

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.

Regulatory and Natural Resources Policy Division, Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group, 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.

Consultation on and publication of the Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy 2020-2040.

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.

Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy 2020-2040.

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

The Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy, under the auspices of the UK Peatland Strategy, will provide a framework for both conserving our intact peatlands and our peatland restoration programme. The aim of this Strategy is to ensure that by 2040, all peatlands in Northern Ireland are conserved or restored to healthy, functioning ecosystems and that the ecosystem services that they provide are acknowledged and appreciated. The scope of this strategy includes peatland with semi-natural vegetation and peat soils that can be restored to peatland with semi-natural vegetation, whether publicly or privately owned.

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.

Semi-natural peatland habitats are found across Northern Ireland, although Blanket Bogs tend to have a largely northern and western distribution. They are not found in urban areas by definition.

The draft Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy will provide a framework to guide both the conservation and restoration of semi-natural peatlands in Northern Ireland. As peatlands are not found in urban areas, it is expected that the Strategy will be of interest to a greater proportion of the population who live in rural rather than urban areas. That being said however, peatlands in good condition are a nature-based solution to climate change and as such will be of interest to the entire population of Northern Ireland.

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.

A number of actions contained within the draft Peatland Strategy involve possible updates to legislation and policies around peatland conservation and restoration that may have a greater impact on population who live in rural as opposed to urban areas e.g. policies around commercial peat extraction and the exercise of Turbary Rights, agricultural and land use policies and the potential for designation of ASSIs.

There are also actions in the draft Peatland Strategy which refer to the need for the development of bespoke training courses to build capacity and practical skills for those involved in peatland conservation and restoration. This may lead to enhanced job opportunities in rural 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 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 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.

Empty response box for question 3C.

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 development of the Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy has been guided by the NI Peatland Strategy Project Advisory Board, comprising officials from DAERA and a small number of external organisations. Advice and comments have also been sought from the main environmental NGOs and UFU representatives. All comments in relation to impacts on people in rural communities will be welcome during the consultation process and responses gathered during the consultation exercise will be used to refine the Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy.

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.

N/A

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.

Implementation of the Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy will lead to positive outcomes for the environment in Northern Ireland and will help to underpin the intention of the Northern Ireland Executive to tackle the challenge of climate change. All comments in relation to impacts on people in rural communities will be welcome during the consultation process and reflected as far as is reasonably possible in the final Strategy document.

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:	Renny McKeown
Position/Grade:	Deputy Principal
Division/Branch	Natural Heritage Branch, RNRPD, DAERA
Signature:	
Date:	7/7/2020
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	
Position/Grade:	
Division/Branch:	
Signature:	
Date:	