

Appendix I - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Name of Public Authority.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

A proposal to introduce a new Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework for Northern Ireland (NI).

1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Developing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Draft Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework for NI

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

To provide an overarching and integrated framework for animal health and welfare programmes and activities in NI; to establish linkages with draft Programme for Government (PfG) and the Outcomes Framework; and to provide a mechanism for monitoring and reporting on performance using the outcomes based accountability approach. The proposed NI Framework would have a 10 year lifespan.

1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

The proposed Strategic Framework applies to Animal Health and Welfare and does not require a definition of rural or urban areas.

SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

The proposed Strategic Framework for animal health and welfare policy in NI, which is the subject of this public consultation, is aimed at the farming industry, the agri-food sector, keepers of both farmed animals and domestic pets, veterinary practitioners, animal welfare groups and other interested bodies and individuals. It is, therefore, expected that the proposed Framework would directly affect a greater proportion of the population that live in rural rather than urban areas.

2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

While the proposed Framework is likely to impact upon a greater number of people in rural areas, it is not expected to impact those affected differently.

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

Rural Businesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

The development of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework has been underpinned by ongoing engagement with a sub-group of the Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholders Forum. This sub-group, which consisted of representatives from the Ulster Farmer's Union, a veterinarian, sheep, cattle, pig and poultry industries, and the USPCA enabled us to capture the views of a wide range of rural economic interests.

Alongside this, the development of the proposed Framework required significant desk research, in particular considering similar strategies and publications introduced in other jurisdictions. These include:

- Animal Health and Welfare in the Livestock Industry: Strategy 2016 to 2021, *The Scottish Government*, March 2016;
- Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework, *Welsh Government*, July 2014;
- National Farmed Animal Health Strategy 2017-2022, *Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine*;
- Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit, *UK Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs*, February 2018;
- A New Animal Health Strategy for the European Union (2007-2013), *European Commission*; and
- Other national strategies including Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The proposed strategy also takes note of a number of Departmental and Executive policy papers including the draft Programme for Government / Outcomes Framework, Going for Growth, the All-island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy, the NI Future Agricultural Policy Framework: Stakeholder Engagement paper and the DAERA Knowledge Framework.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

The proposed new Framework intends to: -

- provide an overarching and integrated framework for animal health and welfare programmes and activities in NI;
- establish linkages with draft Programme for Government (PfG) / Outcomes Framework;
- develop a strong evidence base to support the challenges and opportunities, particularly in relation to trade, arising as result of exit from the EU;
- support wider agri-food and economic strategies for NI that link to trade and growth;
- support the concept of 'One Health' which recognises that animal health and livestock management impact significantly on public health and environmental sustainability;
- ensure public monies are allocated strategically and efficiently at a time when there are significant competing demands on the public purse and to provide a strong evidence base to underpin bids for public funding allocations;
- provide a mechanism for monitoring, evaluation and reporting that supports the decision-making process; and
- improve stakeholder engagement and build upon partnerships and collaborative working arrangements in accordance with the approach taken in draft PfG.

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

The draft Framework considers the impact of animal health and welfare issues on the economy, public health and well-being, and the environment.

Economy:

- At farm level, healthy animals increase productivity and reduce inefficiencies including veterinary costs, making farms more profitable. At an industry level, a healthy livestock population requires less intervention to tackle disease and provides enhanced opportunities for trade and market accessibility.
- Measures to control and eradicate endemic disease can have major and costly consequences for the economy, the environment and society as a whole. Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) has proved a challenging problem for the NI livestock industry. Substantial costs have been incurred attempting to eradicate the disease - annual public expenditure on the bTB Eradication Programme is currently around £40 million.
- The potential impact of a major animal disease outbreak can be considerable. It is estimated that the 2001 Foot and Mouth outbreak had a direct cost of over £24 million in Northern Ireland.

Public Health and Well-being:

- Animal disease can pose a significant threat to public health. Many human infectious diseases are caused by zoonotic pathogens, and transmitted from animals or wildlife through direct contact (such as rabies) or vectors (as for avian influenza). Zoonoses can be highly fatal and have the potential to cause major epidemic outbreaks, with very considerable associated costs to the economy and wider society.
- Disease and infection can also be transmitted to the general population through the food chain from infected meat and meat products. Lost consumer confidence in food production can have long-term economic consequences for the agri-food sector, as was the case following the well-publicised health scares relating to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and salmonella in eggs.

Environment:

- Agriculture is recognised as a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, which in turn are linked to climate change and potentially harmful consequences for the environment and human health. In 2017, agriculture was the largest sector in terms of emissions (27%), accounting for a higher proportion of emissions in NI compared with other parts of the UK due to the greater relative importance of agriculture to the economy here. There is also a clear link between poor animal health and increased livestock emissions.
- Animal waste and animal by-products (ABPs) are potential environmental pollutants and are heavily regulated to ensure their safe disposal, for example ammonia (released from decaying organic matter and slurry) can leech into water courses causing eutrophication. The efficiency and value of production can be enhanced through the processing or rendering of ABPs into food products and fuel for export or for fertiliser.

Wider societal concerns:

- The Framework also considers the importance of animal health and welfare for public health and consumer confidence. It also notes that high standards of health and welfare provide significant marketing benefits for producers.

SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

Yes No If the response is **NO GO TO Section 5C.**

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

Through engagement with the sub-group of the Animal Health and Welfare Stakeholders Group, the draft Framework sets out five proposed outcomes which are linked, either directly or indirectly, to rural needs. These outcomes are:

1. We keep our animals healthy and treat them well.
2. We have a competitive, innovative livestock industry that contributes to our economic prosperity.
3. We protect public health and our food from animal-related disease.
4. We take a sustainable approach to the farming of animals that respects the environment.
5. We have animal health and welfare safeguards that are widely recognised and trusted.

The Framework also sets out the Department's proposal for the development of an annual delivery plan. This plan would set out the priorities and related actions for delivery in that year and, in keeping with the OBA methodology, would challenge the Department to set out how much work it did, how well it did it and consider whether anyone is better off as a result of this work.

If the response to Section **5A** was **YES GO TO Section 6A.**

5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.

SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Siobhan Kelly
Position/Grade:	Acting Deputy Principal
Division/Branch	Animal Health & Welfare Policy Division, AHS & TSE Branch
Signature:	<i>Siobhan Kelly</i>
Date:	14/06/19
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Naomi Callaghan
Position/Grade:	Grade 6
Division/Branch:	Animal Health & Welfare Policy Division
Signature:	<i>Naomi Callaghan</i>
Date:	17/06/19