

## 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 – Marine and Fisheries Division

#### 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.

Enactment of Fee Provisions contained in Regulation 3 of the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007, as amended.

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

Developing a	Policy <input 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 checked="" 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.

Enactment of Fee Provisions contained in Regulation 3 of the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007, as amended.

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

DAERA is the marine licensing authority for the Northern Ireland inshore region (0-12 nautical miles). Our objective is to create a fairer and more efficient regime for discharging marine licensing/environmental functions and to help ensure Climate Change goals for renewable energy are met. It is anticipated that the application of the EIA fees will assist in delivering this and enable the allocation of more staff to Marine Licensing Branch.

**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.

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.

**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 type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input 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.**

The application of environmental impact assessment fees will impact on organisations wishing to undertake a licensable activity in the Northern Ireland inshore region. Typically, such activities will usually be linked to large strategic projects that tend towards millions of pounds in terms of value. They are undertaken by developers and public bodies such as councils and NI Water. Some activities could take place in the sea close to rural areas. These fees will enable the Department to adequately resource the assessment of the environmental impacts of such projects. Currently no fees are charged for this service with the taxpayer carrying this financial burden. The Department is legally bound to complete these assessments with or without the application of a fee. The proposed fees are a small percentage of the estimated value of large strategic projects which would have operational costs running into six figures and would have little bearing on whether a project was completed. The proposed fees will be set out in a scheme developed by the Department after public consultation. The people impacted are likely to be developers and organisations wishing to undertake activities in the marine and coastal area. As such, it is anticipated that the potential impact of the application of the proposed fees provided for under regulation 3 of the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 will have little or no 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 type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input 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 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.**

DAERA analyzed the public register of marine licenses and identified that there had been 4 projects where the EIA process had been enacted within the last three years and would have triggered the application of the proposed fees. DAERA then studied these and other projects from previous occasions to consider their impact on the rural community and develop the proposed fees.

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

None identified.

**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?**

The Department takes the view that EIA projects will stand or fall on their own merits. The EIA process is required by law and takes place whether or not a fee is applied. Currently fees are not applied. In practical terms for the works on the ground there will be no impact. The case can be made that rural considerations can be better met through the proper resourcing of environmental impact assessment of strategic projects which this proposal attempts to achieve.

## **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 considered the practical impact of the application of EIA fees. Its view is that EIA projects will stand or fall on their own merits and impacts. The EIA process is required by law and takes place whether or not a fee is applied. Currently fees are not applied. In practical terms for the works on the ground there will be no impact. The case can be made that rural considerations can be better met through the proper resourcing of environmental impact assessment of strategic projects which this proposal attempts to achieve.

## 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.**

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.**

The Department considered the practical impact of the application of EIA fees. Its view is that EIA projects will stand or fall on their own merits and impacts. The EIA process is required by law and takes place whether or not a fee is applied. Currently fees are not applied. In practical terms for the works on the ground there will be no impact. The case can be made that rural considerations can be better met through the proper resourcing of environmental impact assessment of strategic projects which this proposal attempts to achieve.

## 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.

<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Jim Ramsey
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Staff Officer
<b>Division/Branch</b>	Marine and Fisheries Division
<b>Signature:</b>	Jim Ramsey
<b>Date:</b>	3/12/2025
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	Stephanie Bennett
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Grade 7
<b>Division/Branch:</b>	MFD, Marine Environment Policy Branch
<b>Signature:</b>	S Bennett
<b>Date:</b>	19/12/2025