



RTD Centres of Excellence

Supporting the establishment of research and development centres to stimulate leading-edge research

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Introduction

Centres of excellence stimulate leading-edge, commercially-focused research.

As a partnership between government, businesses and the science base, centres of excellence maximise the impact of investment in R&D and also provide high-technology business incubators and showcase best practice.

Centres of excellence also offer industry an enhanced technological infrastructure that will allow fresh and energetic talent to drive and capitalise on industrial research, therefore ensuring that Northern Ireland is a thriving, vibrant economy in the future.

Our RTD Centres of Excellence programme supports the establishment of R&D centres to stimulate leading-edge, industrially-exploitable and commercially-focused research.

How will it help me?

The RTD Centres of Excellence programme provides the support to help you establish an R&D centre which will:

- improve the competitiveness of local industry;
- further restructure the Northern Ireland economy;
- exploit the opportunities offered by new technologies; and
- fuel industrial wealth creation.

How does it work?

Most recent centres of excellence were established following the allocation of European

Peace II funds, further augmented by Invest NI support.

Whilst these funds have been allocated, Invest NI continues to consider proposals from both industry and academia.

The following levels of financial assistance have previously applied toward eligible costs:

Sector	Invest NI support
Industry costs	Up to 35 per cent funding
University costs	Up to 50 per cent funding

New proposals must focus on their ability to carry out leading-edge, industrially-exploitable, and above all, commercially-focused research, which will improve the competitiveness of Northern Ireland industry in real terms.

In addition to R&D facilities, it is anticipated that supported centres may also function as:

Best practice technology demonstrators and showcase centres

These will provide industry, particularly small and medium sized enterprises, with a showcase to view and gain valuable experience in the most recent environmental and technological developments, as well as grasp the potential of cross-sectoral technology transfer.

High technology incubators

These will support the creation and development of the necessary infrastructure and environment, which will accelerate the transfer of knowledge-based, industrial and academic research, to commercial viability.



Who is eligible?

Invest NI welcomes major proposals from industry or academia for the establishment of R&D centres that will carry out leading edge, industrially exploitable and above all, commercially-focused research, that can improve the competitiveness of Northern Ireland industry.

Projects which reflect key Northern Ireland and European technology are particularly welcome.

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.