



## Trade Missions

Group visits to export markets

January 2007

### Introduction

Trade missions are organised group visits to target markets. They provide an excellent opportunity for businesses to visit foreign countries to find out how business is done and generate valuable sales leads.

Conducting desk research into an overseas market is an essential first step, but to get to grips with a country there is no substitute for visiting.

Travelling to your chosen overseas market for the crucial face-to-face contacts that are needed to win business is a big step. Trade missions give you the security and support of travelling in a group.

Our annual programme of trade missions, consisting of a number of multi-sector missions and sectoral missions to worldwide markets, is a popular and effective aspect of the overall Passport to Export suite of programmes.

### How will they help me?

You will get financial assistance towards the cost of an economy airfare and accommodation for one of your business' representatives. A follow-up visit may also be assisted.

You will be supported by pre-mission briefings and receive practical support on the ground.

Missions are organised to enable your business to set and achieve its own objectives. Sectoral missions often include the opportunity to visit a major international trade exhibition.

Trade missions will give you an opportunity to gain first-hand experience of your target market and a chance to assess your business's potential abroad. You can observe local conditions and

build contacts as well as learning from more experienced exporters on the trip.

### How do they work?

As part of the mission the organiser typically provides you with a range of useful market information and a schedule of one-to-one business appointments, giving you an opportunity to generate sales leads.

The overall programme of missions is drawn together on a calendar year basis and published both in brochure form and on the Invest NI website –

[www.investni.com/tradeeventsprogramme](http://www.investni.com/tradeeventsprogramme).

Generally trade missions last from three to five days.

As well as taking part in a limited number of group activities such as briefings and receptions you have the freedom to organise your own programme of visits and meetings with potential customers, agents, possible joint-venture partners and government representatives.

Delegates often network with key market contacts in the impressive surroundings of UK embassies, high commissions and consulates.

### Who is eligible?

Any Northern Ireland business currently exporting or with potential to export its product or services can take part in an Invest NI trade mission.

You do not need to be an Invest NI client to participate.

### 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](http://www.investni.com).

## Contact

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If you are an Invest NI client you may also contact your Client Executive if you feel your business will benefit from this service.

## [nibusinessinfo.co.uk](http://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.