

Human Rights and Equality Assessment

Assessment issued pursuant to Section 42(2) of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014

Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) is a “public body” for the purposes of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 (IHREC Act). Therefore, in the performance of its functions and pursuant to Section 42(1) of the IHREC Act, SBCI must have regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination,
- promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and
- protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services, (together, the “Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty” or the “Duty”).

The IHREC Act states that a public body’s Duty can be fulfilled by:

- setting out an assessment of the human rights and equality issues relevant to the public body’s functions and purpose in its strategic plan in a publicly accessible manner, along with policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues; and
- reporting on developments and achievements regarding human rights and equality in its annual report in a publicly accessible manner.

However, the obligation on a public body to undertake an assessment and to report is measured against the body’s functions, purpose, size and the resources available to it. Accordingly, SBCI’s assessment was calibrated in this context and its responsibilities under the IHREC Act were considered in conjunction with the following relevant factors:

- SBCI provides services and performs functions for banks, non-banks, credit unions and Government Departments and does not directly provide services to either businesses or individuals.
- SBCI does not directly employ any staff – SBCI staff are employed by the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) and are assigned to SBCI by the NTMA.

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Human rights and equality issues relevant to staff assigned to SBCI

The NTMA provides certain business and support services and systems to SBCI. Human Resources are one such service provided as SBCI does not directly employ any staff. Rather, SBCI staff are employed by the NTMA and assigned to SBCI by the NTMA. Accordingly, SBCI will defer to relevant NTMA policies in relation to any plans or actions that affect staff assigned to SBCI.

The NTMA Corporate Strategy, which is reviewed and updated on an annual basis, contains targets and deliverables to reflect progress on key projects and initiatives, in the areas of equality, diversity and inclusion.

As part of its compliance with the requirements of the Duty, the NTMA has several policies in place to support employees including:

- a Dignity and Respect policy,
- a Workplace Equality policy, and
- a Gender Identity and Expression policy.

NTMA reports annually on equality measures in its Annual Report, Gender Pay Gap report and to the National Disability Authority.

SBCI Service Providers

SBCI as a contracting authority is subject to EU Directive 2014/24/EU as implemented in Ireland by the European Union (Award of Public Authority Contracts) Regulations 2016 (the “Regulations”), in respect of the procurement of goods, works and services above certain EU value thresholds (“EU Thresholds”). The principles underpinning the Regulations are:

- equal treatment,
- non-discrimination,
- mutual recognition,
- proportionality, and
- transparency.

Where the Regulations do not apply – either because the value of the procurement is below the EU Thresholds or falls outside of the Regulations – SBCI adopts a process designed to obtain the best value for money that can be achieved.

SBCI is committed to incorporating environmental and social considerations into its procurement practices where appropriate.

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Following the selection of a preferred service provider, a letter of engagement or contract is agreed between SBCI and the service provider. This governs all relevant engagement between the parties in respect of the provision of the service to SBCI.

Customer Charter & Appeals Procedure

SBCI has a Customer Charter which outlines SBCI's commitment to customer service and describes the standards of service that its customers can expect to receive from SBCI. SBCI also has a "Feedback and Complaints" procedure in respect of its customer service.

Further details on the Customer Charter and the "Feedback and Complaints" procedure are available on SBCI's website via the following link:

<https://sbc.gov.ie/information-access/freedom-of-information/services-provided-or-to-be-provided-to-the-public>

Other – Oireachtas members and Media

SBCI may receive queries from Oireachtas members (or their representatives), reporters, or other interested parties. In responding to such queries, SBCI ensures that it acts as transparently as possible, within the parameters of its legal obligations.

SBCI's interaction with these parties is often based on responding to queries originating from them. SBCI does not discriminate with regard to the receipt of or response to these queries and all queries are dealt with promptly and professionally. SBCI is therefore satisfied that the human rights of these parties are protected.

Assessment

As a public body, SBCI has regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect human rights of staff and service users, as set out in Section 42 of the IHREC Act 2014.

SBCI provides services and performs functions for banks, non-banks, credit unions and Government Departments and does not directly provide services to either businesses or individuals. As the NTMA is the body which assigns staff to SBCI, public sector duty obligations relating to SBCI staff will therefore be assessed and addressed by the NTMA.

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Where SBCI deals with individuals as members of the public, Oireachtas or media, SBCI is professional and ensures that it acts as transparently as possible, within the parameters of its legal obligations.

SBCI has policies and procedures, or mutually agreed contracts or legal agreements, for dealing with its customers and service providers, and the NTMA has policies for matters relating to SBCI staff.

We are satisfied that these policies and agreements are sufficient for ensuring compliance with SBCI's responsibilities under Section 42 of the IHREC Act.

Further information is available on the NTMA website [here](#).