



Higher Education Innovation Fund

Encouraging technology transfer within academia

February 2008

Introduction

The Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) aims to foster research, development and technology transfer within academia, and to encourage and assist our local universities to increase their capability and respond to the needs of Northern Ireland businesses and the wider community.

The fund focuses on knowledge transfer from world class research departments and centres of excellence to improve exploitation of the science base and release the potential social and economic benefits of the Northern Ireland universities.

How will it help me?

Approximately £3.2 million per annum has been made available by Invest NI and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) for a three-year pilot programme. All projects will receive 100 per cent funding.

HEIF will encourage our universities to better meet the needs of local businesses and the wider community and focuses on wealth creation. The aim of HEIF is to promote innovation within and from our universities and can benefit the university by:

- creating the capability within the university to successfully transfer its knowledge and technology to small and medium sized businesses to generate new wealth and progress towards a knowledge-driven economy;
- supporting the continuation of any links with the community and voluntary sectors and public bodies;

- supporting networking and interaction between the universities and businesses;
- instilling and integrating a culture of knowledge generation and knowledge exploitation into the institution;
- recruiting and training new technology transfer officers and providing financial assistance to help universities protect their intellectual property; and
- providing funding for the commercially focused businesses required to achieve these objectives.

How does it work?

There are two components to HEIF:

Component 1

The first component is a continuation of the HEROBC funding from DEL and is directed towards the relationships between the universities and business. It assists the universities to reach out to businesses through Queen's University's Chief Executive Club and the University of Ulster's Knowledge Club.

It also gives a central point of contact within the universities for businesses and others through the Research and Regional Services Directorate at Queens University and the Office of Innovation and Enterprise at the University of Ulster.

Component 2

The second component involves capturing and exploiting intellectual property (IP) and is funded by Invest NI. This is associated primarily with providing the personnel to ensure that the university's IP is captured and the right resources and training structures are put in place to ensure



the best use of this IP, either through spin-out businesses, licensing agreements or assignments.

Who is eligible?

The current three year pilot programme is only open to Queen's University and the University of Ulster. The call for proposals was issued in March 2004 and projects have been running from the start of the 2004–05 academic year.

Becoming an Invest NI client

To qualify as an Invest NI client company, your business must meet certain criteria.

You should typically be from the manufacturing or international tradeable sectors and be able to demonstrate that currently, or over the next three years, your business will have:

- total sales of over £100,000 a year;
- sales outside Northern Ireland of greater than 25 per cent of turnover or greater than £250,000 a year; and
- the capability and willingness to work with Invest NI.

If you are not an Invest NI client, but can satisfy the above criteria and would like to become one, please contact the Invest NI office in your area.

Full details can be found at www.investni.com.

Contact

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nibusinessinfo.co.uk

Invest NI has launched a new online information and support facility, **nibusinessinfo.co.uk**

This web site provides all Northern Ireland businesses and entrepreneurs with free access to an extensive source of essential business information.

nibusinessinfo.co.uk provides 24x7 advice, information, guidance and signposting, with over 5,000 fact sheets and over 70 interactive tools on offer. Every aspect of setting up and running a business is covered, from the earliest days of developing a business idea to the legal issues involved in selling a business concern.

nibusinessinfo.co.uk also features case studies showing how local businesses have handled particular business challenges.

nibusinessinfo.co.uk provides you with a single point of access for all your business information needs, freeing up time for to concentrate on running operations.