

**Office of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland**

**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties  
Annual Progress Report 2014-15**

**Contact:**

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:  
[www.nicsscommissioners.org](http://www.nicsscommissioners.org)

**Signature:**



**This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.**

**It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.**

**This report reflects progress made between April 2014 and March 2015**

## **PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme**

### **Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice**

- 1** In 2014-15, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

*Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.*

Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland (CSCNI) are responsible for ensuring appointments to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. We also have a role in hearing appeals made by existing civil servants under the NICS Code of Ethics.

Commissioners' primary role is to regulate appointments to the NICS, at all levels, to ensure that the Merit Principle is adhered to. Commissioners are concerned only with new appointments made to the NICS by way of open competition.

Commissioners derive their responsibilities from prerogative Orders in Council made by the Secretary of State. Our authority derives from the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999. The current Regulations for the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland referred to as our General Regulations came into operation on 1st February 2007.

Commissioners discharge their statutory responsibilities by:

- maintaining the principle of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition in relation to selection for appointment;
- making General Regulations which prescribe the circumstances in which the Merit Principle shall not apply;
- publishing and maintaining a Recruitment Code on the interpretation and application of the Merit Principle;
- auditing recruitment policies and practices followed in making appointments to the Civil Service to establish whether the Recruitment Code is being observed; and
- requiring the publication of such information as they may specify relating to recruitment and to the use of permitted exceptions to the Merit principle.

Commissioners are supported by a small Secretariat team funded by the Northern Ireland Office headed by the Secretary to the Civil Service Commissioners and known as the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners (OCSC).

The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in all their areas of work in line with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Commissioners' primary role is to regulate appointments to the NICS to ensure these

are made on merit and on the basis of fair and open competition. The Commissioners' Recruitment Code provides advice and guidance on the application of the Merit Principle and is mandatory for everyone involved in open recruitment to the NICS.

Commissioners firmly believe that adhering to the Code will ensure appointments to the NICS are made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and will promote an effective Civil Service which reflects the diversity of Northern Ireland society and promotes equality and good relations.

Appointments to the NICS must be made in line with the expectations set out in the Commissioners' Recruitment Code. Commissioners audit NICS Recruitment policies and practices followed in making appointments to the NICS to establish whether the Recruitment Code is being observed. Commissioners are committed to continuing to work in close partnership with all key stakeholders to uphold the Merit principle and promote public confidence in NICS recruitment.

The Commissioners' 2014/15 Business Plan included an objective to fulfill all statutory equality responsibilities and encourage the NICS to promote diversity, equality and good relations via the recruitment process.

The Commissioner's Secretariat staffs' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the Equality Scheme, where relevant. The effective discharge of Section 75 statutory duties was appraised in the annual performance reviews of Commissioners and the Secretariat staff.

Commissioners are fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations and have demonstrated this commitment this year through outreach, engagement and training.

During 2014/15 Virginia McVeigh, Chief Executive and Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner of the NI Human Rights Commission delivered training to the Commissioners and Secretariat on Human Rights in practice, applying the law and understanding duties and obligations.

Professor Joan Ballantine from the University of Ulster briefed Commissioners and the Secretariat on her research on Gender Equality at the Executive Level of the Public Sector in Northern Ireland in March 2015. Commissioners asked to be kept updated on the research and action plans that flow from it.

In December 2014 Una Wilson and Paul Oakes from ECNI delivered an update on equality law, Disability Action Plans and positive action measures in recruitment to Commissioners and the Secretariat. This looked at recent cases and the reasonable steps defence process. The training looked at how positive action measures work within the Equality Framework and Section 75 and Section 49a application to public bodies.

The Commissioners' Chairperson, Brian Rowntree, and the Secretary met with the ECNI Chief Commissioner Michael Wardlow and Chief Executive Evelyn Collins in October 2014 to discuss areas of mutual interest to inform the deliberations of the Civil Service Commissioners in the discharge of their statutory functions.

During the year Commissioners continued to exercise oversight of all Senior Civil Service

(SCS) external recruitment competitions through their SCS 4-state authorisation process. Through the process Commissioners seek assurances from the NICS in relation to the consideration of diversity and outreach measures and the recruitment approach being adopted, and the examination of potential barriers to ensure that there is as broad an appeal as possible across the community for any competition.

Commissioners have met the Head of the Civil Service and the Permanent Secretaries Group to discuss NICS recruitment issues and the Commissioner's role in safeguarding and promoting the Merit Principle.

The Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 and the Commissioners' Recruitment Code require NICS Departments and Agencies to publish a wide range of information and statistical summaries regarding recruitment to the NICS. Amongst other things, Commissioners require the following information to be published:

- Statistical summaries, in a format which the Commissioners may specify, of all recruitment activity during the publication period, including analyses by all categories covered by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998;
- Any actions or initiatives undertaken in the reporting year to attract candidates, and advance a recruitment-related agenda for diversity, inclusivity and equality of opportunity and which specifically target areas of under-representation; and
- A report on the outcomes as a result of any such actions or initiatives.

Commissioners continue to engage with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in relation to the statistical information that they produce as this is important independent analysis that is used to inform the Commissioners ongoing discussions with the NICS in relation to recruitment.

Throughout the year Commissioners continued to engage with the NICS to ensure that they are taking all steps possible to minimise any potential for adverse impact during the selection and recruitment process. Commissioners regard the monitoring of recruitment data as a vital factor in identifying and addressing imbalances in the equality groups at each stage of the recruitment process. Commissioners engaged with the NICS on a number of recruitment-related issues this year including, for example, the Northern Ireland Prison Service Custody Officer recruitment competition in relation to the actions that could be taken to attract a more diverse applicant pool; and on the outcome of an independent NICS commissioned 'Study on Identified Adverse Impact in NICS Recruitment Competitions for First Line Managers'.

Commissioners also welcomed the NICS pilot work experience programme for people with disabilities and will continue to support the NICS in their development of this initiative.

Commissioners continue to honour their commitments in their Disability Action Plan which sets out measurable actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

PART A

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2014-15 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Attached

PART A

**3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes                       No (go to Q.4)                       Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

**3a** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

**3b** What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

- As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*
  
- As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*
  
- As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*
  
- As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*
  
- Other *(please specify and give details):*

**Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures**

**Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)**

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

All job descriptions for relevant staff reference the requirement to comply with Section 75 statutory duties.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Section 75 statutory duties were integrated into the personal performance agreements of relevant staff.

6 In the 2014-15 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs
- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan

PART A

- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2013-14 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The 14/15 Business Plan contained a specific target in relation to compliance with Section 75 Statutory duties.

**Equality action plans/measures**

**7** Within the 2014-15 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:  Actions ongoing:  Actions to commence:

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Commissioners have developed an Equality Scheme and Action Plan which is reviewed twice yearly. An annual progress report is submitted each year and training needs are assessed annually.

**8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2014-15 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

The scheme was reviewed and no amendments were considered necessary.

**9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2014-15 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

**Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)**

**10** Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: (*tick one box only*)

- All the time
- Sometimes
- Never

PART A

- 11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2014-15 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The were no consultations undertaken this year.

- 12** In the 2014-15 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other *(please specify)*:

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

There were no consultations undertaken this year.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

There were no consultations undertaken this year.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes       No       Not applicable – no commitment to review

**Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

[<http://www.nicscommissioners.org/equality-scheme.htm>

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**15** Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

0
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**16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2014-15:

0	Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment</b> (EQIA) presented.
0	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> alone.

**17** Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

N/A

**18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

Yes       No concerns were raised       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

**Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

**19** Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2014-15 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes       No       Not applicable

PART A

Please provide any details and examples:

**Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

**20** From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes  No, already taken place  
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date  Not applicable

Please provide any details:

**21** In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes  No  Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

**22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2014-15 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

N/A

**23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

N/A

**Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)**

**24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2014-15, and the extent to which they met

the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Training was delivered to the Commissioners and Secretariat by Una Wilson and Paul Oakes of the Equality Commission on 10 December 2014. This updated and refreshed the knowledge and understanding of Equality & Diversity Issues for Commissioners and the Secretariat and has enabled Commissioners to inform meetings with key NICS stakeholders. This training also refreshed Commissioners' and Secretariat staffs' awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories.

The training that has been delivered this year has been appropriate and proportionate given the nature of the work performed by the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners and the size of our operation (4 Commissioners, 6 staff - 2 full-time, 4 part-time).

- 25** Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Feedback from staff and Commissioners in relation to the Equality Commission training delivered on 10<sup>th</sup> December and the presentation on Gender Diversity at Executive Level in the Northern Ireland Public Sector given by Professor Joan Ballantine in March 2015 suggested that the participants achieved a stronger awareness of diversity issues and the importance of the role of the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners in promoting the principles of equality of opportunity and equality of treatment in relation to our promotion of the application of the Merit Principle in recruitment to the NICS.

### **Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)**

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2014-15, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

There has been no change to how we make information, including information in relation to the role and work of the Commissioners, available to the public. On request, information will continue to be made available in alternative formats. We will aim to do this within 10 working days. If we envisage any delay in meeting the request within this timescale, we will advise the member of the public of the of the reason and the timescale.

### **Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)**

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2014-15?

Insert number here:

0
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Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

### Section 3: Looking Forward

28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

2017

29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

Commissioners and Secretariat staff will be provided with refresher /awareness session during the next reporting period.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2015-16) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

**PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans**

**1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:**

8

Fully achieved

Partially achieved

Not achieved

**2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.**

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs <sup>i</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>
National <sup>iii</sup>	None		
Regional <sup>iv</sup>	Commissioners' Recruitment Code to clearly encourage the NICS to consider how best to facilitate disabled people to compete on merit in fair and open competition with others.	Commissioners have included a statement reflecting their commitment to this expectation in the Recruitment Code. All NICS Departments and Agencies are required to adhere to the Code.  Commissioners sought	NICS and general public are aware of the Commissioners' expectation in relation to facilitating disabled people to compete on merit.  Commissioners were consulted on and played a key role in shaping and influencing the development and implementation of the first NICS Employment Equality and Diversity

PART B

	<p>Commissioners' Business Plan to promote the positive benefits of supporting and employing people with disabilities.</p>	<p>assurances from Corporate HR on actions being taken by the NICS to encourage disabled people into employment with the NICS.</p> <p>Commissioners have regular dialogue with senior NICS representatives and use their influence to encourage and support employment of people with disabilities and seek regular feedback on new initiatives within the NICS.</p>	<p>Plan and were provided with progress reports in October 2009, May 11 and May 12.</p> <p>The NICS is aware that Commissioners are committed to monitoring data relating to persons with disabilities and as part of the review of the Recruitment Code revisited the requirements on the NICS to publish a breakdown of all S75 Groups that is monitored from 2011 onwards.</p> <p>The NICS is aware that Commissioners are committed to monitoring data relating to persons with disabilities and as part of the review of the Recruitment Code revisited the requirements on the NICS to publish a breakdown of all S75 Groups that is monitored from 2011 onwards.</p>
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PART B

	<p>Recognise the scale of disability amongst our stakeholders by ensuring positive and proportionate imagery on all corporate documentation.</p> <p>Review external and internal communication policies, practices and procedures.</p> <p>Ensure training on disability duties and disability legislation is delivered to existing Commissioners, new Commissioners and Secretariat staff.</p> <p>Ensure specialist training is provided for Commissioners and the Secretariat involved in recruitment and selection panels.</p>	<p>All main corporate documents were reviewed.</p> <p>A comprehensive consultation process was held in November 2007 and will be reviewed as necessary.</p> <p>Refresher training is delivered annually.</p> <p>All Commissioners and relevant staff attend regular training on recruitment processes and practices within the NICS. Commissioners will use their influence with the NICS to ensure that diversity</p>	<p>Commissioners are content that their corporate documentation reflects their commitment to the statutory duties in relation to disability.</p> <p>The Commissioners' website was amended during 2014/15. It is accessible for all users to enable the download of documents and on-line completion of forms. The database of consultees is kept under regular review</p> <p>Commissioners and the Secretariat have enhanced their knowledge and understanding of disability duties .</p> <p>Commissioners and staff enhance their knowledge and understanding of various strands and elements of the recruitment and selection processes and, in particular, emerging legislative changes and</p>
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PART B

	<p>DDA and statutory duties in relation to recruitment to be taken into account when developing terms of reference for the Commissioners' schedule of audits.</p> <p>Discuss with sponsor Department, as appropriate, actions which might help attract disabled candidates to apply for Civil Service Commissioner appointments.</p>	<p>considerations, including the needs of disabled people, are properly considered by recruitment panels</p> <p>As appropriate reference has been included in the audits. The findings and recommendations of audits are discussed with the NICS.</p> <p>This is raised with the NIO sponsor unit when considering arrangements for competitions to appoint new Commissioners.</p>	<p>relevant case law.</p> <p>NICS and those undertaking audits are aware of the Commissioners' commitment to their statutory duties in relation to disability and of Commissioners' expectations.</p> <p>Secretariat and Commissioners are content that the issue has been raised for action as appropriate.</p> <p>This was taken into account when developing job specifications and advertising for future replacement Commissioners.</p>
Local <sup>v</sup>	None		

PART B

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Equality/Disabilty Training on 10 December 2014	Update on current Equality/Disability Policy and Law	Inform Commissioners and Secretariat of current thinking which will in turn inform stakeholders in NICS.
2			

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	None this year.		
2			

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to '**encourage others**' to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact

PART B

1	Commissioners engage regularly with Permanent Secretaries and senior NICS officials, where equality and diversity are discussed.	Face to face discussion	NICS awareness of the importance Commissioners attach to equality, diversity and meeting the needs of people with disabilities
2			

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	None at this time		
2			

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	N/A			

PART B

2				

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	N/A	
2		

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

Commissioners monitor the Disability Action Plan closely and review and report annually. Commissioners discuss reports at regular intervals at business meetings

(b) Quantitative

Commissioners monitor the Disability Action Plan closely and review and report annually. Commissioners discuss reports at regular intervals.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

PART B

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

No

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

No

## PART B

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<sup>i</sup> **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

<sup>ii</sup> **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

<sup>iii</sup> **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

<sup>iv</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

<sup>v</sup> **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.

<sup>vi</sup> **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.