

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Vocational Training and Information Actions Grant Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008

S.R. 2008 No. 297

Purpose

1. To provide for the payment of Community Support by the Department in respect of any expenditure it has approved in accordance with Measure 1.1 (Vocational Training and Information Actions) of the Rural Development Programme. Measure 1.1 will provide a range of innovative and focussed training and information actions for the farmer and farm family. Examples are Focus Farms, Farm Family Options and Benchmarking.

Policy Background

2. The Regulations supplement in respect of Northern Ireland the Community Legislation listed in the Schedule to the Regulations. The Community Legislation inter alia provides for support to be paid from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Explanation of Content

3. The Department has made these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred on it by section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972.

4. These are new Regulations to implement Measure 1.1 of the NI Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) 2007-2013 — Vocational Training and Information Actions..

5. The information contained within this Explanatory Memorandum is in line with the content of the SL1 provided to the Agriculture Committee of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

6. The Regulations are subject to the negative resolution procedure.

Consultation

7. As part of the wider consultation on the NIRDP 2007-2013, the agricultural industry has been consulted on the Vocational Training and Information Actions Measure and welcomes its introduction.

8. The Department did not consult on the draft Regulations. The main policy aspects including the eligibility criteria and aid rates were covered in the consultation on Measure 1.1 and the economic appraisal carried out in relation to the actions within the Measure. The Regulations provide for the minimum requirements necessary to administer the scheme.

Equality Impact Assessment

9. In compliance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, a full equality impact assessment (EQIA) has been carried out on the NIRDP. The EQIA considered that Measure 1.1 will not have a differential impact on any of the section 75 groups. It is expected that the geographical spread of beneficiaries will cover all of Northern Ireland, with the benefits of the Measure accruing not only to the applicants but also indirectly to their extended families.

Regulatory Impact

10. A Regulatory Impact Assessment was not necessary because the proposals provide a legislative framework for payment and enforcement powers regarding the award of grant moneys. There will be no costs or savings.

Contact

11. The person to be contacted in relation to these Regulations is Anne Dorbie, Rural Development Division, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Telephone (028) 9052 4578. E-mail anne.dorbie@dardni.gov.uk.