

being entrepreneurial being innovative being international

Export Starts

Tailored support for start-ups focused on export markets

January 2007

Introduction

Invest Northern Ireland is focused on supporting innovative local businesses that can demonstrate the potential for substantial export growth.

We want to support projects where there is a clear market need and a commercial opportunity which will result in the creation of high growth businesses in Northern Ireland.

A comprehensive range of services and initiatives is available from our offices throughout Northern Ireland to export-start businesses.

Our Export Start services are typically offered to businesses under two years old which can enter and compete effectively in markets outside Northern Ireland, including the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.

How will it help me?

You will benefit from the advice of our Client Executives who have a great deal of experience in dealing with companies looking to expand their operations through export.

Client Executives have a broad range of commercial and industrial experience, combined with functional and sectoral expertise.

They will work with you to assess your needs and to identify the best type of support from the full range of assistance available, to help you establish or grow your export business.

This can include:

- access to experienced Invest NI professionals who help people to develop business ideas and deal with the practicalities of setting up a business;

- financial support such as grants, loans, and equity from Invest NI or other sources of finance;
- advisory support such as help with market research, competitor intelligence, guidance on legal issues and ICT advice;
- advice about management skills and practical assistance on exploiting new market opportunities;
- assistance in developing your skills in key areas such as management, sales and marketing; and
- help in developing your business through business improvement services, trade and export services, innovation support, and product and process development.

How does it work?

We don't take a one-size fits all approach. Our team of specialist advisors and Client Executives offer a service tailored to your particular business requirements. However, we need to be selective in order to maximise the impact the support will bring. We cannot support every project presented to us.

Our financial support is focused on those businesses that have the potential to be strong exporters and can deliver the best return for our investment.

The level of support offered, financial or advisory, will be decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the specific needs and the growth potential the business opportunity represents. Any financial assistance offered by Invest NI will, however, only represent part of the project costs, with the balance of funding being provided by the promoter, banks or investors.

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The process of deciding if your project can be supported is as follows:

Step 1

Meet with a Client Executive at your nearest Invest NI office to describe and discuss your business opportunity and agree if the project has potential to receive support from us.

Step 2

If we consider that your project has merit, follow-up meetings with other Invest NI advisors may then be arranged to help develop your opportunity more fully. We will also highlight the nature of support available to you at this stage.

Step 3

You may then be asked to prepare a business plan which will outline precisely what you propose to do and which will highlight the areas where assistance will be needed.

Who is eligible?

Support is available to businesses that are less than two years old, already trading, or proposing to trade manufactured goods or tradeable services in markets outside Northern Ireland. The business must have:

- potential export sales that are greater than 25 per cent of total sales;
- total sales greater than £100,000 in three years' time;
- export sales greater than £250,000 in three years' time.

You do not need to be an Invest NI client to get Export Start support. If you are not an Invest NI client and would like to find out more about how to become one please contact the Invest NI office in your area.

Contact

If you are an Invest NI client company please contact your Client Executive if you believe your business will benefit from this programme.

Alternatively you can also contact:

Eastern Office

T: 028 9023 9090

E: eo@investni.com

North Eastern Office

T: 028 2564 9215

E: neo@investni.com

North Western Office

T: 028 7126 7257

E: nwo@investni.com

Southern Office

T: 028 3026 2955

E: so@investni.com

Western Office

T: 028 8224 5763

E: wo@investni.com

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.