

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 40855/40813) 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 (Nicola Kilpatrick ext 40877) 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 Sustainable Development Strategy. (NISD)

Aims The strategy will provide a broad strategic direction and framework for government to direct policy and decision-making in Northern Ireland which will facilitate a coordinated and co-operative approach to sustainable development.

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 strategy will have a direct impact on government departments, who will have to deliver on the specified targets. The implementation of the policies which are contained in the strategy will impact to varying degrees on the public at large. Equality considerations in relation to the strategies and policies of other departments, which are referenced within the strategy are a matter for the relevant department.

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) The Sustainable Development Strategy has been drawn up jointly by the Department of the Environment (DoE) in conjunction with government departments and key stakeholders.

(b) The policy will be delivered by Departments and other public bodies who have responsibility for the targets and policies identified.

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

There is direct linkage between DoE and all other NI Departments who have been involved in the development of the NISD. Departments and NDPBs will have a key role in the implementation of the various strategy targets and objectives.

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

The NI Sustainable Development Strategy will provide the overarching framework for government to direct policy and decision-making in Northern Ireland, in order to facilitate a coordinated and co-operative approach to deliver sustainable development. Data will require to be gathered and monitored at the implementation stage to take forward the strategies targets and objectives.

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 (Nicola Kilpatrick, ext 40877) or Equality Unit (Alex Boyle, ext 41194, or Una Downey, ext 40855).

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

There is no evidence that any of the particular groups is, or will be more affected by these proposals than any other, or that any particular group would be disproportionately affected by the policy proposals.

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		No
Dependants		No

Please give details

There is no evidence of this and no reason to suspect that any of the particular groups would gain advantage or be disadvantaged by this policy in terms of their particular needs and priorities. The strategy is intended to promote the three pillars of sustainable development namely social, economic and environmental.

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.

The strategy has been developed in conjunction with key stakeholders. No section 75 issues were identified as being problematic throughout this process.

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

No

Sustainable development strategy is a major cross cutting initiative,

the goal of which is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations. The strategy's objectives should promote better community relations as it is intended that people will become more closely involved in the decision making process.

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:

N/a

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

N/a

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

- 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**

Sustainable development is a major cross cutting initiative, the principal purpose of which is to provide a comprehensive analysis and framework which will allow sustainable development to be taken forward systematically throughout NI. The goal of sustainable development (SD) is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations. It is therefore considered that a full EQIA is not needed for this strategy.

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

N/a

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

Please give details

N/a

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: Frank M. Lynch
Agency/Division: Sustainable Development Division
Date: 17th May 06.

Section 6

For Completion by Equality Unit

	Date
Screening result recorded:	<u>22/5/06</u>
Placed on website:	_____
Screening out completed:	<u>22/5/06.</u>
Screening to be reconsidered:	_____
Give reasons:	_____ _____ _____ _____
Agency/Division notified date:	_____

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

UNA DOWNEY, EXT 40855
 una.downey@doeni.gov.uk

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); transgendered 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