

## 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 (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.

As part of a review of Bathing Waters, the Department is seeking views on the management of Bathing Waters including seeking nominations for new Bathing Waters to be identified.

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

Developing a	Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input 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.

Bathing Water Policy Review for Northern Ireland

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

A Co-Design workshop with stakeholders was organised on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November. The primary purpose of which was to help ensure that DAERA captured recommendations from stakeholders as well as the OEP recommendations in making changes to Bathing Waters Policy in Northern Ireland.

**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.*

N/A

*Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.*

N/A

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

N/A

## 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 policy which will go out to consultation includes the following recommendations:

- Extend length of bathing season
- Risk Based approach to monitor bathing water sampling
- Testing water quality at nominated bathing water sites
- Criteria for identification of bathing waters including definition of bathing users and nomination of new bathing water sites
- Alternative stakeholder recommendations

These recommendations intend to further improve the bathing water programme with extension of the bathing water season and identification of new bathing waters likely to bring tourism to an area. More information will be needed to categorically determine if there will be either positive or negative impacts on those in rural 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.**

This policy is unlikely to impact people in rural areas differently than from those in urban areas. The Consultation process however will allow people from rural areas to give their views on the policy. Since bathing waters are principally in rural areas, benefits of tourism will accrue that will not be available in urban areas.

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input 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 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.**

N/A

### 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 type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input 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.**

Prior to public consultation on the nomination and management of new waters, DAERA has undertaken a pre-consultation process with Bathing Water Operators, which include Councils and the National Trust, non-bathing water operators and relevant stakeholders. No detrimental effects of new bathing waters were identified. Benefits may accrue due to increased tourism.

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

Benefits will accrue to rural populations in terms of access to healthy activities.

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 Department considers that the extension of the bathing season and the nomination of new bathing waters will bring benefits to local populations in two areas.

- (i) Health – identified Bathing Waters improve health information, managed access and facilities to users.
- (ii) Tourism – identified Bathing Waters provide increased tourism to an area.

No detriments have been identified as a consequence of the policy.

## 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.**

No detrimental or social impacts have been identified in relation to the policy.

It is considered that the policy has the potential to bring health and tourism benefits to areas where Bathing Waters are identified.

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:**

**Position/Grade:**

**Division/Branch**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

19/11/2025

**Rural Needs Impact**

**Assessment approved by:**

**Position/Grade:**

**Division/Branch:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

Marine Strategy & Catchments