the safe side it is recommended that you consider changes to or any new initiatives, proposals, schemes or programmes as policies. The policies covered in the Equality Scheme EQIA programme are a reasonable guide both to the nature of external departmental policies and the level at which they should be considered.

The revised Guidance from The Equality Commission emphasises that the Statutory duties apply to **internal** policies (relating to people who work for the organisation) as well as **external** policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the organisations).

It is important to remember that even if a full EQIA has been carried out in respect of an “overarching” policy or strategy, it will still be necessary for the policy maker to consider if a further EQIA needs to be carried out in respect of those policies cascading from the overarching strategy.

OFMDFM Guidance on Legislative Procedures (Primary and Subordinate) sets out clearly the stages at which equality of opportunity considerations should be taken into consideration in the development of legislation.

Overview of Policy Proposals

The aims and objectives of the policy must be clear and well defined. You must take into account any available data or evidence that will enable you to come to a decision on whether or not a policy may or may not have a differential impact on any of the S75 categories. Evidence may be qualitative and or quantitative and may include research or internal information and or experience in relation to service and customer monitoring exercises. Where appropriate, arrangements should be made to obtain any data necessary to assist screening. The Equality Unit or Central Statistics & Research Branch (Stephanie Harcourt ext 40878 or Michael Bennett ext 40916) are available to provide advice on data requirements.

2.1 Please insert below a brief description of the policy/legislation, including the title and all the main aims and objectives

Title	NIEA (Northern Ireland Environment Agency) Corporate Communications Strategy and Plan 2008 - 2011
Aims	To convey NIEA key messages to external and internal target audiences, that will help achieve the NIEA Mission Statement: To protect and conserve the natural and built environment and to promote its appreciation for the benefit of present and future generations. <hr/> The objectives of the Corporate Communications Strategy are: 1) To convey specific environmental messages to its (external) target audiences, in a way that will improve attitudes and behaviours; that will promote a more sustainable way of living; and which will in effect ultimately improve the state of our environment 2) To raise the awareness and the profile of NIEA; ‘the main protector of the environment and a significant influence and lead player in the promotion of sustainable development, biodiversity conservation and environmental improvement 3) To raise the importance of communication (internal and external) to all NIEA staff <hr/> The above objectives have been defined in order to help achieve the Agency’s four long term environmental outcomes, which are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainable use and protection of our natural resources• Improved conservation and management of our natural heritage• Improved conservation and protection of our built heritage• Better public awareness and understanding of the environment <hr/>

It is essential that all the aims/objectives of the policy be clearly and fully defined.

2.2 On whom will the policies/legislation impact? Please specify

The NIEA Corporate Communications Strategy and Plan (2008 – 2011) will impact on NIEA External Target Audiences (in Northern Ireland):

The wider public, the business community (including farmers), the education sector, the public sector

NIEA Internal Target Audiences:

All staff working for NIEA (permanent and contract)

2.3 Who is responsible for (a) devising and (b) delivering the policy, eg is it DOE, a Whitehall Department or EU? What is the relationship and have they considered this issue and any equality issues?

- (a) **NIEA, an Agency of the Department of the Environment is responsible for devising the Corporate Communications Strategy and Plan (2008 – 2011). This is in response to its mission statement and responsibilities and business objectives defined under EU, UK and local Northern Ireland policy and legislation**
- (b) **NIEA, an Agency of the Department of the Environment is responsible for delivering this Strategy and Plan**

2.4 What linkages are there to other NI Departments/NDPBs in relation to this policy/legislation?

This Strategy and Plan aims to support the policy and legislation of PEPG (NI Biodiversity Strategy, Land & Resource Management Strategy, Water Framework Directive) and OFMDFM (NI Sustainable Development Strategy)

2.5 What data are available to facilitate the screening of this policy/legislation?

MRNI EHS Awareness Survey (April 2003)

IPSOS MORI EHS Customer Survey (December 2004)

NI Omnibus Survey (May/ June 2007)

IPSOS MORI Omnibus Surveys of awareness of Eco Eye and Hidden Heritage Television Series (March 2007)

Ipsos Mori NIEA Customer Survey (December 2008)

NI Omnibus Survey (May/ June 2009)

Series of Focus Group consultations (December 2008 – March 2009 and beyond)

'Happy Sheet' feedback of NIEA events, sites and properties (2008 and 2009, and beyond)

Evaluation of NIEA advertising campaigns (2009, 2010, 2011)

We are taking into account feedback on and understanding of NIEA products, services, provision of information, events, sites and properties by our target audiences and customers

2.6 Is additional data required to facilitate screening? If so, give details of how and when it will be obtained.

No

See Appendix 4 of the Equality Commission Practical Guidance on EQIA which provides a list of Sources of S75 data or speak to Central Statistics and Research Branch (Stephanie Harcourt, ext 40878, or Michael Bennett, ext 40916) or Equality Unit (Laura McAleese, ext 40203, or Jeff Johnston, ext 40813).

Section 3 – Screening Analysis

In cases where there is no available quantitative evidence, you will need to take a pragmatic, common sense judgement as to whether the policy/legislation you are screening may have a particular/differential impact on any of the groups. Discussions with Equality Unit, Statistics Branch and organisations representing the Section 75 Groups will be important and helpful at this stage in obtaining qualitative evidence of impacts. Every effort should be made to ensure that assessments are evidence based.

The following criteria must be considered when screening.

3.1 Is there any indication or evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by the following Section 75 groups?

	Yes	No
Religious belief		No
Political opinion		No
Racial group		No
Age		No
Marital status		No
Sexual orientation		No
Gender		No
Disability		No
Dependants		No

Please give details

3.2 Is there any indication or evidence that any of the following Section 75 groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this policy issue?

	Yes	No
Religious belief		No
Political opinion		No
Racial group		No
Age		No
Marital status		No
Sexual orientation		No
Gender		No
Disability	Yes	
Dependants		No

Please give details

In keeping with the Department's "Guide to Making Information Accessible", all information provided by NIEA will be provided in a format which is accessible to all those who wish to access its services. The Agency recognises that people with disabilities may have different needs in relation to the messages provided and will ensure that they are available in a range suitable formats.

3.3 Have consultations with the relevant representative organisations or individuals within any of the Section 75 categories, indicated that policies of this type create problems specific to them?

	Yes	No
Religious belief		No
Political opinion		No
Racial group		No
Age		No
Marital status		No
Sexual orientation		No
Gender		No
Disability		No
Dependants		No

Please give details of any consultations carried out, and any problems identified.

Previous consultations (October 2006 and 2007) with representative bodies (including Chinese, Disabled, and Elderly) have produced negligible responses, indicating that no problems have been identified

The Agency had an action contained within the Department's Race Action Plan to carry out research on how it might promote the local environment & heritage to the ethnic minority community. This was delivered. Again, this produced a low response rate, but the Agency has now committed to issuing the Annual Events Calendar to ethnic minority groups.

NIEA plans to carry out full consultation of target external audiences in the period December 2008 to March 2009 and beyond (see 2.5 above).

3.4 Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or community relations by altering the policy, or by working with others, in Government, or in the larger community in the context of this policy?

Yes

No

Please give details

3.5 It may be that a policy/legislation has a differential impact on a certain Section 75 group, as the policy has been developed to address an existing or historical inequality or disadvantage. If this is the case, please give details below:

Not applicable

3.6 Please consider if there is any way of adapting the policy to promote better equality of opportunity or good relations.

Please give details

No

Section 4

EQIA Recommendation

You should consider carefully in this section whether full EQIA is necessary, particularly where answers to any questions in Section 3 are affirmative.

- 4.1 Full EQIA procedures should be carried out on policies considered to have significant implications for equality of opportunity. Please fill in the following grid in relation to the policy/legislation.

Prioritisation Factors	Significant Impact	Moderate Impact	Low Impact
Social Need.			Low
Effect on people's daily lives.			Low
Effect on economic, social and human rights.		Moderate	
Strategic significance			Low
Financial significance		Moderate	

Please give details

In terms of promoting environmental legislation, the economic and financial significance to the business/ farming community is moderate

- 4.2 **In view of the considerations in Section 3 and 4 do you consider that this policy/legislation should be subject to a full EQIA? Please give reasons for your considerations. If you are unsure, please consult with affected groups and revisit the screening analysis accordingly. Yes/No/Unsure**

NO

Previous consultation with S75 groups has indicated that there is no indication or evidence that this strategy will have any significant impacts.

4.3 If an EQIA is considered necessary please comment on the priority and timing in light of the factors in table 4.1.

4.4 If an EQIA is considered necessary is any data required to carry it out/ensure effective monitoring?

Please give details

Section 5

Endorsement

I can confirm that the proposed policy has been screened for equality of opportunity and good relations implications and has been screened out for equality impact assessment/~~requires a full equality impact assessment.~~

Signed:



Agency/Division:

NIEA

Date:

18/11/08

PLEASE FORWARD A COPY OF THE COMPLETED FORM TO:

**DOE EQUALITY UNIT
ROOM 413A
CLARENCE COURT
10-18 ADELAIDE STREET
BELFAST
BT2 8GB**

QUERIES TO:

**LAURA McALEESE, EXT 40203
laura.mcaleese@doeni.gov.uk**

**JEFF JOHNSTON, EXT 40813
jeff.johnston@doeni.gov.uk**

Section 6

For Completion by Equality Unit

Date

Screening result recorded: _____

Placed on website: _____

Screening out completed: _____

Screening to be reconsidered: _____

Give reasons:

Agency/Division notified date: _____

Main Groups Relevant to the Section 75 Categories	
<u>Category</u>	<u>Main Groups</u>
Religious belief	Protestants; Catholics; people of non-Christian faiths; people of no religious belief
Political opinion	Unionists generally; Nationalists generally; members/supporters of any political party
Racial Group	White people; Chinese; Irish Travellers; Indians; Pakistanis; Bangladeshis; Black Africans; Black Caribbean people; people with mixed ethnic group
Gender	Men (including boys); women (including girls); trans-gendered people
Marital status	Married people; unmarried people; divorced or separated people; widowed people
Age	For most purposes, the main categories are: children under 18, people aged between 18-65, and people over 65. However, the definition of age groups will need to be sensitive to the policy under consideration
“Persons with a disability”	Disability is defined as: A physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities as defined in Sections 1 and 2 and Schedules 1 and 2 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
“Persons with dependants”	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; persons with personal responsibility for the care of a person with an incapacitating disability; persons with personal responsibility for the care of a dependant elderly person
Sexual orientation	Heterosexuals; bi-sexuals; gays; lesbians

