

DOE Section 75 Equality of Opportunity Screening Analysis

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 Northern Ireland Environment Agency Charging Policy 2010 - 2013

Aims With effect from 1st April 2010, NIEA proposes to limit fee increases in line with the GDP deflator on an annual basis for a 3 year period from April 2010 to March 2013, except where substantial revision is required;

From April 2010, where new schemes are to be introduced or where substantial revisions to an existing scheme are required, consultation with stakeholders will be carried out simultaneously, through single or parallel consultation papers as appropriate;

In 2010/2011 NIEA will consult on the introduction of risk-based charging and wider services; and,

NIEA will publish all its fees and charges for the forthcoming year and all consultations on the Agency website on a dedicated Charges webpage at www.ni-environment.gov.uk.

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

All those subject to environmental regulation and holders of environmental authorisations

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 as the environmental regulator

(b) NIEA

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

To maintain full cost recovery for regulatory activities under this policy NIEA will work closely with Finance Unit, Department of Finance and Personnel, Internal Audit and the Northern Ireland Audit Office

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

None

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 (Alex Boyle, ext 41194, or Laura McAleese, ext 40203).

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		X
Political opinion		X
Racial group		X
Age		X

Marital status		X
Sexual orientation		X
Gender		X
Disability		X
Dependants		X
Please give details:		
The charging policy will impact on holders of environmental authorisations and those subject to environmental regulation. There is no evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by any of the Section 75 groups.		

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		X
Political opinion		X
Racial group		X
Age		X
Marital status		X
Sexual orientation		X
Gender		X
Disability		X
Dependants		X

Please give details:

The Charging Policy 2010 – 2013 will impact on holders of environmental authorisations and the business community. There is no evidence that any of the Section 75 groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this policy issue.

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		X
Political opinion		X
Racial group		X
Age		X

Marital status		X
Sexual orientation		X
Gender		X
Disability		X
Dependants		X

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

No problem areas or issues have been identified at this stage. However any section 75 issues raised as a result of this consultation exercise will be taken into consideration.

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?

No

Please give details:

This is not relevant, as the Charging Policy applies equally to those businesses that have an environmental impact and which NIEA has a duty to regulate.

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:

Please give details:

There is no evidence that the Charging Policy will have a differential impact on any Section 75 group. The charging powers which permit NIEA to charge for its regulatory function are applicable to all sectors of society.

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:

The policy outlines NIEA proposals for a Charging Policy with regard to its regulatory function. Given the nature of the policy and its purpose, there isn't a way to adapt it to promote better equality of opportunity or good relations.

3.7 In relation to Departmental obligations under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), please consider if there is any way of adapting the policy to show due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled

people and/or encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

Please give details:

This does not apply to the Charging Policy which outlines NIEA proposals to set fees and charges with regard to its regulatory function.

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.			X
Effect on people's daily lives			X
Effect on economic, social and human rights			X
Strategic significance			X
Financial significance			X

Please give details:

The Charging Policy sets out NIEA's policy for revision of fees and charges and is expected to have a low impact regarding the five categories above.

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, full EQIA not necessary

Please give details:

The result of the screening analysis considers that a full EQIA is not necessary, as there are no significant implications for equality of opportunity or community relations as a result of this policy.

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

Please give details:

Not applicable

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

Please give details:

Not applicable

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.

Signed:



Agency/Division: Strategy Unit
Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Date: 24th November 2009

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: ALEX BOYLE, EXT 41194
alex.boyle@doeni.gov.uk

LAURA McALEESE, EXT 40203
laura.mcaleese@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: _____
