

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.

DAERA

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.

The development of an Ammonia Strategy for Northern Ireland.

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.

Proposed Ammonia Strategy.

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

The objective of the Proposed Ammonia Strategy following consultation, as part of the Combined Approach to Ammonia, is: To put Northern Ireland agriculture on a pathway to meet the UK National Emissions Ceiling Regulations (NECR) 2018 target for reductions in ammonia emissions by 2030.

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.

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 Ammonia Strategy contains a series of mandatory and voluntary on-farm measures to reduce ammonia emissions to deliver the objective of the strategy. Additional consultation on the proposed mandatory measures will take place as part of the Nutrients Action Programme Review.

The on-farm emission reduction measures will apply across the diverse range of farm business types and sizes in Northern Ireland. Not every measure will apply on every farm as the specific measures will be determined by individual farm characteristics.

The voluntary measures in the Proposed Ammonia Strategy include a range of alternatives to technology-based emissions reduction measures applicable across a range of farm sizes, depending on individual farm characteristics. These include longer grazing seasons, reductions in crude protein levels in livestock diets, selection of livestock genetics to improve nutrient use efficiency, and the establishment of tree plantations to reduce the impact of ammonia emissions.

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.

The mandatory and voluntary measures in the Proposed Ammonia Strategy will apply at farm level and will therefore impact farmers in rural areas subject to the individual farm characteristics as described at point 2B. Farmers may be required to change their practices on farm in respect of the mandatory measures in the Proposed Ammonia Strategy and will also have a choice on adoption of the voluntary measures in the Proposed Ammonia Strategy.

The reductions in ammonia emissions arising from the measures in the Proposed Ammonia Strategy will have a positive impact for all residents, both rural and urban, of Northern Ireland through reducing the level of air pollution.

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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" 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.

A public consultation was held on the Draft Ammonia Strategy from 4 January to 3 March 2023. Stakeholder responses to the consultation were taken into consideration in the reworking of the strategy. A number of public information events were held during the public consultation period at venues across Northern Ireland.

Meetings were held with stakeholder representative organisations during the development of the Proposed Ammonia Strategy. An Ammonia Strategy Roundtable group was formed in 2024 to discuss the ammonia challenge.

Additional questions were added to the Agricultural Census in 2023 and 2024 to inform the Proposed Ammonia Strategy.

Key Rural Issues, Northern Ireland 2023 - In 2023 the rural and urban economies differed substantially in terms of dominant sectors, with 39% of rural businesses belonging to the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors, followed by construction (17%). The predominance of agriculture businesses is even more pronounced in rural areas more than an hour from Belfast.

Economic analysis was used in the form of a Marginal Abatement Cost Curve to examine the farm-based costs of implementing ammonia reduction measures. Following the public consultation the economic analysis is being updated.

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

DAERA's Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland, published in 2024, forms the basis for a coherent and effective set of interventions that can deliver real improvements in the quality of the environment and thereby: improve the health and well-being of all who live and work here; create opportunities to develop our economy; elevate Northern Ireland to an environmental leader; and enable us to play our part in protecting the global environment for many decades to come. The strategic drivers in the Environmental Improvement Plan are:

- A. Sustainability - the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- B. Global Climate and Biodiversity Action.
- C. Green Growth Strategy
- D. Northern Ireland Climate Action Plan 2023-27.
- E. Environmental Governance and Cooperation.
- F. Agriculture, Food and Environment.
- G. Marine Environment.
- H. Built and Historic Environment.

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.

Issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas:

- The need to achieve better outcomes for nature, and for public health.
- The need to meet Northern Ireland's legal obligations and to ensure a sustainable agri-food sector.
- The need for determination of the most cost-effective ammonia reduction measures to deliver Northern Ireland emission reduction targets to 2030, as set out the National Emissions Ceiling Regulations, 2018.

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.

Rural Needs Identified	How development of the Proposed Ammonia Strategy has been influenced by the rural needs identified.
The need to achieve better outcomes for nature, and for public health.	Following public consultation on the Draft Ammonia Strategy and consideration of stakeholder feedback, the vision, objective, outcomes and targets in the Proposed Ammonia Strategy have been revised and updated.
The need to meet Northern Ireland's legal obligations and to ensure a sustainable agri-food sector.	Following public consultation and consideration of stakeholder feedback the UK's 2030 commitment for ammonia emissions reductions under the National Emissions Ceiling Regulations 2018 has become the key target in the Proposed Ammonia Strategy. The strategy has also been considered in parallel with the cojoined Operational Protocol to assess the impacts of air pollution on the natural environment, to ensure alignment. The proposed spatially targeted measures around designated sites were removed following consideration of stakeholder feedback.
· The need for determination of the most cost-effective ammonia reduction measures to deliver Northern Ireland emission reduction targets to 2030, as set out the National Emissions Ceiling Regulations, 2018.	Following public consultation and consideration of stakeholder feedback the Marginal Abatement Cost Curve modelling is in the process of being updated to reflect the updated target in the strategy. Additional consultation on the proposed mandatory measures in the strategy will take place as part of the Nutrients Action Programme Review and will provide additional economic information to inform the costs of the strategy.

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:	Dr Kate Semple
Position/Grade:	Grade 1
Division/Branch	Ammonia and Nutrients Branch
Signature:	<i>Dr AM Kate Semple</i>
Date:	25/11/24
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Fiona Dickson
Position/Grade:	Grade 6 Deputy Director
Division/Branch:	Natural Environment Policy Division
Signature:	<i>Fiona Dickson</i>
Date:	03/12/2024