

EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**Strategic Investment Board Limited****Annual Progress Report 2008 – 2009
on Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and
Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006**

Name of public authority

Strategic Investment Board Limited (SIB)

Equality Officer

Section 75 and DDO:

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Executive Summary

- What were the key policy/service developments made by the authority during this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations and what outcomes were achieved?

The SIB Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission in November 2005. In 2006-07 SIB screened the 48 existing policies and determined that the Equal Opportunities Policy should be subjected to a full EQIA. This EQIA was substantially completed during 2008-09, although the final report was approved by the Board just after the end of the year. An action plan has been adopted and will be implemented over the next 2 years. It is expected that the actions will achieve an increase in the number of suitably qualified women applying for posts in SIB Limited.

In addition, the 2008-09 Business Plan included a number of actions

designed to ensure engagement with key stakeholders in respect of the implementation of various projects which will contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Plan also included a specific target relating to the development of an IS monitoring system for the implementation of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018 with a linkage to the SIB website to allow public access to appropriate information on project updates. This will also encourage greater engagement with the public and help to promote equality of opportunity.

- What are the main initiatives planned in the coming year to ensure the authority improves outcomes in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations for individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75?

In the coming year, SIB will focus on –

- continuing to implement the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018;
- implementing the action plan resulting from the EQIA of the Equal Opportunities Policy;
- screening any new policies developed during the year;
- providing refresher training for officers and awareness training for new employees;
- planning and preparing for the 5 Year Review of the Equality Scheme which is due to be carried out in 2010-11.

- Please give examples of changes to policies or practices which have resulted in outcomes. If the change was a result of an EQIA please tick the appropriate box in column 3:

	Outline change in policy or practice which have resulted in outcomes	Tick if result of EQIA
Persons of different religious belief	• See below	
Persons of different political opinion	• See below	
Persons of different racial groups	• See below	
Persons of different age	• See below	

Persons with different marital status	• See below	
Persons of different sexual orientation	• See below	
Men and women generally	• See below	
Persons with and without a disability	• See below	
Persons with and without dependants	• See below	

In 2007-08 SIB took the lead in developing the second iteration of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI 2008-2018). The Executive decided to carry out an EQIA at a strategic level on ISNI 2008-2018, the Programme for Government 2008-11 and the Budget for 2008-11 and this assessment concluded that:

- delivering significant investment and improvements to Northern Ireland's infrastructure is likely to have a positive impact on all Section 75 groups, both directly and indirectly by contributing to economic growth, social progress and environmental protection;
- however, some areas of infrastructure investment will have a differential impact on a number of the Section 75 groups which is likely to be positive and address recognised need;
- investing in infrastructure has the potential to promote equality and good relations while addressing issues of exclusion and marginalisation.

The implementation of ISNI 2008-2010 commenced in 2008-09 and is expected to lead to positive outcomes for people across the Section 75 categories.

In addition, as outlined above, SIB took action in 2008-09 to increase engagement with key stakeholders, including community groups, in respect of a range of projects within ISNI 2008-2018 and also to increase access to information about the progress of projects. Again these actions led to positive outcomes for people across the Section 75 categories.

Section 1: Strategic Implementation of the Section 75 Duties

- Outline evidence of progress made in developing and meeting equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets in corporate and annual operating plans during 2008-09.

The SIB Equality Scheme includes a commitment to integrating objectives and targets relating to the statutory equality duties into the 3 year corporate plan and the annual business plan as appropriate (Section 3.5). The 2008-11 Corporate Plan includes specific references to duties under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Section 49A of the DDO 2006 and restates SIB's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, good relations, positive attitudes towards disabled people and their participation in public life.

The 2008-09 Business Plan also included specific references to the statutory duties and targets relating to the implementation of the action plans set out in the approved Equality Scheme and the Disability Action Plan. Work continued throughout the year to implement the action plans, with the main focus being the EQIA of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Section 2: Screening

- Provide an update of new/proposed/revised policies screened during the year.

Title of policy subject to screening	Was the <u>F</u> ull Screening Report or the <u>R</u> esult of initial screening issued for consultation? <i>Please enter <u>F</u> or <u>R</u></i>	Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? <u>Y</u> es/ <u>N</u> o	Is policy being subject to EQIA? <u>Y</u> es/ <u>N</u> o? If yes indicate year for assessment.
None			

Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

- Please provide an update of policies subject to EQIA during 2008-09, stage 7 EQIA monitoring activities and an indicative EQIA timetable for 2009-10.

EQIA Timetable – April 2008 to March 2009

Title of Policy EQIA	EQIA Stage at end March 08 (Steps 1-6)	Outline adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals, and the relevant Section 75 categories due to be affected.
Equal Opportunities	5	<p>The policy was subjected to EQIA because of the under-representation of women in the SIB workforce; however, many of the recommendations - such as the development of additional family friendly policies - will benefit all staff and the EQIA also considered measures to increase the representation of disabled people within the workforce. The action plan identified the need to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ develop new policies on flexible working; ▪ develop family friendly policies; ▪ develop a disability policy; ▪ review recruitment documentation and processes; ▪ review job advertisements; ▪ improve internal communications relating to equality of opportunity; ▪ investigate the feasibility of establishing a graduate internship; ▪ establish an annual benchmarking programme. <p>These actions were approved in June 2009 (Stage 6) and will be implemented over the next 2 years.</p>

- Where the EQIA timetable for 2008-09 (as detailed in the previous annual S75 progress report to the Commission) has not been met, please provide details of the factors responsible for delay and details of the timetable for re-scheduling the EQIA/s in question.

The last annual S75 progress report indicated that the EQIA of the Equal Opportunities Policy would be completed by January 2009. The consultation on the EQIA took place between October 2008 and January 2009 and a draft final EQIA was produced in February 2009. However, two of the three non-executive Directors of the SIB Board reached the end of their terms of office in March 2009 and new Directors have yet to be appointed by the OFMDFM. There was therefore a delay in submitting the final report to the Board for approval. The report and recommended action plan were approved in June 2009.

Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities: April 2008 - March 2009

Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring	Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased	Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased
Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018		

Note: As explained above, the EQIA of ISNI 2008-2018 concluded that delivering significant investment and improvements to Northern Ireland's infrastructure is likely to have a positive impact on all Section 75 groups. In 2008-09 work was undertaken on the development of an IS monitoring system and a link to the SIB website to allow greater public access to information on the progress of projects within the Investment Strategy. Further analysis of the information obtained from the monitoring system will be undertaken in the coming year.

2009-10 EQIA Time-table

Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2008 – March 2009	Existing or New policy?	Please indicate expected timescale of Decision Making stage i.e. Stage 6
Equal Opportunities	Existing	The EQIA action plan was approved by the Board in June 2009 and the final report was published in July 2009.
No further EQIA are planned but the screening of new policies during the year may give rise to the need for additional EQIA.		

Section 4: Training

- Please outline training provision during the year associated with the Section 75 Duties/Equality Scheme requirements including types of training provision and conclusions from any training evaluations.

The SIB Equality Scheme includes a commitment to developing an effective training programme for all staff (Section 6.1) in order to –

- raise awareness of current anti-discrimination legislation and the statutory equality duties; and
- provide those employees involved in implementing various aspects of the Equality Scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

Initial awareness training was provided for all staff in November 2003 and refresher training and awareness training for new employees has provided each year as required. An awareness session for new employees was held on 22 July 2008 which included:

- an update on equal opportunities legislation;
- the responsibilities of SIB;
- complaints;
- project planning to allow for screening/EQIA and community engagement; and
- key inequalities in Northern Ireland.

SIB has a small workforce and so it has been possible to include all staff in most training sessions. The training has increased awareness of the statutory equality duties and has provided an opportunity for staff to discuss the significance of equality of opportunity in the work carried out by SIB.

Section 5: Communication

- Please outline how the authority communicated progress on delivery of the Section 75 Duties during the year and evidence of the impact/success of such activities.

There are three specific measures set out in the SIB Equality Scheme which relate to the communication of progress on the delivery of the statutory equality duties –

- monthly progress reports to the Board (as part of the standard progress report on business objectives) on achievements against the objectives and targets relating to Section 75 duties which have been integrated into the corporate plan and the annual business plan (Section 3.5);
- review of targets relating to Section 75 duties included in the personal performance plans of all staff directly engaged in this work (Section 3.6) – this is carried out as part of the annual performance review in April each year;
- annual review of progress towards implementing the arrangements in the Equality Scheme (Section 3.7) – the findings of this review were reflected in the annual progress report to the Equality Commission submitted in August 2008. This report was also made available on the SIB website and drawn to the attention of all staff.

In addition, a quarterly report is made to the Board on all equality issues.

Section 6: Data Collection & Analysis

- Please outline any systems that were established during the year to supplement available statistical and qualitative research or any research undertaken/commissioned to obtain information on the needs and experiences of individuals from the nine categories covered by Section 75.

During the year, SIB developed an IS monitoring system to provide information on the implementation of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008 -2018.

With regard to employees, in 2006 SIB extended the equal opportunities monitoring form issued with application forms for vacant posts in order to collect data on all of the Section 75 categories. Towards the end 2007-08, as part of the EQIA of the Equal Opportunities Policy, a questionnaire was issued to all staff appointed prior to 2006 requesting further Section 75 information and providing an opportunity to comment on the current policy. This information was collated into a database in 2008-09 and will be updated as required in future years.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide.

The monitoring questionnaire circulated to staff made extensive use of the recommended wording in Appendix A of the Commission's Section 75 Monitoring Guide.

Section 7: Information Provision, Access to Information and Services

- Please provide details of any initiatives/steps taken during the year, including take up, to improve access to services including provision of information in accessible formats.

Access to information

In line with the commitment in the SIB Equality Scheme (Section 7.3), a review was undertaken during 2006-07 of the arrangements for providing information in alternative formats. The conclusions of the review were that –

1. Adequate arrangements are in place to provide documents in alternative formats on request.
2. No such requests have been received to date and there is no reason to believe that the demand will increase significantly.

No requests were made in 2008-09.

Access to services

As SIB does not provide services directly to the public, the key issues relate to the general availability of information.

In order to promote public access, SIB makes a considerable amount of information available on its website, including general information about SIB itself and the projects it supports and details of the SIB Publication Scheme. In future there will be a link between the SIB website and the IS system developed to monitor the implementation of the ISNI 2008-2018; this will allow the public access to appropriate information on project updates.

The website is available in a text only version to assist those with visual impairment. The Publication Scheme includes a commitment to providing information in alternative accessible formats on request.

No information is available on usage of the website other than the number of “hits” and page views. There were no requests for alternative formats under the Publication Scheme.

Section 8: Complaints

- Please identify the number of Section 75 related complaints:
 - received and resolved by the authority (including how this was achieved);
 - which were not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant;
 - which were referred to the Equality Commission.

SIB has developed a procedure for dealing with Section 75 complaints but no complaints have been received to date.

Section 9: Consultation and Engagement

- Please provide details of the measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups during the year.

During 2008-09, SIB consulted and engaged with representative groups in relation to the EQIA of the Equal Opportunities Policy, particularly in relation to groups representing the interests of women and disabled people. All comments were taken into account when decisions were made and a full report of the consultation, showing the action to be taken as a result, was published as part of the final EQIA report.

In addition the SIB Business Plan for 2008-09 included a number of actions designed to ensure engagement with key stakeholders in respect of the implementation of various projects within ISNI 2008-2018.

Section 10: The Good Relations Duty

- Please provide details of additional steps taken to implement or progress the good relations duty during the year. Please indicate any findings or expected outcomes from this work.

In general, SIB has taken forward the 'good relations' duty alongside the requirement to promote equality of opportunity. All awareness training includes information on the duty to promote good relations and, in particular, references to "A Shared Future" and the type of initiatives which are being taken forward by Government Departments.

Any opportunities to promote good relations will be identified and considered as they arise.

- Please outline any use of the Commission's Good Relations Guide.

No particular use was made of the Commission's Good Relations Guide in 2008-09.

Section 11: Additional Comments

- Please provide any additional information/comments

None.

**Annual Report April 2008/ March 2009
'Disability Duties' Questions**

1. How many action measures for this reporting period have been?

6

Fully
Achieved

0

Partially
Achieved

0

Not
Achieved

2. Please outline the following detail on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ¹	Outcomes / Impact ²
National ³			
Regional ⁴	6. Encourage disabled people to participate in consultation meetings	Measures taken to ensure organisations representing disabled people were involved in consultation on the Equal Opportunities EQIA	Comments received on issues affecting disabled people
Local ⁵			

¹ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

² **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

³ **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

⁴ **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

⁵ **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local forums.

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
3	Draw disability duties to the attention of all staff and office holders	All staff attended a training session in May 2007 and were provided with information on the disability duties. In 2008-09 written guidance was provided to all staff for inclusion in the staff handbook.	All staff are aware of the disability duties.
4	Include awareness training on the disability duties in induction briefings	11 briefings carried out for 11 staff during their induction	Increased awareness of disability duties
5	Provide training on disability duties for all staff and office holders involved in the implementation and/or monitoring of the Disability Action Plan	One training session held in May 2007 for all staff; further awareness session provided for new employees in July 2008.	Increased awareness of disability duties

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
	No specific measures		

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others**’ to promote the two duties:

	Encourage Others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
	No specific measures		

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Mainstream consideration of disability duties into the policy development process and amend the screening template.	Template amended in July 2007. No screening exercises carried out in 2008-09.	
2	Review existing policies in relation to the disability duties and revise accordingly	The review (including consultation) was completed in 2008-09 and a new code of practice on the employment of disabled people was adopted.	Increased awareness of the needs of disabled people in relation to employment.

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones ⁶ / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	None			

⁶ **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.

4. Please outline what action measures have not been achieved and the reasons why?

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	None	

5. What monitoring tools have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

No specific monitoring tools put in place.

(b) Quantitative

Screening reports are monitored to ensure that consideration is being given to the disability duties in the course of policy development.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions, has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes.

No

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan in light of your organisations annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?**

No