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**Enterprise, Trade
and Investment**

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Consultation

Social Economy Enterprise Strategy 2009-2011

August 2009

Stimulating
innovation
enterprise and
competitiveness

Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Investment

Social Economy Enterprise Strategy 2009-2011

August 2009

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Social Economy Branch

Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Investment
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
Belfast BT4 2JP

E: socialeconomy@detini.gov.uk
T: (028) 9052 9324
F: (028) 9052 9500
Textphone: (028) 9052 9304
www.detini.gov.uk

An executive summary of this document is also available in an accessible format if required i.e. Braille, large print, audio cassette or in a minority language

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Foreword



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arlene Foster".

Arlene Foster

Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

As Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, I recognise and value the significant role played by social entrepreneurs in Northern Ireland. I have seen the real difference that social economy enterprises have made to people's lives particularly in terms of their impact on local communities and areas of economic disadvantage.

I am delighted to present this Strategy which has been developed to ensure that social economy enterprise is valued, encouraged and supported. My Department retains lead responsibility for taking this work forward within Government and will be working in partnership with those Departments involved with the social economy including Invest NI, DSD, CPD (Central Procurement Directorate), DEL, DHSSPS and DARD. We will need the full engagement of those Departments and stakeholders working with the sector to deliver the actions outlined in this Strategy.

The development of a strong and sustainable Social Economy Network (SEN) is a key element in this Strategy. We have put in place a phased reducing grant of £600,000 to be paid over the four year period up to 2011 to enable the SEN to build a fully inclusive, more independent and income generating organisation to represent the sector. I would encourage all social economy enterprises to join the SEN and make your voice heard on the issues that are of importance to the development of your business.

I believe that through co-operation and partnership we can achieve Government's vision for this Strategy, which is an enterprise environment that encourages greater social entrepreneurial activity and supports social economy enterprises that want to grow.

We are keen to have your views on this draft Strategy and I would encourage you to use this opportunity to contribute to the consultation process. On receipt of your views, the draft Strategy will be finalised and published.

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

The Executive has identified “growing a dynamic, innovative economy” as the top priority over the next 3 years, with DETI having lead responsibility in delivering on this aim. It is within this context, and in recognition of the potential of the social economy to make a significant contribution to both social and economic regeneration, that Government has developed this refreshed SEE Strategy in partnership with the social economy sector. Through the delivery of the three strategic objectives listed below, we aim to achieve our vision of ‘an enterprise environment which encourages greater social entrepreneurial activity and is supportive of those SEEs that want to grow’.

The Strategy, along with the Enterprise Strategy also being developed by DETI, can be considered as a transitional Strategy in preparation for the enhanced role envisaged under the Review of Public Administration (RPA) for district councils.

STRATEGIC PLAN

In building on the significant achievements of Northern Ireland’s first SE Strategy, Government - working in partnership with the social economy sector and in particular the SEN - is committed to a range of actions designed to deliver three key strategic objectives to:

- increase awareness of the sector and establish its value to the local economy;
- develop the sector and increase its business strength; and
- create a supportive and enabling environment.

Our focus will be on developing the business strength of existing SEEs to reach a scale and capability which will enable them to contribute to the overall viability and sustainability of the sector and ultimately the local economy.

The SEE Strategy includes actions designed to:

- increase knowledge and understanding;
- provide support for business growth;
- build business skills;
- foster a SEE culture;
- build the evidence base; and
- measure the impact of SEEs.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A key area of work within the Strategy will be to establish the value of the social economy sector to the local economy and we want to ensure that effective arrangements are put in place to make sure we can measure the impact of the Strategy.

As the key owners of actions in the Strategy the SEN, Social Economy Policy Group (SEPG) and the Social Economy Forum (SEF) will have lead roles in monitoring and reporting progress against the agreed strategic objectives.

The Strategy will be evaluated and reviewed as it is progressed so as to take account of the changing environment, and DETI will lead on the preparation of annual progress reports which will be published on the DETI Social Economy website.

In addition, an external evaluation will be carried out in 2010-11 to assess what impact the Strategy has had on the sector.

EQUALITY

In developing this Strategy careful consideration has been given to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. Evidence would suggest that social economy policy has a positive impact on equality of opportunity for a number of the Section 75 groups; and in implementing actions in the Strategy, Government Departments will apply their respective statutory equality obligations.

CONCLUSION

The Strategy has been developed in partnership with the social economy sector. It has been widely circulated both within Government and within the sector to identify and address the priority needs of the sector. Government remains committed to developing the social economy sector and values the distinctive role played by SEEs arising from their social and economic objectives.

The Strategy is available on the DETI website www.socialeconomy.detini.gov.uk

Copies can also be obtained from:

Social Economy Branch
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
Belfast BT4 2JP
Email: socialeconomy@detini.gov.uk
Tel no: 028 9052 9324
Fax: 028 9052 9500

Introduction

1

SOCIAL ECONOMY POLICY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The social economy is a wide and diverse sector which has been operating and developing over many years and has a strong tradition of supporting local communities. More recently, its contribution to social and economic life has been receiving greater recognition.

The first Programme for Government (PfG) prepared by the Executive of the Northern Ireland Executive, published in April 2001, recognised the potential for the social economy to make a significant contribution to both social and economic regeneration.

In 2004, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) published a three year Strategic Plan – “Developing a Successful Social Economy” to implement a more integrated approach to the social economy. Three strategic objectives were identified to facilitate Government’s actions. They were to:

- increase awareness of the sector and establish its value to the local economy;
- develop the sector and increase its business strength; and
- create a supportive and enabling environment.

DETI also put in place key structures to support the implementation of the Strategy including:

- an inclusive Social Economy Network (SEN) to represent the sector;
- an Inter-Departmental Steering Group (IDSG) to develop greater cross-departmental co-operation including preparation of Action Plans; and
- the Social Economy Forum (SEF) where representatives from the SEN and officials from the IDSG could work in partnership.

More detail on the current social economy support structures is attached at Annex A.

A high level evaluation of the Strategy was completed in March 2007. This concluded that DETI should retain lead responsibility for developing an adapted social economy policy working closely with other relevant Departments/Agencies and the sector to agree a new strategic approach and plan of action.

This work will be taken forward by an IDSG called the Social Economy Policy Group (SEPG) which consists of those Departments most closely involved with the social economy.

Current Policy Context

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PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

The over-arching aim of the Programme for Government (PfG) 2008-2011, prepared by the Executive and published in January 2008 is to build a peaceful, fair and prosperous society, with respect for the rule of law and where everyone can enjoy a better quality of life now and in years to come.

The Executive set out in the PfG five strategic and interdependent priorities as follows:

- Growing a Dynamic, Innovative Economy;
- Promote Tolerance, Inclusion and Health and Well-Being;
- Protect and Enhance our Environment and Natural Resources;
- Invest to Build our Infrastructure; and
- Deliver Modern High Quality and Efficient Public Services.

GROWING A DYNAMIC INNOVATIVE ECONOMY

The Executive has identified “growing a dynamic, innovative economy” as the top priority over the next 3 years, with DETI having lead responsibility in delivering on this aim.

DETI’s Corporate Plan (2008-2011) sets out the priorities and actions to be undertaken in support of the PfG. They represent an ambitious and challenging agenda to help strengthen the economy. To support this approach, DETI is in the lead on the development of an Enterprise Strategy.

ENTERPRISE STRATEGY

The Enterprise Strategy will provide a co-ordinated framework of support that helps entrepreneurs (across all sectors) start and grow a business, in particular by becoming more productive and maximising export opportunities; that enhances our ability to attract Foreign Direct Investment; that makes the most of our tourism potential and that ultimately delivers increased productivity and employment. It is a 3 year transition Strategy with the purpose of ensuring that all those involved in

enterprise support have an understanding of how their activities contribute to the four stages of the enterprise pipeline i.e. Awareness; Pre-Start; Start-up and Growth. The transition period will also provide an opportunity for Departments to evaluate the effectiveness of their enterprise-related programmes and initiatives.

SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTERPRISE STRATEGY

The PfG recognised that part of developing our economy also includes developing the social economy. Government believes that a separate SEE Strategy led by DETI is required to build on the work started by “Developing a Successful Social Economy” (2004). Government want to ensure that social economy enterprise is valued, encouraged and supported.

The vision for this SEE Strategy is:

An enterprise environment which encourages greater social entrepreneurial activity and is supportive of those SEEs that want to grow.

Achievement of this vision will require the co-operation and partnership of a wide range of existing and potential stakeholders including central and local government, the private, social economy and wider voluntary and community sectors. DETI is committed to this vision and will work through the SEPG and the SEN to ensure delivery of this Strategy.

The SEE Strategy, like the Enterprise Strategy, can also be described as a 3 year transition Strategy in preparation for the enhanced role envisaged under Review of Public Administration (RPA) for district councils in the delivery of social economy policy and programmes. The focus in this SEE Strategy is to complement the Enterprise Strategy, with both documents of direct interest to SEEs.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME

On 31 March 2008 the Minister of the Environment announced the vision for local government, agreed by the Executive, following a review of the previous administration’s decisions. The review considered what local government would be expected to deliver in the context of a fully functioning devolved Assembly and Executive. The vision is for a strong, dynamic local government that creates vibrant, healthy, prosperous, safe and sustainable communities that have all citizens at their core. The implementation of this vision will require a rationalisation of council numbers combined with a strengthening of functions and activities they carry out and the powers they have to act on behalf of their areas. DETI will consult with district councils on the proposed SEE Strategy and work with the SEN to agree a plan to help ensure that local government is aware of the current and potential contribution of the social economy sector.

DETI will transfer important elements of the current enterprise portfolio to district government. This includes the Start a Business Programme, Youth Entrepreneurship programmes, Investing in Women, the Social Entrepreneurship Programme and Neighbourhood Renewal. DETI will retain policy responsibility in these areas through the Enterprise Strategy and the SEE Strategy.

LEARNING FROM SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTERPRISE ACTIVITY ACROSS THE UNITED KINGDOM AND REPUBLIC OF IRELAND (ROI)

DETI officials maintain regular contact with colleagues in England, Scotland, Wales and ROI to exchange knowledge, best practice and new initiatives and opportunities of relevance to the social economy. While there are national and regional variations in approach and priorities, the opportunity to share ideas and learn from other experiences/successes are invaluable as each administration implements its strategies and action plans. Annex B provides a brief overview of the approach being taken in England, Scotland, Wales and the ROI.

In addition to monitoring and evaluation activity within Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK and the ROI, officials will continue to work with the SEN to monitor and assess international best practice and where relevant and appropriate, use this knowledge and experience in the development of policies, programmes and initiatives for the development of the sector.

DETI also remains alert to European policy and the Barroso Taskforce. Where appropriate the Strategy will take account of the Taskforces' social economy recommendations.

A range of measures of the EU PEACE II Programme (2000-2006) supported the social economy. Most significantly, the twenty-six Local Strategy Partnerships (LSPs) delivered €125 million primarily for social economy activities.

Additional supports available under the 2000-2006 PEACE II Programme included support for the development of workspace provision. The social economy sector also benefited from EU funding support delivered by local government.

The 2007-13 PEACE III Programme, which opened to new project applications, has a strengthened focus on activities that directly promote reconciliation. As a result, it has less scope for assisting activities of a social economy nature. However, the partnership principles of the LSPs will be retained under the new Programme as local authorities will continue to cooperate with social partners to develop local Action Plans for their respective areas until 2011 when the RPA is expected to be implemented. Following RPA implementation, local peace-building activities will be led by the new local authorities, again on a partnership basis.

In future, support for local economic development will continue to be supported by the NI Sustainable Competitiveness Programme. The local economic development strand of this programme will encourage and support projects delivering outputs which will benefit the local economy. Proposals will come from local government and should concentrate on innovation, research and development, and entrepreneurship. Finally, applications should demonstrate that the proposed activity fits with local, regional and national strategy.

Achievements

3

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FROM 'DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL ECONOMY 2004-2007'

Compared to the baseline position in 2001, significant progress has been made in social economy policies and structures. The following is a sample of the achievements from the first Strategy:

Increasing awareness of the sector and establishing its value to the local economy

- We now have good baseline data for nearly 400 SEEs with a total of some 6,700 paid employees, 5,000 volunteers and turnover of just over £355million. The findings, published in June 2007, were transferred to the SEN to help develop its services to its membership and to increase knowledge of the size and scale of the sector;
- On-going focus on the social economy within the sustained Invest NI 'Go For It' campaign on social entrepreneurship, including Social Entrepreneur of the year within Enterprise Week 2006 and 2007;
- The SEN, in conjunction with the School for Social Entrepreneurs in Ireland (SSEI), held its Social Enterprise Day on 16th November 2007, as part of Invest NI's Enterprise Week. The event showcased a range of innovative and inspiring social enterprises and included an award ceremony for NI Social Entrepreneur of the Year; and
- DETI led a programme to ensure that Departments understood the social economy sector and appreciated more fully the contribution it makes to the economy. This also involved the promotion and placement of professionally written case studies on Departmental websites, staff magazines and other sectoral publications.

Developing the sector and increasing its business strength

- Invest NI launched its Social Entrepreneurship Programme (SEP) in June 2006 to help new and existing SEEs, at various stages of the business cycle, to improve their capability to operate to commercial business models. The SEP achieved all its top line targets within the programme's two year timeframe and resulted in referrals for progression to Invest NI mainstream support for 15 groups relating to 16 projects;
- In 2006 Department for Social Development (DSD) launched its Modernisation Fund which provided funding to groups, including SEEs, aiming to modernise and develop their capacity to become more efficient in the delivery of services. To complement this, Invest NI's SEP also included a component of capacity support, centered on enabling the transition of voluntary and community groups and/or emerging social enterprises availing of the Modernisation Fund;
- Two University based projects were initiated where Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) worked with the social economy sector by allowing access to the universities' extensive information and research resources and curriculum development. The programme partners also included the SSEI whose training within the social economy sector is delivered through University of Ulster's (UU) Business Institute; and

- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) commissioned a study which was published in April 2005 aimed at developing and strengthening the social economy sector by identifying interventions and actions to improve the availability of, access to and uptake of business support services by SEEs.

Creating a supportive, enabling environment

- Structures were established to support the development of the sector including the IDSG, the SEN and the SEF;
- The SEN was reconstituted in 2006/7 from an unincorporated body to the newly established Social Economy Network (NI) Ltd. In March 2007 DETI agreed funding of £600k for the 4 year period up to 2011 to support the development and long term sustainability of the SEN as the representative body of the social economy sector;
- In January 2006 Central Procurement Directorate (CPD), within the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), formed a Social Economy Enterprise Working Group which brought together a small and focused team of procurement practitioners and SEEs with direct experience of competitive tendering. CPD also supported the development of a Procurement Guide for SEEs which was launched in February 2005. The Guide was part of a wider programme to help the sector increase their understanding and capability to compete successfully for Government and other public and/or private sector contracts. The full guidance can be found at www.cpdni.gov.uk/social-economy-enterprises-guidance-pdf.pdf;

- In March 2007 DETI hosted an awareness raising seminar, attended by around 80 delegates involved in the social economy sector, to alert SEEs and advisors to the sector of new legislation to introduce Community Interest Companies (CICs) as a new legal form of company;
- CPD, in conjunction with DETI, held a 'meet the buyer' event for SEEs in September 2007 designed to increase understanding between the sector and public procurement practitioners. This event provided the opportunity for SEEs and procurement practitioners to focus on common areas of interest in an environment conducive to doing business;
- The NetWORKS 2008 Trade Event for Social Enterprises, funded by Co-operation Ireland and the International Fund for Ireland and organised by UCIT, took place on 10 June 2008 at St George's Market, Belfast and was the first event organised exclusively to provide a platform for SEEs to focus on trade. Over 900 people attended the event with 87 social enterprises from across Ireland taking the opportunity to exhibit at the event and network with potential new buyers; and
- DETI supported the SSEI in its development of a portfolio of high quality university accredited business and management programmes for the sector. Since the SSEI's inception over 200 leaders and managers in the third sector have completed social enterprise, management and leadership development programmes.

Strategic objectives /
Areas for future action

4

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

An independent evaluation of Government's first SE Strategy confirmed that considerable progress has been made since 2001, when the term "social economy" first appeared in a Northern Ireland policy context. Views on the effectiveness and impact of the first Strategy were wide ranging, however the evidence points to there being a strong and sound rationale for continuing with a social economy policy that embraces the three initial strategic objectives.

The three objectives are as follows:

- Increasing awareness of the sector and establishing its value to the local economy;
- developing the sector and increasing its business strength; and
- creating a supportive, enabling environment.

Government, working in partnership with the social economy sector, has already helped to increase awareness of the sector, establish its value to the local economy, increase its business strength and create a more supportive and enabling environment. The evaluation reported that most progress has been made on the third objective, followed by the first. We are keen to see further progress on the second objective.

Our focus will be on developing the business strength of existing SEEs to reach a scale and capability in which they can contribute to the overall viability and sustainability of the sector and ultimately the local economy. A general policy supporting the volume growth of SEEs is not needed. There is however a rationale for supporting and encouraging the establishment of new organisations which seek to meet the needs of deprived communities and/or address aspects of Government's Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy.

AREAS FOR FUTURE ACTION

Roles of Departments and the Sector

DETI will have the lead role in developing an integrated approach to the social economy and managing the implementation of this 'refreshed' SEE Strategy. DETI will also work with key Departments/Agencies and the sector to build SEE's capacity and capability.

Invest NI support will be available to SEEs within the new comprehensive Social Entrepreneurship Programme (SEP). It replaces the previous SEP with a more flexible offering through all phases of business development, from pre start to established social enterprises. The programme introduces new funding sources at the start up phase and it continues targeting areas of disadvantage. While there will continue to be a 'core' offering available to all, resources within the programme will be skewed to those SEEs that show growth potential and/or are likely to deliver the greatest additionality. The focus will be on building the skills and capabilities of the social entrepreneur and in ensuring that those SEEs which are capable of making a significant economic impact get appropriate support in a timely fashion. It is anticipated that over 100 groups per annum will receive assistance under the SEP through its range of support interventions.

Invest NI will also programme manage (alongside **DEL**) the delivery of the pilot Social Economy Fund (SEF). This pilot programme was developed as part of the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task

Force (WBGSTF) and is delivered by the Employment Services Board. The programme represents a specific employability intervention to individuals with employment placement in new SEEs. The pilot project will support a minimum of 25 placements with 75% of those recruited to the posts still in post or mainstream employment after two years. One of the key criteria in considering placement allocations has been maximising the impact on the business development and growth of the SEE. Other potential outcomes and lasting benefits within the Social Enterprise context are:

- Contribution to local and sustainable wealth creation in a deprived area;
- To contribute to the a survival rate of 70% within SEP; and
- Linked to the above to achieve a conversion rate of 50% to 'pull through' to Invest NI's mainstream/Business Development Support portfolio.

Invest NI will commission an ongoing evaluation of this pilot programme in early 2009.

DFPs **Central Procurement Directorate (CPD)** will work with the SEPG and the sector to raise awareness of public tendering processes and to explore ways of addressing barriers to public procurement. Subject to the necessary legislation being put in place, DFP will take a lead role in developing a policy on how unclaimed assets in dormant bank and building society accounts may be spent for social or environmental purposes.

DSD will have lead responsibility for a range of strategies to encourage and support a more enterprising Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). In addition, DSD will encourage those that see merit in the SEE model and signpost them to the right type of business support, primarily to Invest NI's SEP, which has a specific strand designed for VCS groups interested in this transition process.

DARD will support the sector through opportunities within the Rural Development Programme (RDP) to support enterprise (including SEEs) by encouraging the wider rural community to avail of support under the RDP. DARD will offer an enhanced rate of up to 75% to a maximum of £250k for SEEs under Axis 3 of the RDP. DARD will also work with the SEN, which has substantial membership from rural entrepreneurs, to identify opportunities for the sector.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) will promote the use of SEEs within the Health and Social Care field. It recognises that there are many advantages that SEEs can provide within the Health and Social Care sector and the requirement to develop a more strategic and integrated approach to them. DHSSPS recognises that SEEs can deliver high quality services within the health and social care sector, while also contributing to wider social, economic or environmental goals.

DEL will support organisations, including SEEs, to develop and professionalise through a range of programmes designed to help them access training, including management training and skills development, to improve managerial and leadership competence.

The **SEN** will work with stakeholders to promote the concept of the social economy as one which combines a focus on tradable income alongside a social mission. It will represent and articulate the views of the social economy sector, and facilitate access to high quality development support and opportunities. For further information on the SEN can be found at www.socialeconomynetwork.org

The **SSEI** will promote sustainable community economic development through delivery of its range of programmes to build leadership, management and organisational capability within SEEs. Further information on School for Social Entrepreneurs can be found at www.sse.org.uk

UCIT will provide loan finance, free advice, business support and mentoring to the social economy sector. It will work with Invest NI to assist SEEs supported by the SEP and to find new and sustainable ways of financing the sector including the availability of a loan product to suit the social economy sector. Further information on UCIT can be found at www.ucitltd.org

Northern Ireland Government Departments will work with the sector, through a range of actions developed and implemented in partnership with the sector, to achieve the three strategic objectives. These include:

**Objective 1:
Increasing awareness of the sector and establishing its value to the local economy**

There is a broad recognition across Government and within the social economy sector that more work is needed to raise awareness of what the sector is and how it benefits the local economy and communities in a unique and effective way.

Raising the profile of SEEs will be key to ensuring that this business model is recognised as a viable option to do business. This will be realised by exploring opportunities to increase local knowledge and understanding and measuring the impact of SEE activity.

**Action 1.1
Increasing our knowledge and understanding**

The **SEN** will:

- undertake activities to raise the profile of the sector by encouraging SEEs to apply for local and national sector specific business awards; and
- work with the Community Interest Company (CIC) Regulator to increase awareness of CICs as an alternative company model. Further information on the CIC Regulator can be found at www.cicregulator.gov.uk

DETI will:

- work in partnership with the SEPG, SEN and local authorities to raise awareness of the sector through a range of initiatives (inc visits, case studies, strategic awareness sessions, master classes etc); and
- work with the SEPG to explore opportunities for integrating social economy policy into Departmental planning and also liaise with European, UK and ROI social economy counterparts to inform policy development decisions and to share best practice.

Invest NI will:

- increase awareness of the sector through sponsorship of sector specific events and article placement. A key event will be the NI heat of the UK wide Enterprising Britain competition which invites applications from initiatives that demonstrate community transformation through enterprise. All of this work will be within the overall “Go For It” promotional campaign.

DSD will:

- raise awareness of the social economy sector through mechanisms such as the Government Funding database and NI Voluntary and Community database;
- explore how Departmental and sectoral representatives can be engaged in social economy policy issue discussions through the joint Government Voluntary Sector Forum; and

- engage and share information, in relation to the social economy, with a number of UK and ROI fora involving representatives from Government departments and the regional voluntary sector representative bodies.

DHSSPS will:

- promote awareness of the opportunities that SEEs can offer to Health and Social Care organisations, in terms of high quality, value for money services that can also offer patients and users a wider selection of innovative, convenient and responsive services; and
- deliver two workshops in partnership with the SEN, to raise awareness of SEEs and to help SEEs, Health and Social Care organisations and the Department explore how they can work together to provide effective services whilst benefiting from the wider social advantages that social enterprise can offer.

DARD will:

- work with the SEN to identify opportunities to jointly raise awareness of the SEN and the sector within rural communities; and

DEL will:

- update its website and Careers Advisers on social economy developments.

Action 1.2

Measuring the impact

Invest NI will:

- as part of on-going programme evaluation, measure the social, financial and economic impacts of the sector, by measuring the social impact of enterprises supported within the SEP and SEF;

DSD will:

- work with Community Evaluations Northern Ireland (CENI) in the development of a social capital indicator toolkit;
- work with CENI and others, (including Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMdFM), Northern Ireland Housing Executive), on developing a tool to measure deprivation and targeting need, building in community capacity and infrastructure; and
- consider the findings and opportunities of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) research, due to be published early 2009, into VCS involvement in public service delivery to assess how government is working to build capacity of the voluntary sector (including the SEEs);

Departments will:

- consider how to measure the level of uptake of their respective programmes/initiatives by SEEs and how to record this information for future analysis.

**Objective 2:
Developing the sector and increasing its
business strength**

The evaluation of 'Developing a Successful Social Economy 2004-2007' indicated that further progress on the objective of 'Developing the sector and increasing its business strength' should be a future priority. Providing access to effective business development support will help to ensure the development and business growth of SEEs with the principal emphasis on improving sustainability. This will include a focus on developing the business strength of existing SEEs to reach a scale and capability in which they can contribute to the overall viability and sustainability of the sector and building the business skills of SEEs.

**Action 2.1
Providing support for business growth**

DETI and **Invest NI** will:

- work with **UCIT** on the identification and design of innovative financial products and support services to assist in the development of the sector. This will include a new Flexible Enterprise Fund for start up social enterprises offering loan funding within the SEP.

DETI, supported by **CPD**, will:

- work with the **SEN** to facilitate up to two meetings per annum of the Social Economy Enterprise Procurement Group. CPD will help inform the group to increase awareness of the tendering process and break down barriers to procurement.

Invest NI will:

- assist in the growth of the social economy sector within the context of DETI's new Enterprise Strategy. The Strategy will see a continuance of the SEP, which focuses on business growth and offers a range of assistance to develop new and existing SEEs;
- monitor the delivery of the pilot SEF Programme for West Belfast and Greater Shankill, launched in June 2008, to:
 - Bring Long Term Unemployed (LTU) into the labour market, maximising the opportunity for linkage between SEEs and the various employability interventions in the area; and
 - Be an additional resource 'anchored' to Invest NI's SEP to broker the recruitment and employment of those furthest from the labour market; and

- support the maintenance and future development of the www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk site to ensure the delivery of continued best practice information to the NI businesses.

CPD will:

- have appropriate systems in place to allow access by Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and SEEs to opportunities for doing business with CPD; and
- encourage other Central Government bodies to use this common platform to achieve a more coordinated approach to advertising Public Sector Tenders.

DARD will:

- through Axis 3 the Rural Development Programme (RDP) with a budget in excess of £100m, will provide opportunities to support enterprise (including SEEs). The wider rural community will be encouraged to avail of the support opportunities offered under the RDP. All but measure 3.2 (Farm Modernisation) will be open to SEEs. Under eligible measures an enhanced grant rate of up to 75% will be available to SEEs. DARD will also work with the SEN, which has substantial membership from rural entrepreneurs, to identify opportunities for the sector; and
- DARD is delivering a Rural Anti Poverty and Social Inclusion Framework (worth £10 million) up to 2011. It has five priorities; Rural Childcare, Rural Transport, Rural Fuel Poverty, Rural Community Development and a Rural Challenge Programme. This programme will be open to applications from the SEE sector.

DHSSPS will:

- follow up on the fact finding visit in October 2008 to study the development of Social Enterprise within the health and social care sector in England. Representatives of the Department, Commissioners, Social Enterprise and Community and Voluntary groups were invited to study examples of best practice and lessons learned from their counterparts, Department of Health (DH), with the aim of developing the sector; and
- develop closer links with DH to ensure that best practice learning from England can be applied to the development of Social Enterprise within Health and Social Care.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) will:

- work with the SEN to identify opportunities for SEEs to engage in the delivery of local tourism services.

Action 2.2

Building the business skills of SEEs

DETI will:

- support the work of the **SSEI** to build leadership, management and organisation capability in the sector.

CPD will:

- deliver basic training in sustainable procurement to procurement practitioners, including the integration of equality and sustainable development (social, economic and environmental issues) into public sector procurement. The guidance on 'Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Procurement', published in May 2008, can be found at www.cpdni.gov.uk or www.equalityni.org.

DEL will:

- assist in professionalising the social economy sector through curriculum development and innovative programmes tailored to the needs of the sector;
- provide ongoing financial support under the second round of Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) for 2 university based projects providing community and voluntary groups with access to the universities' extensive information and research resources; and

- support leaders and managers within the social economy sector through financial assistance for skills development, and organisational development through the promotion of the benefits of working with the Investors in People Standard and offering financial support towards the cost of first time assessment against the standard.

Objective 3:

Creating a supportive and enabling environment

A more explicit proposal in this Strategy will be to look at opportunities to develop the concept of the social economy as a valuable tool for the delivery of public policies, and the contribution which SEEs can make to the effective, efficient and equitable delivery of public services to communities.

Challenges ahead, for Government and the sector, will be to work together to build on the evidence base, foster a culture of social enterprise and create the conditions and opportunities for SEEs to develop and thrive.

Action 3.1

Building the evidence base

The **SEN** will:

- develop and maintain a detailed database on the size/scale of the sector and develop a 'Trade Directory' of services and goods supplied by the sector. Both will be updated on a monthly basis; and
- collate intelligence from its membership and undertake research to identify sectoral issues to inform/lobby policy makers. This work will be taken forward from June to August 2009 and the findings will be updated on an annual basis thereafter.

DETI will:

- consider how to identify gaps in the knowledge of the sector and what steps can be taken to develop the evidence base to demonstrate how it can contribute to the delivery of quality public services.

DETI/SEPG will:

- work with the SEN to pro-actively promote its membership.

Invest NI will

- through an enhanced innovation vouchers scheme, as part of its contribution to the Regional Innovation Strategy in NI, provide SMEs including SEEs with access to technical support from publicly funded research institutions throughout the island of Ireland. The initiative aims to help Northern Ireland registered small enterprises establish links with the regions' Knowledge Providers (universities, colleges and publicly funded research bodies in NI or ROI) to solve knowledge problems. More info at www.innovationvouchers.com.

DSD will:

- work with the SEN to consider how the Government Funding Database and other sources of information on the sector can be captured to contribute to the evidence base on the size and scale of the sector and what its potential is for growth; and
- through its contact with the Office of the Third Sector (OTS), share relevant information with Departments and the sector on the Third Sector research initiative.

Action 3.2 **Fostering a SEE culture**

The **SEN** will:

- work with the Credit Unions to identify opportunities to develop their role in the social economy sector. This work will be taken forward from June to December 2009.

DETI will:

- support the development of a sustainable SEN until 2011 in line with its package of financial assistance;
- commission an external evaluation of the SEE Strategy in 2010 – 2011 which will include an assessment of the contribution of social economy structures in meeting the strategic objectives and the impact of the Strategy on the sector; and
- supported by **CPD**, work with the **SEN** to facilitate up to two 'meet the buyer' events per annum across Northern Ireland to bring public sector procurement practitioners into contact with SMEs and SEEs.

DARD by continuing to support Rural Community Development will:

- provide for capacity building, support and training which will have a positive impact upon SEEs, by developing people, confidence and skills within the rural community.

CPD will:

- monitor and report annually on the success of SEEs competing for the delivery of public service contracts;

- monitor and report twice yearly on Government Departments' compliance with the guidance on integration of equality and sustainable development priorities into procurement processes;
- measure and report on the effectiveness of the guidance in 2011;
- provide information on the CPD website about best practice examples of public sector contracts that have integrated sustainability, including social goals; and
- use the CPD website to promote awareness across Procurement Practitioners about equality and sustainability within public procurement.

DSD Development Offices will:

- work with **Invest NI** to determine how action plans and priorities, developed for each of the Neighbourhood Renewal areas, can provide opportunities to improve social enterprise, self employment and small businesses in these areas of high deprivation;
- work with **Invest NI** to explore opportunities to work together on common areas of interest between Neighbourhood Renewal and Invest NI's SEP;
- consult and work with the VCS and social economy sector in developing the new Volunteering Strategy for NI;
- have lead responsibility for a range of strategies to encourage and support a more enterprising VCS such as the Advice and Support Services Strategies. These will outline a NI wide structure and approach linked into the new councils to

underpin the delivery of support by sub regional organisations that provide a range of support and advice services to local voluntary and community groups;

- explore what opportunities there are for the Charity Commission for NI to work with the social economy sector; and
- undertake evaluations of the Modernisation Revenue Fund and the Modernisation Capital Fund programmes and share the key lessons arising from both strands with Northern Ireland Departments and the sector.

The **Regional Supplies Service (RSS) of DHSSPS**, which acts on behalf of Health and Social Care bodies in a wide range of contracts, will:

- explore the most effective mechanism for integrating equality of opportunity and sustainable development into its procurement processes; and
- in addition, in December 2008, RSS intends to produce its Sustainable Procurement Action Plan to deliver sustainable development priorities within its portfolio of contracts which will allow for the inclusion, as appropriate, of social, economic and environmental goals.

DFP will:

- consider, subject to legislative requirements, how the social economy sector can benefit from the developing policy on how unclaimed assets in dormant bank and building society accounts may be spent for social or environmental purposes; and

Departments, in partnership with **DHSSPS/CPD/DETI** will:

- facilitate workshops for and develop case studies of effective delivery of public services by SEEs.

Monitoring, Reporting on Progress and Evaluation of the Social Economy Enterprise Strategy

Monitoring, Reporting on Progress and Evaluation of the Social Economy Enterprise Strategy

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INTRODUCTION

In developing the SEE Strategy, Government and the social economy sector are committed to a range of actions designed to deliver the key strategic objectives as outlined in Chapter 4. It is therefore important to be able to demonstrate the extent to which progress will be monitored in achieving these actions, what role the social economy structures will play in reporting and evaluating progress, and how the implementation of the actions will contribute to the success of the Strategy. As a result we want to ensure effective monitoring arrangements are put in place to make sure we measure the impact of the Strategy.

The role of the Social Economy structures in monitoring and reporting progress against strategic objectives

As the key contributors to the actions in the Strategy the SEN, SEPG and the SEF will have a key role in monitoring and reporting progress against the agreed strategic objectives within this document.

DETI and the SEN will exchange reports on progress against objectives at regular progress meetings and also twice yearly at SEF meetings.

The SEPG will manage the implementation of the Action Plan. DETI will lead on the preparation of annual progress reports, with input from the SEPG, the SEN and other stakeholders, to include any revisions to the action plan for the duration of the Strategy. Annual progress reports will be published on the DETI Social Economy website www.socialeconomy.detini.gov.uk

We recognise that the Action Plan may evolve as it progresses and it will be re-evaluated and reviewed where necessary to take account of the changing environment.

Evaluation

In evaluating the impact of the SEE Strategy an external evaluation will be carried out in 2010-11 to (a) assess to what extent the strategic objectives have been achieved (b) how effectively and to what extent the social economy structures have contributed to the delivery of the strategic objectives and (c) what impact the Strategy has had on the sector.

Equality and other impact assessments

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EQUALITY

As part of the development of the SEE Strategy, and in line with our commitment to fulfilling our statutory equality duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, DETI has given careful consideration 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.

We have also considered the need to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

As part of this process, DETI has completed a draft Policy and Legislation Screening Form attached at Annex C which indicates that social economy policy has a positive impact on equality of opportunity for

a number of the Section 75 groups. The conclusions in this form were informed by available information taken from data collected for DETI's July 2007 survey of SEEs in Northern Ireland. Further anecdotal information received as part of the evaluation of the first SE Strategy also indicated that certain Section 75 groups benefitted from the Strategy, e.g. women, children, people with a disability. There are also plans to collect further information on SEEs through the SEN.

In implementing the actions in this cross departmental Strategy, Government Departments will be required to fulfil their statutory equality duties and to have due regard for the need to promote equality of opportunity and have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between the groups highlighted above.

After careful consideration DETI has decided to screen out the policy on the basis that this is a refreshed Strategy document based largely on existing programmes. It is a high level Strategy document and the equality issues raised in the screening form will be further explored by individual departments and agencies in implementing actions flowing from the Strategy.

We would welcome any comments which you may have on the findings on the draft Policy and Legislation Screening Form.

OTHER IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

In developing the SEE Strategy consideration has been given to the impact this Strategy might have across a range of social, economic and environmental issues. It is considered that this Strategy is likely to have a positive impact across a breadth of industries and social groups in both urban and rural areas. As with equality issues, when implementing the actions in this Strategy, Departments will be required to have due regard to the impact of these actions across a range of areas as appropriate including Health, Targeting Social Need, Regulatory and Rural. This position will be monitored as part of the 'monitoring and evaluation' arrangements to measure the impact of this Strategy.

Responding to the Consultation Process

Responding to the Consultation Process

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WE WANT YOUR VIEWS

To respond to this consultation paper, please send your comments, in writing, to:

Social Economy Branch
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
BELFAST
BT4 2JP

Email: socialeconomy@detini.gov.uk

This consultation paper is being sent to a wide range of organisations identified within DETI's Equality Scheme, to members of the SEN, SEEs, district councils, Associations, Federations, those providing services to the sector and others that have expressed an interest in helping the sector to develop and grow.

If you require additional copies of the consultation paper, please contact the above address or telephone 028 9052 9324. This document is also available at www.socialeconomy.detini.gov.uk. The DETI textphone number is 028 9052 9304.

Alternative formats of the Executive Summary will be made available on request. Please contact the above address or telephone number.

The closing date for comments is
9th October 2009.

In order to ensure full participation we will organise appropriate regional and local events across Northern Ireland. We will do this in partnership with the SEN in order to maximise opportunities for views from the sector.

Consultation Questions

The ongoing work of the SEPG, SEN and SEF will continue to develop and feed into this Strategy and that of the SEN over the next 3 years. We are keen to have your views on the overall draft Strategy but would particularly welcome comments on the following areas: Strategic objectives/Areas for future action.

Objectives

- Do you consider that the three key strategic objectives are appropriate? If not, what changes would you suggest and why?

Actions

- Have we identified the right associated actions to meet these objectives? Are there other actions you would wish to see included and why?

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Are the proposed monitoring and evaluation mechanisms appropriate to ensure that progress is made and reported? Are there others you would wish to see and how do you consider they would assist the process?

Equality Impact

- Are there any other issues that you feel should be included in equality considerations at this stage? Can you identify any further sources of relevant information?

All comments will be treated as public unless you state that you wish your comments to be treated in confidence when you send them to us. The SEPG may not be able to respond to every point raised, however, all comments will be acknowledged and considered when finalising the Strategy.

A summary of responses will be placed on the DETI Social Economy website
www.socialeconomy.detini.gov.uk

Thank you for your interest in this consultation paper and we look forward to receiving your comments.

Annex A

Social Economy Support Structures

Annex B

Summary of Social Economy
Enterprise activity in the
United Kingdom and
Republic of Ireland

Annex C

DETI Policy &
Legislation Screening Form

Annex D

Glossary of terms

SOCIAL ECONOMY SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Social Economy Policy Group (SEPG)

DETI have formed a new and smaller SEPG chaired by DETI, to replace the IDSG. This group consists of those Departments most closely involved with the social economy including Invest NI as they will have a lead role in programme delivery; DSD in view of their policy and delivery role for the Voluntary and Community sector; Central Procurement Directorate in DFP and DEL, DHSSPS and DARD (see membership below). DETI will require the full engagement of these Departments to help deliver the actions outlined in this Strategy.

Invest NI is responsible for the delivery of DETI's policies and strategies in relation to business support. They will have a key role in terms of implementing and delivering the SEE Strategy and primarily through the SEP and other activities and initiatives to promote the social economy enterprise model.

Social Economy Policy Group (SEPG)

DFP (CPD)	Business Planning and Co-ordination Branch
DARD	Rural Policy Branch
DSD	Voluntary Community Unit
DEL	Strategy & Equality Branch
DHSSPS	Office of Social Services
Invest NI	Entrepreneurship Development Team
DETI	Social Economy Branch

Social Economy Network (NI) Ltd (SEN)

The development of a strong and sustainable SEN supporting the sector was a key element in the Government's Social Economy Strategy. From 2002-2006, funding totalling £600,000 was provided by DSD and Invest NI to the Social Economy Agency as Network Co-ordinating Agent to facilitate the establishment of the Network.

In October 2005, an Economic Appraisal confirmed the ongoing need and rationale for further Government support for the development and sustainability of the Network. The best value for money option to secure a more independent and sustainable SEN was the creation of a new corporate entity with a Board of Directors and directly employed staff.

Following a review the SEN was incorporated during August 2006 as a Company limited by Guarantee. DETI is currently the sole funder with a Letter of Offer in place for a phased reducing grant of £600,000 to be paid over the next four year period up to 2011 to enable the transition to a more independent and income generating organisation.

The Board (see membership below) is keen to build a fully inclusive Network to enable the sector to operate in a more structured and coherent way. They are aware that funding from Government on this scale will not be available post 2011. The challenge for the SEN is to make the most of this opportunity and work with a committed and engaged membership towards an inclusive and sustainable Network enabling the sector to operate in a more structured and coherent way. It puts the onus on the SEN to work with the members to play its part to raise the profile of the sector, make use of available tools to prove its social impact, develop its capacity to deliver products and services to market and attract and retain new entrants.

Board of Social Economy Network (NI) Ltd

Audrey Murray (Chair) – Larne Enterprise Development Agency

Brian Howe (Treasurer) – Ulster Community Investment Trust Limited

Aisling Owens (Secretary) – Lisburn Enterprise Organisation

Claire Ferris – Workwest

Anna McAleavy – Northern Ireland Co operative Forum

Ken Nelson – Enterprise Northern Ireland

Paul Roberts – Ashton Community Trust

Chris Williamson – Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations

Trevor Wright – Extern Recycle

Brian McCrory – Irish League of Credit Unions

Arthur Savage – Ulster Support Employment Limited

Kerry Thompson – University of Ulster

Staff

Anne Graham (Director),
Stephanie McManus (Administrative support) and
Brónagh Sharpe (Communications and Membership Officer)

Address:

171 York Road,
Belfast,
BT15 3HB

Telephone: (028) 9077 0502

Email: director@socialeconomynetwork.org

Website: www.socialeconomynetwork.org

Social Economy Forum (SEF)

The SEF is a joint meeting of representatives from the SEPG and the SEN, co-chaired by DETI and the SEN. The SEF provides a platform to enable representatives from the SEN and officials from Government to work together. This partnership was formed to enable the sector to raise and debate key issues in a high level policy forum, contribute to ongoing policy change and work in partnerships through shared learning and expertise to champion the social economy.

On occasion the SEF might consider inviting relevant Ministers or expert speakers to attend meetings as appropriate and it is envisaged that the SEF will agree a forward programme of meetings with agreed topics.

The Forum will normally meet twice a year although further meetings can be called as and when necessary.

SUMMARY OF SOCIAL ECONOMY ENTERPRISE ACTIVITY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

England

The first Government Strategy for social enterprise, *Social Enterprise: A Strategy for Success*, was published by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in 2002. This led to the creation of a new legal form, the CIC; improved business support, advice and the availability of finance; and supported the establishment of the Social Enterprise Coalition (SEC) to provide a voice for the sector.

In 2006 the OTS was created in the Cabinet Office, with its own dedicated Minister for the Third Sector with the remit to develop an environment which enables the whole sector, including social enterprise, to thrive.

OTS launched the Social Enterprise Action Plan: *Scaling New Heights* in November 2006 which builds on the original Strategy. The Social Enterprise Action Plan sets out the Government's cross-department commitment to create the conditions for more social enterprises to thrive by:

- Fostering a culture of social enterprise;
- Ensuring the right information and advice are available to social enterprises;
- Enabling social enterprises to access appropriate finance; and
- Enabling social enterprises to work with government.

The Third Sector Review, published in July 2007 reinforced the commitment to the actions in the Action Plan and made additional commitments to support social enterprise over the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) Years 2008-2011. These include:

- Promoting social enterprise;
- Building the evidence base; and
- Social Investment.

Scotland

The Government Economic Strategy (2007) outlines the purpose of the Scottish Government, which is to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increased sustainable economic growth. The strategy places the Third Sector at the heart of Scottish Government with a role in helping to achieve this purpose. The Enterprising Third Sector Action Plan, published in June 2008, goes on to explain in more detail how the Scottish Government intends to create the right environment in which an enterprising Third Sector can fulfil its role in the development, design and delivery of policy and services in Scotland. This goal will be taken forward by means of two key paths: investment, and non-financial support.

Firstly, they will invest in those enterprising organisations within the Third Sector that have the right business skills to deliver high quality services to those that need them, whilst moving towards financial sustainability and reducing organisational dependency on grants. Direct financial support is currently being provided through the Scottish Investment Fund, comprising £30m to be delivered between 2008 - 2011 and beyond, which is designed to build capacity, capability and financial sustainability in the third sector.

Further direct funding is expected to be provided by the Third Sector Enterprise Fund – for organisations that want to operate in an enterprising way – and the Social Entrepreneurs' Fund – for those wishing to start new social enterprises. Details on these two funds have not yet been finalised.

Secondly, they will work on the local level to promote the circumstances in which an enterprising Third Sector can thrive. Local priorities, partnerships and collaboration are now crucial in Scotland, as most of the responsibility for delivery and therefore funding for the Third Sector has been devolved down to local authorities, and the role of central government is therefore primarily to facilitate, support and encourage local partnership working.

Wales

The first Social Enterprise Strategy for Wales was published in June 2005. A Social Enterprise Joint Working Group bringing together departmental officials, specialist support agencies and practitioners running social enterprises has been co-ordinating action and tracking progress.

In January 2008 the Assembly Government published 'The Third Dimension', a strategic action plan giving a clear direction to its engagement with the Third Sector. Accelerating the number, scale and impact of social enterprises in Wales is a key priority, and all Assembly Government departments as well as the wider public sector have been challenged to identify opportunities for social enterprises to compete to deliver high quality and personalised public services and other benefits such as local wealth creation and community regeneration, in inclusive and sustainable ways.

Additionally, the Assembly Government's progressive agenda, One Wales, emphasises the potential for social enterprise to meet a variety of social, economic and environmental needs. The Social Enterprise Action Plan, launched in early 2009, sets out how an environment where social enterprise can continue growth and assist in delivering One Wales commitments. This has also led to the creation of the post of Deputy Minister for Regeneration who, with the assistance of an Inter-Departmental Regeneration Board, strives to increase the contribution made by social enterprises within broader regeneration schemes.

The aims and objectives for social enterprise, as outlined in the 2005 Strategy, remain unchanged as follows:

Aims:

- creation of an environment that encourages new social enterprises and capitalises on opportunities for growth;
- the establishment of integrated support for the sector involving mainstream and specialist agencies leading to; and
- the creation of a thriving social enterprise sector in Wales.

Objectives:

- create an enabling environment for social enterprise;
- make social enterprises better businesses;
- establish the value of social enterprises; and
- encourage the development of new opportunities.

Republic of Ireland

Until 2006, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Social Economy Programme in the Republic of Ireland, was operated by FAS (Foras Aiseanna Saothaire, the Training and Employment Authority in the ROI). In January 2006, the Government transferred responsibility for the programme to the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs. The name of the programme was changed to the Community Services Programme (CSP) and it is managed on behalf of the Department by POBAL - a not-for-profit company with charitable status that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU.

The CSP provides funding to community enterprises to deliver essential local services to, and employ people from, disadvantaged communities. Given the differing needs of people in communities around Ireland, the type of services and beneficiaries supported is diverse. In 2007, the CSP provided support to over 341 community businesses totalling €40.8M including contributions to start-up costs, managers' salaries, workers' wages, non-wage costs and technical support. Further research, as well as analysis of primary data from groups, will continue to inform the programme's development and support services.

DETI POLICY AND LEGISLATION SCREENING FORM

Section 1 The Legal Background

Section 2 Policy / Legislation to be Screened

Section 3 Screening Analysis

Section 4 EQIA Recommendations

Section 5 Disability Duties

Section 1 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.

Without prejudice to the obligations set out 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.

1.1 This form is intended to assist you in your consideration of the new policy or legislation in question to record the outcome in respect of these statutory equality considerations. We have a legal obligation to maintain an accurate audit trail of equality considerations.

1.2 The screening procedure should result in:

- (a) the policy/legislation being screened does not have any or a significant impact on equality of opportunity; or
- (b) the policy/legislation being screened has (or is likely to have) a significant impact on equality of opportunity. Policies falling into this category will need to be considered further and may need an Equality Impact Assessment.

1.3 ***Equality Unit is happy to advise on any aspect of Section 75 and or the specific issues raised in this form and its completion. The form should be signed off by your Grade 5 as Equality and Diversity Steering Group member.***

Section 2 Policy / Legislation to be Screened

What do we mean by “policy”?

There is no specific guidance as to how the term “policy” should be defined beyond reference to the New Oxford English Dictionary definition: *a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government*. A balance needs to be struck on the one hand avoiding too great a level of abstraction and, on the other, consideration of micro-level policies. Both extremes will be likely to cause difficulties.

We would certainly expect individual schemes, programmes or initiatives to be considered as elements of a policy.

Legislation can be either primary or sub-ordinate and the OFMDFM guidance procedures indicate the need to have completed equality considerations at certain stages in the procedures.

2.1 Title of policy/legislation to be screened:

Refreshed Social Economy Enterprise Strategy 2009-2011

2.2 Brief description of policy/legislation to be screened:

NI Government’s second Three Year Strategy for developing social economy enterprise in NI

2.3 Aims/objectives of policy/legislation to be screened:

To increase awareness of the sector and establish its value to the local economy, to develop the sector and increase its business strength and to create a supportive enabling environment.

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

2.4 On whom will the policy/legislation impact?

Existing and potential social economy enterprises in Northern Ireland and providers of support for the sector. e.g. Community Businesses, Credit Unions, Housing Associations, Local Enterprise Agencies.

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

This is a Cross Departmental Strategy involving 7 core Departments (Invest NI, DSD, DARD, DHSSPS, DEL, DFP, DETI) managed through the Social Economy Policy Group (SEPG) chaired by DETI.

Implementation of the Strategic actions, and the associated equality obligations, will be the responsibility of the individual lead Departments. The approach to Equality considerations will be agreed with the SEPG and will be highlighted in the Strategy.

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

As noted in 2.5 above it is a cross departmental Strategy with links to related policies through Departmental representation on the SEPG.

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

In September 2006, DETI undertook a “first steps” survey aimed at producing data for a particular group of social economy enterprises (SEEs). We now have baseline data for nearly 400 enterprises. While limited, the findings have provided us with some indications of the nature of this group of SEEs, their main social goal and beneficiaries.

The Evaluation, conducted by Colin Stutt Consulting, of NI’s first Social Economy Strategy ‘Developing a Successful Social Economy’, also provided some useful information about how the first Strategy contained a number of specific commitments to promote equality of opportunity. While not providing hard data the findings pointed to the sector helping to identify, target and include hard to reach groups in a way that formal policies/programmes have not. It also highlighted the strength of the social economy in Section 75 categories such as age, children’s provision and disability.

See Appendix IV of Equality Commission Practical Guidance on EqIA or speak to DETI Statistics Research Branch, (Martin Monaghan ext 29421) or Equality and Diversity Unit (Irene McAllister, ext 29650, Stephen Shooter ext 29644).

Section 3 Screening Analysis

You should not think of the “not known” column as the easy option to respond to any of the questions. In cases where there is no available 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 and Diversity Unit, Statistics Research Branch and organisations representing the Section 75 Groups will be important and helpful at this stage.

3.1 Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by the following characteristics?

	Yes	No	Not known
Religious belief			X
Political opinion			X
Racial group			X
Age			X
Marital status			X
Sexual orientation			X
Sex	X		
Disability			X
Dependency			X

Please elaborate:

Of the original survey population there was a response rate of 61% with 45% identifying themselves as SEEs. While we now have baseline data for nearly 400 enterprises it is impossible to know if this is representative of the sector and no attempt has been made to estimate the overall impact of SEEs in NI. Within this small group of SEEs there was evidence to suggest that the majority of employees were female. Further work will be undertaken by the Social Economy Network as part of the Strategy to gather further information on SEEs in Northern Ireland.

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

	Yes	No	Not known
Religious belief	X		
Political opinion		X	
Racial group		X	
Age	X		
Marital status		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Sex	X		
Disability	X		
Dependency		X	

Please elaborate:

The findings from the DETI survey confirms that Social Economy Enterprises particularly target hard to reach groups which are beneficiaries of this policy area. It should also be noted that the Evaluation made reference that the social economy straddled community divisions with a high degree of sharing of resources and best practice.

The Evaluation of the first strategy pointed to positive impacts on Section 75 categories such as the elderly, children and those with a disability.

3.3 Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals 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
Sex		X
Disability		X
Dependency		X

Please elaborate:

Consultation with the Social Economy Network (the representative body of the sector in NI) and the Ulster Community Investment Trust (UCIT) has not indicated that this policy would create any problems for these groups. This policy and the Equality screening document will be subject to public consultation.

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	X	No	
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Please elaborate:

The implementation of this policy will be on a cross departmental basis and in partnership with the Social Economy Network and other bodies which support the sector. On this basis there will be an opportunity to promote equality of opportunity in terms of employment/training etc in the delivery of associated social objectives. The Evaluation also found that the first Strategy has made a contribution to equality of opportunity, good relations and anti poverty objectives. It also noted that the social economy straddled community divisions with a high degree of sharing of resources and best practice, i.e. it had a positive impact on good relations.

DETI, in its role as chair of the cross departmental Social Economy Policy Group and through its liaison with the SEN, will encourage others to ensure that equality issues are properly addressed at programme level and to collect information as appropriate.

3.5 If the answer to any of questions in 1 to 4 is yes please indicate whether you consider the policy may present a significant risk to DETI's obligation to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity. You will need to consider whether the policy/legislation could be changed, better to promote equality of opportunity and/or be subject to a full EqIA.

Yes		No	X
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Please elaborate:

There is no evidence to suggest that this strategy will present a significant risk to DETI's or other relevant department's obligation to promote equality of opportunity. In fact the findings from the Evaluation of the first Strategy would firmly suggest that social economy Strategy has a positive impact on equality of opportunity for a number of the Section 75 groups. It should also be noted that the majority of the actions being taken in the implementation of this Strategy will fall to other Departments and therefore these Departments, as well as DETI, will be expected to assess any associated risk in the delivery of their programmes/policy areas.

3.6 It may be that a policy/legislation has a differential/impact on a certain 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:

The evidence from the findings in the survey would point to the main goal of the majority of SEEs is to help people other than through employment. The majority in the survey also indicated that their main social target group for the provision of help was the local community in general however other target groups were children, the unemployed and those with disabilities. As mentioned in 3.1 above it is impossible to know if this is representative of the sector. However a fundamental aspect of the social economy sector is that it helps local communities and promotes social inclusion by building the capacity of disadvantaged individuals and groups who might otherwise not be able to access training, employment, particular services (child care, financial services etc).

Section 4 EQIA Recommendation

4.1 Full EQIA procedures should be carried out on policies considered to have significant implications for equality of opportunity. In light of the above 3 sections please fill in the following grid in relation to the policy/legislation:

	Significant impact	Moderate impact	Low impact
Social Need		X	
Effect on people's daily lives			X
Effect on economic, social and human rights			X

Please elaborate:

Based on available data within the survey there is a clear indication that implementation of this Strategy would have a positive impact on various social groups such as the unemployed/low income, women, children and those with disabilities. The Evaluation of the first Strategy would confirm this assumption.

4.2 What is the scale of expenditure incurred by the policy?

The scale of associated expenditure in implementing this Strategy is unknown. There is no central budget and participating Departments will be expected to use existing budget allocations to deliver strategic actions. DETI has a Letter of Offer in place with the Social Economy Network up to a maximum of £600k until 2011.

4.3 Do you consider that this policy/legislation should be subject to a full EqIA? Please give reasons for your considerations.

It is considered that this Strategy will have a positive impact on certain social groups (children, the unemployed/low income and those with disabilities). Implementation of the Strategy will be through Actions identified by the core Departments linking into already established Departmental policies.

Implementation of the actions in this Strategy is expected to have positive equality impacts on a range of groups and Departments will be expected to consider relevant equality issues in developing detailed actions flowing from the broad Strategy in order to ensure that these impacts are maximised.

On this basis DETI do not consider that this Strategy should be subject to a full EQIA as Departments participating in this Strategy, through the SEPG, will be expected to ensure that their respective Actions have been subject to full equality considerations in line with Departmental obligations.

4.4 What data are required in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

The findings from the DETI survey have been transferred to the Social Economy Network to be used to build on its membership and develop its products and services. As the representative body of the sector the SEN will be expected build on this intelligence to monitor the future growth of the sector.

Section 5 Disability Duties

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), public authorities, when exercising their functions, are required to have due regard to the need:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

5.1 Does this policy/legislation have any potential to contribute towards promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people or towards encouraging participation by disabled people in public life? If yes, please give brief details.

As mentioned above one of the groups seen as beneficiaries of this policy area is those with disabilities. In developing the social economy sector it is expected that there will be a positive impact in terms of employment opportunities for people with a disability which is likely to provide opportunities to integrate with others in the wider local community.

Signed:

EDSG Member

Division:

Date:

Please forward a copy of this completed form to:

DETI
Equality & Diversity Unit
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
Belfast BT4 2JP

Any queries: Irene McAllister Ext 29650
irene.mcallister@detini.gov.uk

Stephen Shooter Ext 29644
stephen.shooter@detini.gov.uk

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CENI	Community Evaluations Northern Ireland
CICs	Community Interest Companies
CPD	Central Procurement Directorate
CSP	Community Service Programme
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DH	Department of Health
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DSD	Department for Social Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EU	European Union
HEIF	Higher Education Innovation Fund
IDSG	Interdepartmental Steering Group
Invest NI	Invest Northern Ireland
LSP	Local Strategy Partnership
LTU	Long Term Unemployed
NI	Northern Ireland
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NITB	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
OFMdFM	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister
OTS	Office of the Third Sector

PFG	Programme for Government
ROI	Republic of Ireland
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RPA	Review of Public Administration
RSS	Regional Supplies Service
SEC	Social Enterprise Coalition
SEE	Social Economy Enterprise
SEEs	Social Economy Enterprises
SEF	Social Economy Forum
SEF	Social Economy Fund
SEIDSG	Social Economy Inter-Departmental Steering Group
SEN	Social Economy Network (NI) Ltd
SEP	Social Entrepreneurship Programme
SEPG	Social Economy Policy Group
SMEs	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
SSEI	School for Social Entrepreneurs in Ireland
UCIT	Ulster Community Investment Trust
UK	United Kingdom
UU	University of Ulster
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
WBGSTF	West Belfast Greater Shankill Task Force



Department of

**Enterprise, Trade
and Investment**

www.detini.gov.uk

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Social Economy Branch

Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Investment
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
Belfast BT4 2JP

E: socialeconomy@detini.gov.uk

T: (028) 9052 9324

F: (028) 9052 9500

Textphone: (028) 9052 9304

www.detini.gov.uk