

**STARTING OR
GROWING YOUR
BUSINESS?
WE CAN
HELP YOU.**

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As the business development agency for Northern Ireland, our role is to grow the economy.

We do this by helping new and existing businesses to grow and compete internationally, and by attracting new investment to Northern Ireland.

SUPPORTING NORTHERN IRELAND'S BUSINESSES

Only by embedding innovation, growing our local companies to scale, increasing our export base and attracting inward investment, can Invest NI increase the size, competitiveness and value of the private sector in Northern Ireland.

We work directly and indirectly with businesses across the private sector and our approach to supporting them is based on three key elements:

- Providing information and advice, directly and through the nibusinessinfo.co.uk website.

- Providing support to people wanting to set up their own business and helping new and existing businesses to grow and move into new markets.
- Providing tailored support to businesses that can make the greatest contribution to increasing productivity, innovation and export growth in Northern Ireland.

We also work to position Northern Ireland as an excellent location for foreign investors and to attract high quality inward investment.

Whether you're starting a business, already in business or an investor seeking to locate in Northern Ireland, we have something to offer you.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

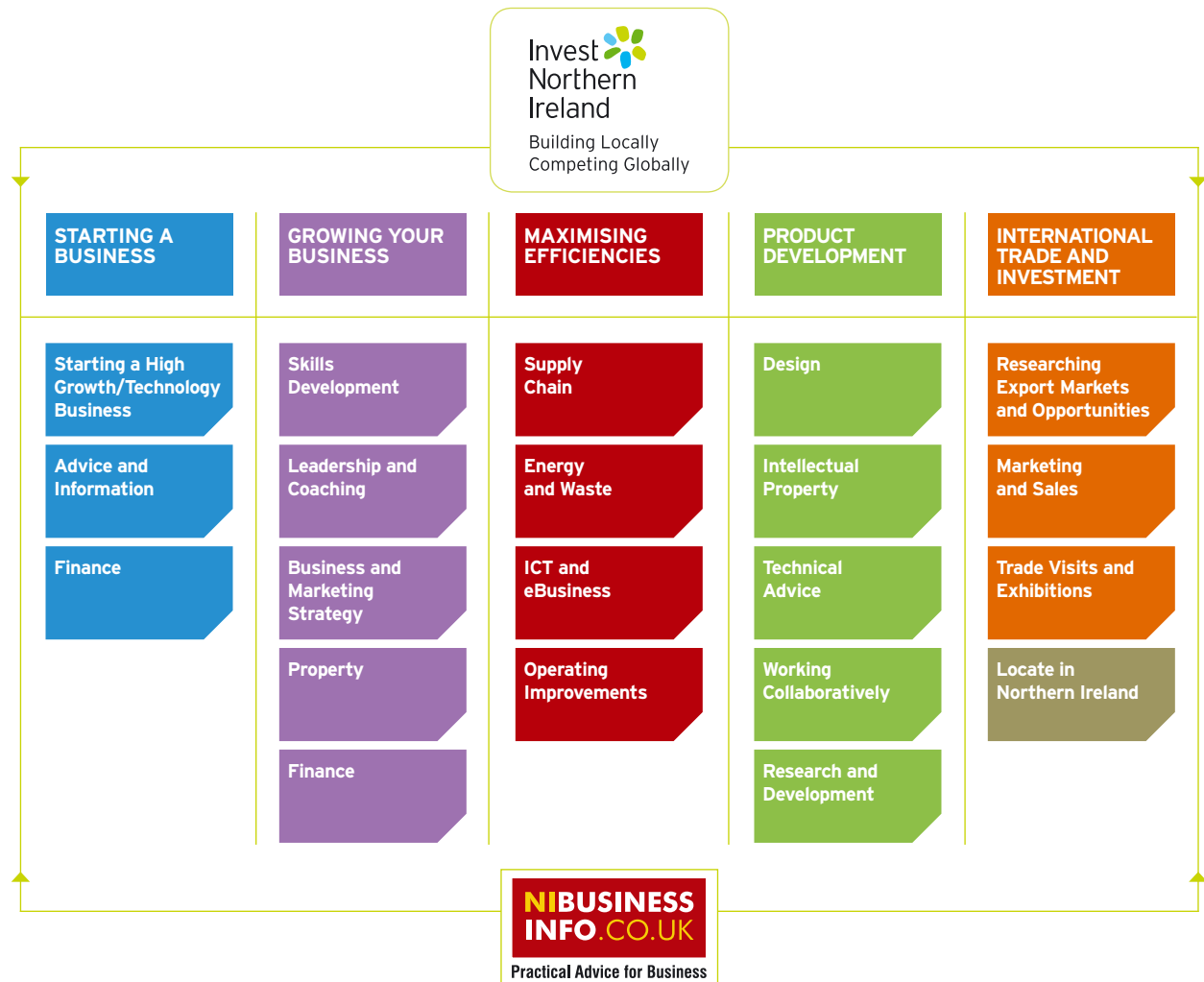
To achieve our goals we work in partnership with many other organisations throughout Northern Ireland, and internationally. These include local councils, government departments, economic development organisations, further and higher education providers, and sector specific and business development organisations.

As well as directly assisting businesses, we provide support for sectors that offer high returns for the Northern Ireland economy. This involves helping to build the connections and infrastructure that will promote excellence in specific areas and drive market-led innovation through Northern Ireland businesses.

WHY WORK WITH US

Through us you can access specialist teams of experts and advisors with many years of commercial, industrial and technical experience. And we also offer financial support for specific projects.

We're confident that we can help your business grow and become more profitable, and you'll find that we share your goals - because our success depends on your success.

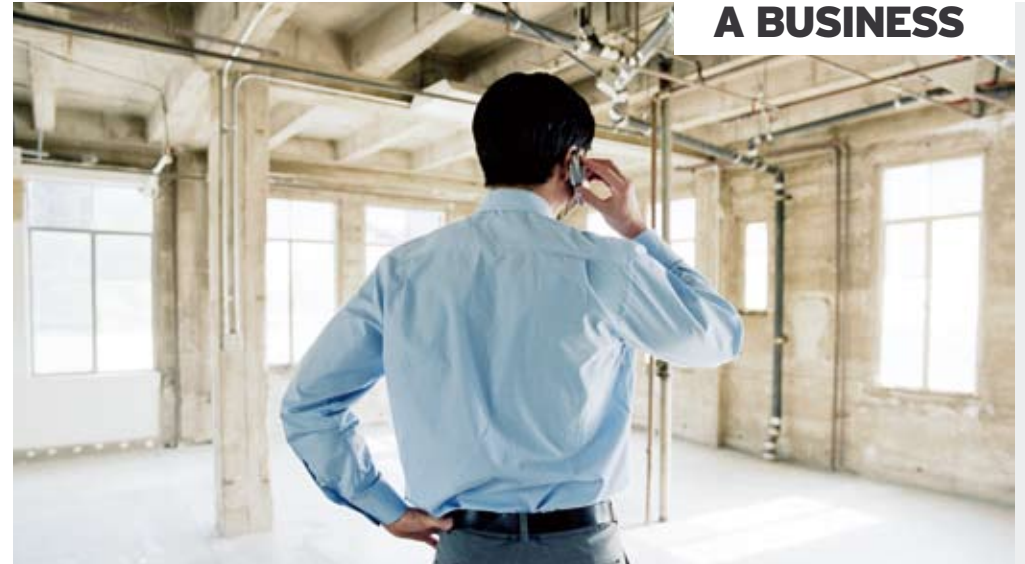


**THINKING
OF SETTING
UP A
BUSINESS?
WE CAN
HELP YOU.**

Invest
Northern
Ireland

Building Locally
Competing Globally

STARTING A BUSINESS



HOW CAN WE HELP?

If you're thinking of setting up a business, or have recently started a business in Northern Ireland, you should speak to us.

We provide three core types of support for start-up businesses.

First, business start-up advice. We'll tell you where to find the answers to all those questions that have been going round in your head, such as:

- How do I do market research?
- How do I write a robust business plan?
- What do I need to be aware of when employing people?
- How do I deal with tax?

And, we'll outline the advice and support you can get from Invest NI and its enterprise partners.

Second, business start-up finance. We provide information about loans and funding for your new business and about the support that is available to businesses that intend to export their goods and services outside Northern Ireland.

Third, specialist support for high technology businesses. We offer specific assistance to people who are planning to set up a high technology business that has the potential for rapid growth and substantial sales outside Northern Ireland.



ADVICE AND INFORMATION

To find comprehensive and practical business advice about setting up a business in Northern Ireland, we recommend you start with a visit to our business information website, www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/startingup. You'll find there the answers to all your business questions and there's lots of links to other sources of support and information.

Then speak to us. We can offer you:

- one-to-one start-up advice;
- support to write a business plan;
- advice on sources of finance for business and programmes run by other organisations; and
- mentoring on a wide range of business areas.

If you're setting up a social enterprise, we can help you refine your idea and provide advice and aftercare during your first year of trading.

We also offer financial incentives to individuals who live in areas of greatest need and amongst those people currently under represented in the business community to start new businesses.

And it's all free.

FINANCE

Our start-up financial support is limited to those new or relatively new businesses in Northern Ireland that can show they intend to sell outside Northern Ireland, are actively pursuing growth plans and can contribute to increasing productivity and innovation in Northern Ireland.

If you feel your business meets these criteria you should talk to us about financial assistance towards marketing, consultancy, employment and working capital.

Social enterprises can apply for financial assistance towards start-up costs which may include salary costs, marketing, equipment and overheads.

You can also visit www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/financialsupport for information on sources of funding from local and national organisations.

STARTING A HIGH GROWTH/ TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS

If you can show that your business idea could achieve significant sales in markets outside Northern Ireland within three years and will create employment, we can offer you a wider range of business advice and financial support.

It's likely that your business will operate in one of the following areas:

- advanced materials;
- bioscience and healthcare;
- design, engineering and photonics;
- energy and emerging technologies; and
- information and communication technology (ICT).

We want to help you fast-track the start-up and growth of your business.

Our advisory services include:

- a high quality enterprise development training programme;
- one-to-one mentoring advice;
- networking opportunities;
- overseas market visits; and
- access to expert knowledge and skills.

We also offer financial support for activities such as marketing, and offer salary support and working capital assistance. You may also be able to access equity funding, venture capital investment, and source incubation space.

NEED SUPPORT TO GET STARTED? WE CAN HELP YOU.

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READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP? WE CAN HELP YOU.

GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

We can help you develop the right infrastructure for your business to make sure you have a sound business strategy, you have the appropriate finance in place, the right people with the right skills and are operating from premises that best suit your needs.



ALREADY IN BUSINESS

If you've already been in business for a few years you'll be looking to take the next step to grow your business, improve profitability and exploit opportunities in markets outside Northern Ireland.

WE OFFER EXTENSIVE SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES AT THIS STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT.

We've structured our support around four key areas to make it easy for you to identify the kind of assistance you might need right now.

MAXIMISING EFFICIENCIES

Through this support your business can become more energy efficient, manage waste, and get the most out of your ICT and e-business solutions. There's also advice on supply chains and on how you can review and improve your business performance.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

We can provide extensive support for research and development (R&D). We also offer support for design development and guidance on technical and intellectual property issues related to your product development.

SELLING OUTSIDE NORTHERN IRELAND

Exporting your products and services outside Northern Ireland offers one of the best opportunities for you to grow your business and with our support, you can research, explore and sell into new overseas markets.

WE CAN HELP WITH GROWING YOUR BUSINESS.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

A flexible and motivated workforce can increase sales and profitability. We can help you identify skills gaps and improve employee competence, motivation and empowerment. We can also advise you on your organisation structure, recruitment and selection, performance management, reward and remuneration and succession planning. Financial support may be available for specific skills improvement projects.



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ALREADY IN BUSINESS



If your business has growth ambitions you'll want to take a good look at your long-term business strategy and see if you have the skills, finance and business environment that you need to support business development.

WE CAN HELP YOU IN THESE AREAS.

LEADERSHIP AND COACHING

We can support the key people in your business to develop their leadership and management capabilities that will boost your business's overall performance. We offer coaching, business mentoring, programme based learning, action learning centres, can organise study visits, or assist in the development of sustainable networks.

BUSINESS AND MARKETING STRATEGY

To help your business to structure its planning process we offer advice on market research and can give you access to extensive business information. Through this support you can do a SWOT analysis, explore funding options and develop and implement strategic plans.

You can also benchmark your business against similar businesses across the world. Financial assistance may be available for drafting a business development plan or employing a non-executive director to assist with the direction and management of your company.



PROPERTY

If you need to find or build the right premises in Northern Ireland we can give you access to a comprehensive database of both public and private sector properties - office, commercial and industrial.

We also may be able to provide financial support by way of a grant or a loan towards the construction of your premises, for the sale of serviced sites or for renting Invest NI buildings.

FINANCE

At this critical stage of your business you may need additional financial support in the shape of grants or equity towards strategically important activities that will ensure your business can secure its position and grow. Because our resources are limited, we can only give financial support to those businesses that will make the greatest contribution to the Northern Ireland economy.

We'll help you identify and access the most relevant support but we will not support activity that would happen anyway, or that does not align with our corporate objectives. So we've set criteria against the broad areas of our financial support.

These are:

You will need to demonstrate that now, or over the next three years, your business will have:

- total sales of over £100,000 per year; and
- sales outside Northern Ireland greater than 25 per cent of turnover, or greater than £250,000 a year.

If your business is from the tradeable services sector, that is, it can sell its services internationally, you must also:

- have the potential to sustain salaries above the Northern Ireland private sector median; or
- show that you can achieve a minimum gross margin of 20 per cent.

**ALREADY
IN BUSINESS**

**LOOKING
TO SECURE
YOUR
POSITION?
WE CAN
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WE CAN HELP WITH MAXIMISING EFFICIENCIES.

SUPPLY CHAIN

An efficient supply chain requires good planning and stock control, and excellent scheduling and logistics. Our support will enable you to assess your supply chain and identify opportunities for improvement. We can also offer guidance and support with skills development relating to supply chain management and process and productivity improvement. We may also be able to fund an initial consultancy assessment of your supply chain.

ENERGY AND WASTE

It makes good business sense to get the most out of your resources and reduce or eliminate waste. We provide tailored advice and training on resource efficiency issues so your business can achieve savings. If your business meets our criteria we can arrange for an energy survey or an interest free loan and provide consultancy support to help you implement sustainable development projects.



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ALREADY IN BUSINESS



Even well established businesses need to keep focused on improvement and productivity to ensure they remain competitive.

WE CAN HELP YOU IN THESE AREAS.

ICT AND E-BUSINESS

Smart use of ICT can deliver real benefits to your business. Our ICT specialists offer impartial advice on new technologies that will have a direct impact on profitability. You can also get hands-on demonstrations of new technology and we may be able to fund software, server hardware or training.

OPERATING IMPROVEMENTS

Through this support you can review productivity levels, identify weaknesses and put in place continuous improvement systems right across your business operations. We offer guidance on how you can resolve issues such as high levels of scrap, meeting customer orders, supplier problems, redundant stock and high levels of downtime. We can also advise you on carrying out a productivity

diagnostic, developing action plans and implementing improvements. Financial assistance may be available to improve your workplace layout or for specific improvement projects.

WE CAN HELP WITH PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT.

DESIGN

Good design can reduce production and operating costs and improve the selling power of your product or service, while a strong brand identity can enhance your business's profile. Invest NI can advise you about using design effectively and also offers consultancy support through design professionals who will work with you on specific design projects.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

If you develop a new product, service, brand or process, it makes sense to protect and exploit your intellectual property (IP). Our specialist advisors can give you information and guide you through patents, trademarks, design patents and copyright. They can also carry out an audit to establish what elements of your business may need IP protection. We also run seminars and events in conjunction with the UK Intellectual Property Office, The British Library and The European Patent Office.

ALREADY IN BUSINESS



There are many things to consider when developing new products, such as how to turn your concept into a viable product or service, how to overcome technical challenges and how to protect your idea.

WE CAN HELP YOU IN THESE AREAS.

TECHNICAL ADVICE

We offer practical advice across a wide range of technical and legislative issues facing businesses. We can provide guidance on materials selection, product testing, quality control, packaging, industrial and manufacturing standards and health and safety. Through us, you can also identify R&D funding opportunities in the UK and European Union. We can also organise a technical audit, which is a health check on your energy, environment and resource efficiency.

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

We can help link your business to other businesses, colleges, universities or other organisations so that your business can take advantage of opportunities that might otherwise be beyond your reach.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Investing in R&D can help you ensure your business remains competitive and grows market share. We offer assistance for R&D projects that will lead to new products, processes or services. This support includes workshops, funding and signposting. We can also arrange for your business to link to a college or university to access academic expertise to help you carry out specific innovation projects.

**WE CAN
HELP WITH
SELLING
OUTSIDE
NORTHERN
IRELAND.**

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**ALREADY
IN BUSINESS**



Exporting your products and services outside Northern Ireland offers one of the best opportunities for growing your business.

**WE CAN HELP YOU
IN THESE AREAS.**

RESEARCHING EXPORT MARKETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

It is important to know which markets offer the best fit for your business so that you can target your export activity efficiently. We have extensive databases and expertise so you can research export markets and our overseas based advisors can give you practical guidance on how to break into new markets.

MARKETING AND SALES

You may feel your business needs to develop new skills to help you sell into export markets. Our advice and consultancy support ensures inexperienced exporters can develop exporting skills and enables more experienced exporters to refresh and update their knowledge of best practice in this area. We also run one-day workshops covering a wide range of export related topics.

TRADE VISITS AND EXHIBITIONS

One of the best ways to explore opportunities in overseas markets is to take part in trade missions and exhibitions. We offer extensive support in this area in the form of advice, general market information, specific market research, arranging meetings with potential customers, and financial support towards the costs.

LOOKING TO INVEST IN NORTHERN IRELAND? WE CAN HELP YOU.

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LOCATE IN NORTHERN IRELAND



Inward investment plays a vital role in strengthening the Northern Ireland economy by introducing new skills and technologies, creating high quality employment and developing local supply chains.

We promote the benefits of investing in Northern Ireland across the world through our network of overseas offices.

Our message is clear. Northern Ireland has plenty to offer: a vibrant, young and educated workforce, world-class infrastructure and telecommunications network, a competitive cost base and excellent incentive packages.

We target specific sectors that best fit Northern Ireland's skills base and have the most to offer our economy. These sectors are financial services, ICT, business services and renewables.

Once an overseas business chooses to locate in Northern Ireland, we continue to work closely with them to leverage additional investment, embedding them into the fabric of our economy and diversifying our business base.

Through our network of international offices, we also help businesses to create or expand commercial relationships overseas. Staff at our international offices can provide your business with direct hands-on, in-market assistance, particularly in the US, Middle East and the emerging markets of India and China.

LOOKING FOR BUSINESS INFORMATION AND ADVICE? WE CAN HELP YOU.

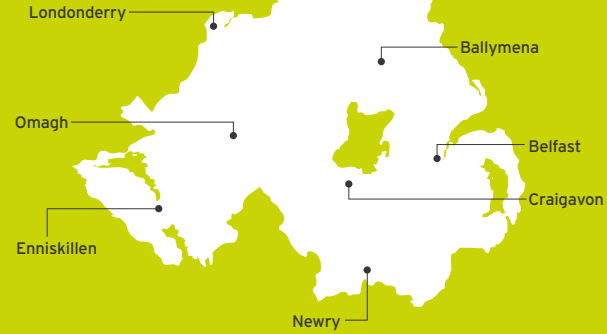


The website, a free service offered by Invest NI, is the official online channel for business support, information and advice in Northern Ireland.

Simple to use, up-to-date and practical, **nibusinessinfo.co.uk** is the first place to go for guidance on regulations, to access government services and to find wider business support. The website offers updates on funding opportunities and key events, alongside providing access to over 70 business support tools and more than 1,500 information guides covering 15 key business areas:

- Starting up
- Finance and grants
- Tax, payroll and company information
- Employment and skills
- Workplace health and safety
- Premises and property
- Environment and efficiency
- Create, innovate and protect your ideas
- IT and e-Commerce
- Sales and marketing
- International trade
- Grow your business
- Buy or sell a business
- For professional advisors
- Business news

Invest NI has seven offices across Northern Ireland and we work globally with 13 offices across the world.



CONTACT US

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FULL LIST OF OFFICES ►



If you are already an Invest NI customer, you can find out about our full range of support solutions by contacting your Client Executive.

All other businesses can find out about how we can support your business by visiting www.investni.com or by contacting Invest NI on **0800 181 4422**.

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If you require this brochure in an alternative format (including Braille, disk, audio cassette or in minority languages to meet the needs of those whose first language is not English) then please contact:

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