

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 Justice

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.

Enabling Access to Justice Programme Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan provides information on the order/priority of legal aid reform proposals. Individual proposals will be taken forward by the initiation of projects. The Department intends to consult on the Delivery Plan to invite comments on the order of delivery/priority.

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 checked="" 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.

Enabling Access to Justice Programme Delivery Plan

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

The Delivery Plan provides information on the order/priority of legal aid reform proposals. Proposals will be taken forward by the initiation of projects. The overall aim of the programme is to enable access to justice for citizens by ensuring a sustainable effective legal aid system. Reforms will be subject to consultation and the development of impact assessments.

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 Department intends to publish and consult upon a Delivery Plan for legal aid reform. The consultation will provide an opportunity for comments on the order of delivery/priority. The legal aid areas highlighted within the plan will be subject to individual projects to develop proposals. At present it is not possible to determine how the proposals within the Delivery Plan will impact people in rural areas. This will be considered in detail through consultations taken forward through individual projects and through the associated impact assessments.

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 Department intends to publish and consult upon a Delivery Plan for legal aid reform. The consultation will provide an opportunity for comments on the order of delivery/priority. The legal aid areas highlighted within the plan will be subject to individual projects to develop proposals. At present there is nothing to suggest that people in rural areas will be impacted differently than those in urban areas. This issue will be considered in detail through consultations taken forward through individual projects and through the associated impact assessments.

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 Department intends to publish and consult upon a Delivery Plan for legal aid reform. The consultation will provide an opportunity for comments on the order of delivery/priority. The legal aid areas highlighted within the plan will be subject to individual projects to develop proposals. At present it is not possible to determine how the Delivery Plan and overall proposals will impact people in rural areas. This will be considered in detail through consultations taken forward through individual projects and through the associated impact assessments.

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 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.

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

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 of Justice has launched an Enabling Access to Justice Programme Delivery Plan. The overall aim of the programme is to ensure Access to Justice for citizens by creating a sustainable effective legal aid system.

The Department will publish and consult upon the Delivery Plan for the programme. Providing an opportunity to comment on the order of delivery/priority. The priority areas identified within the plan will be taken forward by the initiation of a number of projects to deliver within different spheres of legal aid.

The projects will develop evidence based policy proposals that will be consulted upon. The consultations will involve the development of impact assessments including a rural needs impact assessment. This document has been prepared in respect of the Delivery Plan (order of priority). It is not possible to determine the full impact on rural citizens for the entire programme at this stage and it is considered more appropriate to develop impact assessments for individual projects.

As part of the engagement process prior to the launch of the programme the Department has engaged with a number of stakeholders. Engagement with key stakeholders will continue throughout the lifetime of the programme and a steering group will be established.

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.

This document has been prepared in respect of an Enabling Access to Justice Programme Delivery Plan which the Department will consult upon. The Delivery Plan contains proposals for projects to be taken forward to reform areas of legal aid. The overall aim of the programme/proposals is to ensure access to justice for citizens by creating a sustainable effective legal aid system.

The Department will initiate a number of projects to examine the proposals. As part of the policy process, consultations will be launched in respect of these individual areas. The consultation documents will also include impact assessments. It is considered that it is more appropriate to determine the impact on rural areas of each of the reform proposals as the individual projects are taken forward. This will allow full consideration to be given to the impact on rural areas including social and economic needs.

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.

This document has been prepared in respect of an Enabling Access to Justice Programme Delivery Plan which the Department will consult upon. The Delivery Plan contains proposals for projects to be taken forward to reform areas of legal aid. The overall aim of the programme/proposals is to ensure access to justice for citizens by creating a sustainable effective legal aid system.

The Department will initiate a number of projects to examine the proposals. As part of the policy process, consultations will be launched in respect of these individual areas. The consultation documents will also include impact assessments. It is considered that it is more appropriate to determine the impact on rural areas of each of the reform proposals as the individual projects are taken forward. This will allow the proposals to be examined in light of 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: | Mary Smith |
| Position/Grade: | Deputy Principal |
| Division/Branch | Enabling Access to Justice Division |
| Signature: | |
| Date: | 27/11/2024 |
| Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by: | Bronagh O'Reilly |
| Position/Grade: | Grade 7 |
| Division/Branch: | Enabling Access to Justice Division |
| Signature: | |
| Date: | 27/11/2024 |