

invest in



**Tackling the
credit crunch**

**Could wind
energy blow
work your way?**

**How in-market
support can
help you export**

**Will you be
a winner?
Invest NI
Awards 2009**

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Building Locally
Competing Globally

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Many of our clients are feeling the dual pressures of rising costs and falling sales as the world economy turns sour, yet commodity costs remain high. Our response has been to put in place quickly a range of initiatives to help SMEs navigate the challenges.

RESPONDING TO CHALLENGING TIMES



These measures include a £5 million fund to be deployed on the basis of a call for proposals to help businesses develop more efficient operations and cut costs. In addition to up to five days of free specialist consultancy support, we will contribute up to 50 per cent of approved projects with a total-cost cap of £100,000. Advice will cover a range of topics including export sales and supply-chain and working capital management. Our centre pages in this issue provide more details.

Please note that, in response to the downturn, we are broadening our export support activities. In this issue you'll find specific information on our overseas in-market support, which is an invaluable source of on-the-ground assistance in key markets.

Recent increases in gas and electricity prices have tightened the screws even more and inevitably sharpened the focus on renewable energy. In this issue, we

look at wind energy, which is emerging as a leading alternative-energy source. A number of opportunities are opening up for local businesses to enter the supply chain. This is an exciting time for the industry and opportunities for entrepreneurial companies abound.

Finally, in this issue we highlight the Invest NI 2009 awards, which are open to all our clients. These provide the opportunity to acknowledge the commitment to excellence that drives so many local companies, and their innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurial drive is needed more than ever, since the dislocation and asset depreciation that are resulting from the financial-market collapse provide both challenges and opportunities to those who can acquire assets and new customers from weaker competitors.

**Leslie Morrison
Chief Executive**

£16 million investment for Larne

US global medical device manufacturer, CaridianBCT Inc, is investing £16 million in its Larne facility, which will create 235 skilled jobs over the next three years.

Invest NI has offered over £1.7 million of support towards the investment, which was announced by Economy Minister Arlene Foster. She said: "This major investment is a boost for Larne and for the Northern Ireland economy as a whole. The company is offering not just quality employment opportunities, but the chance for local people to gain transferable skills in the important Life Sciences sector."

CaridianBCT's strong focus on training and process excellence has made its Larne facility one of the most efficient operations of its type in the world.

"Our decision to make this investment reflects our confidence that the Larne operation can continue to make a significant contribution to the company's global success, particularly in relation to our ground breaking Atrius system and our innovative wider blood collection product range," said James McKelvey, Managing Director of CaridianBCT in Larne.

Moyola makes major investment



Moyola Precision Engineering is investing £4.5 million to install the latest high speed precision machining centres and develop the company's computer aided design and manufacture capability. Invest NI has offered almost £1 million of support for the investment, which will create 22 highly skilled jobs.


The announcement was made by Economy Minister Arlene Foster, who said that the new state-of-the-art machinery would give Moyola a capability that is unique in Northern Ireland and put the company at the forefront of the UK aerospace supply sector.

Moyola manufactures high specification machined components for a range of industries including aerospace, medical devices, power generation

and automotive. Its customer base includes Airbus, Boeing, Bombardier, Howden, Michelin, NACCO, Ryobi and Thales.

Moyola's Managing Director, Raymond Semple, says: "We now generate around 50 per cent of our turnover from the aerospace sector and see this area as key to our future business plans.

"This investment, the largest we have ever undertaken, will see us adopt the very latest in multi-axis machining plant. We will be one of the first smaller aerospace companies anywhere in the world to have this capability."

 Moyola's Managing Director, Raymond Semple pictured with Economy Minister Arlene Foster

Citi expansion creates 145 new jobs

Leading global financial services company Citi has expanded its Belfast operation for the fourth time in four years, creating a further 145 new jobs. Invest NI has offered £2 million to support this latest project, which brings Citi's total employment in Belfast to over 850.

Citi's Belfast team works with colleagues globally, to ensure efficient, effective and market-leading clearance, settlement and

execution of more than a trillion dollars worth of trades and the movement of billions of dollars in dozens of currencies every day.

Cathy Munro, Managing Director EMEA Securities and Banking Operations at Citi says: "The success of our Belfast-based functions was an important factor behind this latest decision. The strength of the available skills base within Northern Ireland is backed by a strong educational system and has been borne

out in our recruitment efforts over the past three years. We are confident such success will continue."

Announcing the investment, the Economy Minister, Arlene Foster, said: "Invest NI has been working with Citi for over six years and today's announcement is the culmination of many months of hard work on both sides."

£2.7 million investment by Bushmills Inn




Bushmills Inn Hotel is investing £2.7 million to upgrade to four-star status, and provide 19 new bedrooms, conference facilities, a new reception hall and an extension to the restaurant. Major landscaping works will be undertaken around the hotel and additional car parking will also be created.

Invest NI has offered £480,000 towards the project, which will increase staff numbers to over 70.

Announcing the project, Economy Minister Arlene Foster said: "In the past twelve months there has been a 28 per cent increase in holiday visits to Northern Ireland. We must take full advantage of this, and cater for the needs of the growing volume of foreign visitors and the demand for quality, four-star accommodation."

Alan Dunlop, Managing Director of Bushmills Inn Hotel, said: "This is a significant investment programme and the building work will be completed in time for the peak 2009 season. The support of Invest NI has been invaluable, not only in bringing this project to fruition, but also with helping us to develop our overseas marketing capability."

 Economy Minister Arlene Foster with Zoe Dunlop, Bushmills Inn Hotel.

First Derivatives' Asian success

Newry-based software developer First Derivatives has secured a deal worth more than £300,000 with a leading global financial institution in Asia. The breakthrough deal will see the financial institution's Asian operations adopt new and highly innovative financial management software, called qAlgo, developed by First Derivatives following an £800,000 investment backed by Invest NI.

The system uses leading-edge grid computing combined with vector database technology to enable financial

institutions to gather and analyse complex market data quickly in order to implement major investment decisions.

Michael O'Neill, Chief Operating Officer of First Derivatives, says: "Our new system is the culmination of three years' development with the support of Invest NI and features speed and functionality which differentiate it from our competitors. We believe it will help us to build on our already strong market position and further consolidate our reputation as a high quality global service provider whilst generating significant additional export turnover."

Bombardier Belfast makes biggest ever investment


Bombardier Aerospace is to invest over £519 million in Belfast to support the design and manufacture of the wings for the new 110-130 seat CSeries family of aircraft. The company is also currently bidding for a further work package for the nacelles which could increase the total investment to some £560 million.

The CSeries is a twenty-year project, with the potential to sustain over 1,100 jobs at the company's local operation over the peak production period.

Economy Minister Arlene Foster welcomed the investment, the largest ever single investment in Northern Ireland by any company.

"It is a tribute to Bombardier Belfast, with its culture of innovation, strong skills base and high quality production methods, that it has been selected to design and manufacture the wings for the CSeries. Undoubtedly, the expertise in advanced design and innovative composite materials, which Bombardier has developed in Belfast, has been instrumental in the decision."



 Artist's impression of CSeries aircraft

Innovative product targets property market

Urban Art, a Londonderry-based company, is investing almost £230,000 in marketing its 3D visual software for use by construction and property businesses. The company's innovative technology draws together architecture, technology, property marketing, design innovation and animation to offer customers a unique service.

Invest NI is supporting the company to develop and implement an export

marketing strategy and state-of-the-art information systems.

Owner Paul Doherty says: "A key objective for the company is to grow sales by around 300 per cent, mostly through export sales to the Republic of Ireland, which I expect to contribute 80 per cent of turnover over the next two years.

"My research indicates a £40 million spend in Ireland on the promotion

and marketing of new-build property. Vendors are increasingly seeking more effective and creative methods of marketing. Accelerating sales will require a strong brand image that will set us apart in our markets, combined with an effective distribution channel," he adds.

The company, set up in 2006, is based at the North West Business Complex at Skeoge, and has already developed an impressive portfolio of clients.

Support helps generate pipeline of contracts



Invest NI is helping Claudy-based Pipesketch to develop export contracts for its expertise in the design, supply, installation and testing of its heating, ventilation, and air conditioning pipework.

Invest NI is supporting the company to develop and implement an export marketing strategy and state-of-the-art information systems.


With support from Invest NI's Growth Accelerator Programme, the company is appointing an Operations Manager and developing a website for its marketing drive.

Managing Director, Patrick Doherty, says: "We've established a strong base over the past year and have carried out work for key customers in Great Britain and the Middle East.

"The appointment of an Operations Manager is immensely important because it will give me more time

to generate new business leads and convert these into active clients, as well as developing innovative products and services, such as a new type of pipework not yet readily available in Ireland.

"In addition, Invest NI's support is helping us access expert consultancy support to achieve the ISO9001:2000 management system, which is becoming an essential requirement, particularly for business outside Northern Ireland. This will also result in productivity benefits and increase our overall efficiency and competitiveness," he adds.

 Des Gartland, Manager of Invest NI's North West Regional Office, and Patrick Doherty Snr, Pipesketch Commercial Director.

£2m expansion at Fleming Agri-Products

Invest NI is supporting a £2 million expansion by Fleming Agri-Products at New Buildings, Co Londonderry. The family owned and managed company manufactures agri-machinery products, such as bale handling equipment, grass toppers, land-rollers, small trailers and muck spreaders.

George Fleming, the company's Managing Director, says that the investment is an integral part of a comprehensive strategy designed to

add significant value to the company's machinery and services.

"It will mean a much sharper focus on areas such as product design and development, and more effective management of our logistics operations, skills, manufacturing processes and other essential operations including assembly, finishing and quality control," he says.

"Our overall capability will also be increased by the expansion of our

existing facilities and the introduction of new product handling machinery and paint processing facility," Mr Fleming adds.

The investment was announced by Arlene Foster, the Economy Minister, who said that it would help to drive sales of Fleming's machinery products, particularly in markets outside Northern Ireland, and build on recent successes, which have included securing business from Norway.

Closing the gap

Increasing productivity is the focus of Invest NI's new Corporate Plan and also one of the Government's key targets. Damian McAuley, Invest NI's Director of Strategic Management and Planning, explains why.

The good news is that in recent years Northern Ireland has had the best record of any UK region in generating jobs. The bad news is that our labour productivity has been falling. As the creation of economic wealth is fundamentally related to the number of people in employment and their productivity, we need both factors to be strong in order to achieve economic success.

That's why the Government's focus is now on increasing productivity, which is measured as gross value added (GVA) per employee. There is a 20 per cent gap in productivity between Northern Ireland GVA and the UK average and low labour productivity accounts for over three quarters of that gap.

What issues are at play?

A comparison of earnings, industrial structure and business size between Northern Ireland and the UK as a whole, points up some key factors that have led to the labour productivity gap between the two regions.

Wages

A comparison of basic weekly pay shows that median salaries in Northern Ireland are 89 per cent of the UK. Removing the public sector from the analysis, reduces the figure to 83 per cent. Moreover, the average hours worked in Northern Ireland are 3 per cent higher than in the UK as a whole, implying that we work longer and earn less.



A sector analysis shows that the highest average salaries in Northern Ireland are in utilities, education, public administration and defence (police). Wages across all other service sectors are below the UK average. Within business service sectors salaries are

approximately 79 per cent of the UK's, indicating lower levels of value added. The differential in this significant sector has a large influence on the productivity gap.

Across most other sectors, wages in Northern Ireland lag behind the UK. This includes the construction, financial intermediation and manufacturing sectors.



Sector structure

The difference in sector structure between Northern Ireland and the UK also goes some way to explaining the productivity gap. Some 40 per cent of employment here is in the public sector compared to 31 per cent in the UK on average. In contrast, the service sector is under-represented in a broad section of high value private activities including business services, research and development, computer and related activities, financial intermediation and pensions and insurance funding. Overall our service sector is much smaller than the UK's. Employment in business services as a proportion of the economy is only 59 per cent of the UK figure while the financial services sector is approximately 66 per cent.

Although the agriculture sector accounts for a small number of jobs in the Northern Ireland economy, as a proportion of all employment, this lower wage sector is almost twice as large as the agriculture sector in the UK. The manufacturing sector and the wholesale and retail sectors represent similar proportions of the economy in Northern Ireland and the UK.

Manufacturing appears to be under-represented in high value sectors and over-represented in low value sectors. Sectors with lower than average annual earnings, including the food, clothing

and wood sectors, employ much higher proportions of people than in the UK.

Business size

Evidence suggests that in many sectors the earning differential between Northern Ireland and the UK is largely driven by business size. Analysis shows a strong relationship between higher GVA per head and employment in businesses with more than 500 employees. Some 36 per cent of employees in the UK work in businesses with 500 or more employees compared to just 15 per cent in Northern Ireland.

Research shows that business size is a major influencing factor in a range of under-performing sectors in Northern Ireland, including agriculture, transport, business services and construction. Within manufacturing, business size explains a large part of the productivity gap in the food sector and the chemicals and pharmaceuticals sector. While in the services sector, size effects on productivity are particularly apparent in business services.



Interacting factors

There are clearly a range of interacting factors driving the productivity gap in Northern Ireland, although structural effects appear to be a primary driver. Northern Ireland businesses and employment tend to be skewed towards lower value sectors compared to the UK and in the higher value sectors, such as financial intermediation, they tend to be involved in lower value activities. In addition, business size has a considerable effect on productivity. Northern Ireland has a small share of the UK's large multi-national companies, which can better afford to invest in capital intensive R&D and other innovations, hence increasing their competitiveness and productivity.

Big opportunity for small business

Sixty small businesses across Northern Ireland are getting the opportunity to carry out projects in partnership with research centres of excellence, thanks to Invest NI's Innovation Vouchers scheme.

The companies are the first to receive Innovation Vouchers following the launch of the scheme in May, which enables small enterprises to apply for vouchers worth up to £4,000 (€5,000). They can redeem these vouchers against the cost of accessing practical advice and guidance on specific operational projects from a range of research centres of excellence.

There are 38 knowledge providers, including universities, further education colleges and publicly funded research bodies, in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, with which companies can engage to take projects forward.

The knowledge providers cover a range of specialised fields, including food, manufacturing and IT, and can be commissioned to look at projects in areas such as product development, business technology auditing and process streamlining.

"It's well known that companies that invest in innovation and R&D perform more strongly, and are better equipped to grow their market share and diversify into new areas," says Tracy Meharg, Invest NI's Managing Director of Innovation and Capability Development. "However, constraints on resources such as budget, time and specialist expertise can restrict a small business's ability to bring to life that potentially lucrative product idea or enhancement."

The companies that have applied for, and been awarded, vouchers include Enniskillen's Outerspace Conservatories, a specialist in

the design, manufacture and installation of innovative, energy efficient domestic conservatories and sunrooms. Using the voucher the company plans to develop its computer aided design capability, helping to improve product quality and reduce lead times to customers.

Kivertech, based in Loughgall, a supplier to the building industry of a range of sophisticated glass reinforced plastic products such as door surrounds, decorative columns and shower cubicles, has used its voucher to commission the Northern Ireland Technology Centre (NITC) at Queen's University Belfast to research ways of enhancing its innovative leak-proof shower cubicle.

Connor McKiver of Kivertech says: "By engaging with the NITC we will be able to develop solutions to complex engineering problems using sophisticated three dimensional modelling and analysis in a virtual environment. This is significantly less expensive and more effective than trial and error in the real world."

Walleffects, based in Omagh, is using its voucher to gather technical and safety performance data on its product range. The company, which specialises in the design, manufacture and installation of decorative plaster and paint wall finishes, is hoping to use the information to help it penetrate new foreign markets.

Aaron McKeown of Walleffects says: "We are a small company with big ambitions and have already achieved some success in export markets. By engaging with an expert knowledge provider we will be able to market our

range along with useful information on, for example, drying times and handling precautions. This will give us access to lucrative continental markets, which we have yet to tap into and could be a springboard for future growth."



One of Walleffects decorative wall finishes

i The initiative is open to small enterprises (excluding those in the agriculture and transportation service sectors) employing fewer than 50 employees and with annual turnover not exceeding €50 million. It is currently closed for applications but will re-open on 1 November until 28 November. Interested companies can find more information and details of how to apply at: www.innovationvouchers.com

In the hot seat



The combination of entrepreneurship, innovation and ambition in three young brothers from Limavady has resulted in a company that is not only commercially successful but is also changing people's lives.

The Tierney brothers, Martin (18), Ryan (19) and Jonathan (20) set up Seating Matters to design and manufacture innovative seats for the healthcare market. They began trading earlier this year after spending a couple of years designing, testing and patenting the chairs and setting up the manufacturing operation.

The chairs are designed to give elderly and disabled people maximum comfort and support during the long hours that many spend sitting in a chair. The idea came from the boys' mother who runs the Disability Centre, a business involved in assessing patients and providing equipment to meet their needs.

"Our mother knew that there was a need for better chairs for elderly and disabled people. So we researched the market and realised there was global potential for high quality, specialised chairs that could really make a difference to people's lives," says Martin.

Designing the chairs involved input from occupational therapists, nurses, engineers, designers and the boys' father, a civil engineer. Invest NI's Technical Advisory Unit (TAU) helped with the technical aspects of the design,

due diligence and legal advice. This enabled Seating Matters to successfully register patents for the chairs and to protect their intellectual property. The TAU also helped them, through its Technical Development Incentive, with CE marking to meet the requirements of the Medical Device Directive. This allows the chairs to be sold throughout Europe.

Now operating out of the former Huco factory in Limavady, Seating Matters employs nine, manufacturing 40 chairs a week and selling into nursing homes and hospitals across Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland, through a distributor network. The brothers now have their sights set on Great Britain, the US and Australia.

"With help from Invest NI we've recently started registering the designs for the US and Australian markets. Invest NI's trade advisor in Boston has also set the wheels in motion for entering the US market strategically and effectively with contacts that we have made. There is a need for the product in every country and we are aiming to help as many people as possible," says Martin.

Seating Matters currently manufactures four styles of chair, which are

electronically or manually operated, and include many features to enhance the comfort of people in nursing and care environments for long-term sitting.

"We source the very best components for the chairs to ensure the highest quality. Feedback from the users has been extremely positive and we are frequently hearing examples of how the chairs are really changing people's lives," says Martin. "One lady who used one of our chairs hadn't been out of bed since last October as she could not sit comfortably in a standard chair. It's really nice to know that we are doing something that is helping improve the quality of people's lives."

Invest NI is continuing to work closely with Seating Matters on a range of operational issues to help the company maximise efficiency and target new export markets.

i For more information on the support available from the Technical Advisory Unit please contact Kieran McGuinness; tel: 028 9069 8818 e-mail: kieran.mcguinness@investni.com

In-market support for export growth



Invest NI in-market support programmes and services enable companies to grow faster internationally through advice from an experienced business person on the ground in a particular market.

The Trade Advisory Service, for example, provides local knowledge and contacts in markets throughout the world, while the Strategic Business Alliance service can arrange introductions to potential partners overseas.

Practical in-market support is supplied through providing serviced workspace and meeting facilities in a number of Invest NI overseas offices. Other support includes business incubation services for businesses wishing to set up in markets such as the United States and the Middle East.

Support delivers Denver success

EG Information Consulting (EG) in Belfast benefited from practical support and advice from Invest NI's in-market support service to develop a business opportunity in Colorado. The IT company was helped by Peggy McMahon, who runs Invest NI's Northern Ireland Technology and Development Centre (NITDC) in Denver, to pinpoint a business contact. This led to a decision to use its unique software in setting up a major Sustainable Opportunities Summit in Colorado.

EG's ENGAGE Online Business Network software is already being used by CORE, a membership-based, non-profit organisation driving business development in Colorado through

initiatives such as the summit on environmental and social challenges next March.

EG used Invest NI trade missions and NITDC's experience and support to identify and develop contact with CORE and other organisations in Colorado. Peter Shields, EG's Managing Director, says: "Our technology has enabled CORE to create an online platform to communicate with its members and delegates, to enable them to network with each other, to register for events more easily, and to download presentations and other data much faster than has previously been the case.

"Through excellent support from Invest NI locally and on the ground in Denver, we have been able to trial our ENGAGE platform with CORE and talk to several other potential clients in Colorado."

EG delivers consultancy, web development and custom software development for clients in Ireland, the UK and the USA. The company is a Microsoft Gold Partner working in the public, services and financial sectors.

New support base for German traders

Companies aiming to build business in Germany will now be able to access advice and practical support from Invest NI's office in Dusseldorf. The decision to create a trade base there is an essential part of a drive by Invest NI to boost

exports to Germany, one of world's most important markets.

Germany is currently Northern Ireland's biggest export market on the continent, purchasing manufactured goods from local suppliers worth almost £240 million in 2006/7. Among successful products there is the 'Greenfields' branded butter marketed by Belfast-based Fayrefield Foods Ireland.



Local companies also supply to German car makers. Recently, BASE, the Dundonald aerospace engineering consultancy, signed a deal to work with an Airbus subsidiary in Hamburg on a new aircraft project.

The Invest NI Trade office in Dusseldorf will be headed by Adrian O'Hare, an Ulsterman with extensive experience in dealing with German companies and of market opportunities there.

The office will co-ordinate and support export initiatives in Germany, including trade missions and participation in major exhibitions such as Inter-Airport in Munich (7-10 October), AirTech in Frankfurt (21-24 October), and Medica in Dusseldorf (19-22 November).

Ten local companies also took part in an Invest NI trade mission to Germany, based in Dusseldorf, from 7-12 September. Further initiatives are planned in Germany next year.

New advisor in Boston

Jeff Ardis has recently been appointed as an Invest NI trade advisor in the US. Based in Boston and a US citizen, Jeff has a wealth of practical experience, knowledge and contacts, particularly along the Eastern seaboard. He previously held a similar role with the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) and helped a number of Australian companies to increase exports and set up offices in the strategically important New England marketplace.



He has extensive experience in key industries such as ICT, healthcare and environmental technologies. Jeff worked with Austrade in shaping its Cleantech and Renewable Energy Strategy. He is also a member of the influential Mass Technology Leadership Council's Healthcare Advisory Board.

Our in-market support includes:

Trade Advisory Service: offering practical advice and guidance from Invest NI appointed overseas advisors. Contact Sharon Cousins, tel: 028 9069 8073; e-mail: sharon.cousins@investni.com

Strategic Business Alliance: helps you gain access to strategic partnerships and achieve sustained business growth. Contact Joan Russell, tel: 028 9069 8330; e-mail: joan.russell@investni.com

Overseas Market Introduction Services: a UK Trade & Investment service, which provides focused advice and assistance through UK Diplomatic Posts worldwide to businesses exploring new export markets overseas. Contact Christine Browne, tel: 028 9069 8034; e-mail: christine.browne@investni.com

Northern Ireland Technology and Development Centres: offer incubation space and advice for companies setting up in the US and Middle East. For the USA contact Sharon Cousins, tel: 028 9069 8073; e-mail: sharon.cousins@investni.com. For the Middle East contact Claire Gadd, tel: 028 9069 8123; e-mail: claire.gadd@investni.com

Hot Desks: access to fully serviced workspaces and meeting facilities at Invest NI offices in many parts of the world. Contact Sharon Cousins, tel: 028 9069 8073; e-mail: sharon.cousins@investni.com

INVEST NI INNOVATION & EXPORT AWARDS 2009

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ULSTER BANK

This month we are launching our prestigious Innovation & Export Awards 2009. The awards are your opportunity to celebrate the success of your business.

They will showcase Invest NI client companies' success in innovation, export and enterprise, providing the benchmark, inspiration and example for others.

The Invest NI Innovation & Export Awards 2009 recognise and reward the businesses, innovators and thought-leaders whose commitment, vision and talents are key to the growth of the Northern Ireland economy.

Become part of it...

The awards have five categories and the competition is free to enter. The competition is open to all our client businesses and you may enter more than one category. The categories are:

1. Best New Innovation

In recognition of a client business that has launched a new product, service or process within the last two years, which has delivered quantifiable benefits, added value to target markets by increasing market share and demonstrated the potential for future commercial success.

2. Innovator of the Year

In recognition of the outstanding contribution made by a client business, in operation for five years or more, to the economic prosperity and the advancement of innovation in Northern Ireland.

3. Best Emerging Exporter

In recognition of the outstanding export achievement of a client business from the manufacturing or tradeable services sectors that has been exporting goods or services for three years or less.

4. Exporter of the Year

In recognition of the outstanding export achievement (based on incremental export performance) of a client business that has been exporting goods or services for four years or more.

5. Business Excellence

In recognition of a client business irrespective of size or time in operation that can demonstrate exceptional financial returns, strong export growth and innovation strategies, and market leadership in their sector.

A tailored package of support, complementing any existing assistance or specialist advice being received, will also be offered free of charge to all award category winners, to help meet their business development needs.

Submitting Your Application

Application forms can be downloaded from www.innovationandexportawards.com. Simply identify which category you wish to enter, complete the application form(s) and send your entry to:

Noyona Chundur, Head of Corporate Marketing,
Invest Northern Ireland, Bedford Square,
Bedford Street, BT2 7ES

Tel: 028 9069 8149 **E-mail:** 2009awards@investni.com
Web: www.innovationandexportawards.com

For applications to be valid, you will need to register online and use the official application form. Completed applications must be received via e-mail or post by noon on Friday 28 November 2008.

Judging Process

Award entries will be shortlisted through an open competition process. After the closing date for receipt of applications, a judging panel will compile shortlists for each category based on the information* supplied in the application forms.

Shortlists will be announced by 19 December 2008 and if your business is selected, you will be invited to attend the awards ceremony taking place on Wednesday 18 February 2009 at BBC Blackstaff Studios, Belfast.

* All content will be treated as confidential and will be used exclusively for the purposes of judging the Invest NI Innovation & Export Awards 2009. Every effort will be made to ensure category shortlists adequately represent all regions in Northern Ireland.

A Word From Our Sponsor



Ulster Bank is delighted to sponsor the Invest NI Innovation and Export Awards 2009. These awards highlight the high standard achieved by Northern Ireland businesses across innovation, export, leadership and overall business excellence.

These awards are testament to Ulster Bank's commitment to supporting local enterprise and businesses throughout Northern Ireland. Ulster Bank has an extensive network of Commercial Managers, a hub of ten Business Centres located across the province, along with highly dedicated and experienced Corporate and Property teams providing financial solutions to a broad range of businesses across Northern Ireland.

Henry Elvin, Head of Business Banking, Ulster Bank

Key Dates

Deadline for Award Submission
28 November 2008

Announcement of Shortlisted Clients
by 19 December 2008

Filming and Interviews of Shortlisted Clients
January 2009

Innovation & Export Awards 2009
18 February 2009

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Tackling the 'Credit Crunch'

Invest NI has unveiled a £5 million Accelerated Support Fund to help local companies tackle the tough economic conditions that have been labelled the 'credit crunch'.



With the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) predicting that the UK economy is likely to fall into recession this year, local businesses are understandably anxious about the future.

To help businesses respond to current and future economic pressures, Invest NI has announced a range of initiatives offering fast-track support for specific actions. These include three to five days free diagnostic support to help identify current or potential threats to a business's present operations and

their main areas of exposure, along with opportunities arising from changing market conditions.

This diagnosis will lead to an action plan detailing specific projects. Funding is being made available for clients to undertake projects up to the value of

£100,000 each in areas such as financial and cash flow management, improving supply chain and internal efficiencies, or removing barriers to securing sales in new markets. Invest NI will contribute 50 per cent of the cost of approved projects, which in many cases is a higher percentage contribution than is normally available.

The initiatives were unveiled at recent 'Credit Crunch' events in Belfast and Cookstown, which were attended by over 200 client companies.

The events featured presentations from a team of specialist business advisors who gave advice on key business areas. They also acted as a gateway for attendees to access the new free diagnostic support from Invest NI.

Tracy Meharg, Invest NI's Managing Director of Innovation and Capability Development, says: "This is an example of Invest NI proactively bringing forward new initiatives that will enable our clients to maintain a strategic focus in the face of current tougher conditions.

"By providing tailored, practical advice and expertise, we can help our clients not only to develop efficiencies that will keep them competitive but also to identify opportunities to move into new markets, and develop innovative products and processes."

As part of its response to the economic downturn, the agency is also running a number of seminars on exporting and developing international partnerships. Tracy Meharg explains: "In times of economic downturn, the most effective strategy can be to increase marketing and sales activity in external markets. We are broadening our activities in this area by providing tailored support to help more businesses begin or increase export activity."

At a glance

Invest NI's response to help businesses navigate through challenging times includes:



- three to five days free diagnostic support to identify projects to address identified needs in the areas of:

- financial and cash flow management;
- improving efficiencies in the supply chain;
- improving internal efficiencies; or
- reducing or removing barriers to secure new sales and markets;

- financial support of up to £50,000 for approved projects;

- helping clients in the construction sector to identify opportunities in the Middle East and Gulf as well as increasing market visits for this sector to EU countries that are receiving significant EU support;

- a new Introduction to Exporting Campaign, aimed at new exporters who will work with Invest NI to begin exporting. The first event on 22 October will target 50 companies in the Newry area;

- for local businesses with limited exporting experience, a new Preparation for Export Programme will help them develop export capability. Targeting 60 to 90 companies, the programme will offer hands-on support and mentoring to help with export plans;

- seeking ten local businesses that are already established exporters, to take part in the highly successful Enterprise Ireland International Selling Skills Programme, which targets participation at CEO level.

Tracy Meharg adds: "As well as these measures, which are already in place, we are considering other approaches to further strengthen our support for exporters. We are looking at establishing business development professionals (similar to our existing Food Sector Marketing Advisors) in key sectors in European and Great Britain markets.

"Other options currently under discussion include an initiative to introduce German and US business graduates to companies here seeking to do business in those markets, and providing expert one-to-one support to companies to help with exporting to the Republic of Ireland.

"We'll continue to listen to our client companies and tailor our response to meet their specific needs."

i For more information
Client companies can access the Accelerated Support Fund from 20 October, by contacting their Client Executive.

Learning curve

For Northern Ireland to become the globally competitive and innovative region it seeks to be, it needs a highly skilled workforce. Niall Casey, Invest NI's Director of Business Improvement Services, outlines the agency's three-pronged approach to the challenge of upgrading our skills base.



Increasing levels of innovation, entrepreneurship and international investment is the key focus for Invest NI; but we recognise that to underpin success across these areas there is a pressing need to improve the level of skills both within the workforce and among those seeking work.

To this end we are working in three broad areas:

- helping businesses improve skills;
- working with others to help embed entrepreneurship in education; and
- working with the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) on skills strategy and development.

Helping business improve skills

Our Business Improvement Services division offers support for formal qualification-based training and informal, experience-based learning and knowledge sharing which is directly related to meeting the business's needs.

Our main support mechanism for building skills is the Business Improvement Training Programme. It offers financial support to businesses to undertake agreed training programmes that, in addition to raising the skill levels of managers and employees, are directly linked to the business strategy and areas for business improvement. Increasingly this kind of support is being offered as part of every major support package.

We also support skill-based programmes delivered by others. Among these is the Leadership 4 Growth programme, developed by Enterprise Ireland in partnership with the Irish Software Association and delivered by the world-renowned Stanford Graduate School of Business. The programme is open to CEOs of Technology and Life Sciences companies. We are currently supporting Singularity and APT to take part in the programme.

With our inward investment effort largely targeted at the priority sectors of ICT, financial and business services, we are keen to assist skills development in these areas. With our support, Abbey recently launched an initiative that targets its new employees, primarily school leavers. The initiative helps to develop their financial services skills

through a four-year structured career progression programme leading to a formally recognised financial services qualification, as well as Chartered Banker Status.

This new initiative is not the first to target skills growth in the financial services sector. The Futures programme, which began in 2006, is helping to build a pool of talent and experience to seed potential FDI projects in the sector. The programme was initiated by Invest NI in collaboration with the Securities and Investment Institute, Belfast Metropolitan College and DEL. It's a one-year programme which offers participants a recognised qualification - Investment Administration Qualification - and a nine month placement in an Invest NI target company.

Embedding entrepreneurship in education

To increase levels of entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland it makes sense to start building awareness in schools and exposing more young people to the benefits of starting a business. Achieving this requires a partnership approach and we are working with a number of organisations in this area.

With funding from DEL's Skills and Science Fund and the Department for Social Development's Renewing Communities Fund, we developed the Entrepreneurship and Education Initiative, which is delivered by Young Enterprise NI and the Northern Ireland Centre for Entrepreneurship.

The initiative aims to involve 100,000 young people in entrepreneurship programmes.

Working with CCEA we've also developed Clk2do, a web-based resource specifically developed for Key Stage 3 pupils in Northern Ireland to give them an understanding of the benefit of adopting an entrepreneurial approach to their outlook on life.

We also sponsor a number of activities in the education area including the Student Enterprise Awards; the Head Teachers into Industry Scheme; Kauffman Fellowships, and Global Entrepreneurship Week.

Invest NI-supported companies are also taking up the baton of encouraging young people to develop skills and an awareness of entrepreneurship. SAP, one of the world's leading software companies and a recent inward investor to Northern Ireland, has teamed up with IET, Queen's University, W5 and leaders in the field of industry to launch the first FIRST® LEGO® League (FLL) Challenge in Northern Ireland, taking place on 18 November, 2008. FLL is an international programme for children aged 9 to 16 that combines a hands-on, interactive robotics and research presentation with a sports-like atmosphere.

Skills Strategy work with DEL

To determine the current and future skills needs for key sectors such as ICT and financial services, we're partnering with DEL and other key stakeholders in

the Future Skills Action Group. This has been set up by the Skills Expert Group to devise a strategic response to meet specific skills needs in these sectors. To date, an Action Plan has been developed for the ICT sector which highlights some short-term actions that need to be taken to meet growing demand for software professionals in the sector. The three main objectives are to promote the sector as an attractive career choice for young people; ensure the necessary training is available to deliver a pipeline of suitably skilled employees; and attract back to Northern Ireland, people with the right skills who are now working abroad.

If Invest NI is to continue to attract high-quality investment in the ICT and financial services sectors, we must have the right level of skills and experience available. Without this, Northern Ireland's value proposition is significantly weakened. We are agreed that close and joined-up working between the demand and supply side offers the best chance for future growth.

Opposite: Pupils from Downshire School outline their new product idea at a Youth Entrepreneurship event.

Bottom left: Economy Minister Arlene Foster with Rory Ferguson and Megan Flannery, two school leavers who have been shortlisted for the Abbey Chartered Banker Status programme.

Bottom right: Stephanie Wilson, Queen's University, with pupils from St Patrick's Bearnagee and Belfast High School, alongside Jeremy Fitch, Invest NI, helping to launch the Lego League, the world's largest interactive robotics challenge for children.





Quality opens export doors

Invest NI's ongoing support for the food and drink industry is helping companies to expand their customer base, develop new and original products and achieve award-winning excellence.



Gold medals for 'new taste experiences'

They may not be from Beijing, but the 48 gold medals won by some 26 local companies in this year's Great Taste Awards are just as impressive.

The Great Taste Awards are recognised as the authoritative, independent standard for the UK and Ireland.

Two Belfast companies - Suki Tea, and Co Couture, a gourmet chocolatier - gained the highest accolade for their products, three gold stars. Suki Tea gained the top award for its Organic Camomile loose-leaf tea and Co Couture for its Bushmills Whisky Truffle.

Maynard Mawhinney, Invest NI's Director of Food, says: "The awards show that we have a developing cluster of smaller companies that are helping to create wealth and employment through an

impressive commitment to new taste experiences for customers.

"Our objective is to help the companies to realise their undoubted potential, particularly in markets outside Northern Ireland. This flow of new ideas with export potential will help to ensure the continuing growth of our most important manufacturing industry."

Northern Ireland Gold Winners in Great Taste Awards 2008

Belfast: Suki Tea; Co Couture; Baxter Murray Specialist Chocolates; Glen Tender Beef

Co Antrim: Dromona Pure Butter, Ballymena

Co Armagh: Brownlee's Handmade Preserves, Craigavon; Irwin's Bakery, Craigavon

Co Down: California Market Bakery, Jonesborough; Clandeboye Estate, Bangor; Corn Dolly Bakery, Newry; Drumgooland Smokehouse, Castlewellan; East Coast Seafoods, Ballyhornan; Heatherlea, Bangor; Mash Direct, Comber; North South Coffee Company, Silverbridge; Offbeat Bottling Company, Bangor; Rich Sauces, Comber; White's, Tandragee; Whitewater Brewing Company, Kilkeel

Co Londonderry: Ditty's Home Bakery, Castledawson; Genesis Bakery, Magherafelt; North West Organic (Tamnagh Bakery), Claudy

Co Fermanagh: Shazzam, Enniskillen; Tickety-Moo, Irvinestown

Co Tyrone: Fivemiletown Creamery, Fivemiletown; Good4U, Cookstown

Overall Northern Ireland winner: Co Couture

Quality accreditations open up opportunities

Invest NI has helped four small food companies to achieve a globally recognised quality accreditation that will help them to develop business with major supermarket chains throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The companies - Golden Popcorn, Mallusk, Graham's Bakery in Dromore, Linwoods, Armagh, and William Sprott, Portadown, have all achieved British Retail Consortium (BRC) accreditation. Invest NI's Food Division provided financial support to enable the companies to access the expertise in food technology, standards and hygiene at the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE).

BRC, the representative body of UK retailers, operates global standards covering food, packaging, consumer products, storage and distribution systems that help food companies meet the quality standards of top supermarkets.

In another initiative, Invest NI has introduced a Safe and Local Supplier Approval (SALSA) Scheme in association with Sainsbury's.

Fifteen local companies have already signed up for the pilot initiative, which aims to help small local food producers put in place robust food safety procedures. Invest NI anticipates that by achieving food safety recognition, SALSA will open the doors for small food manufacturers to supply more retailers and foodservice companies, and ultimately grow their businesses.

The participating businesses will each receive mentoring and pre-audits as well as the final audit and SALSA membership.

i For further information on the SALSA pilot in Northern Ireland, contact Gráinne Moody: tel: 028 9069 8418, e-mail: grainne.moody@investni.com

Export success for tea and coffee connoisseurs

The unique flavour of Belfast based Suki Tea's loose-leaf blends has gained it some prestigious new customers. Joining the ever-growing portfolio of Suki Tea clients are Jamie Oliver's inspired 'Fifteen' restaurant at Watergate Bay, Cornwall, Rick Stein's 'The Seafood Restaurant' at Padstow, Cornwall, and the Donnybrook Fair 'Eat Up' Restaurant in Dublin.

The company was introduced to Donnybrook Fair by Invest NI and has taken part in a range of Invest

NI programmes including 'meet the buyer' events.



"Selling our teas to such prestigious restaurants is a marvellous endorsement of the quality, variety and innovation of our product portfolio. What we are offering is the same sort of variety and excitement usually associated with the contemporary coffee business," says Oscar Woolley, a Suki Tea founding director.

"We are seeing an increasing demand for the taste and quality that I believe is only available from loose-leaf teas. We are also benefiting immensely from the range of export and business development services provided by Invest NI," he adds.



Irish coffee roaster Johnsons, an Invest NI client company, has won first-time business from one of the leading food retailers in Texas. Johnsons, based at Lisburn, is supplying its distinctive Irel brand of ground coffee to Albertson's LLC, which has over 100 grocery stores in Texas, which are part of a network of markets across the US run by the Iowa headquartered business.

The new business is the result of the company's extensive marketing campaign in the US over the past two years. Johnsons has used Invest NI trade missions and other marketing initiatives to identify and develop US exports.

"Gaining a listing from Albertson's is potentially a very significant deal for us in the world's biggest and most demanding coffee market," says Philip Mills, Business Director at Johnsons.



"We've now achieved a foothold in a \$50 billion coffee market, the world's biggest."

📷 Opposite page: Maynard Mawhinney, Invest NI Food Director with Deirdre McCanny of Co Couture Chocolates.

Top left: Anne Rooney and Oscar Woolley of Suki Tea.

Bottom left: Philip Mills, Business Development Director for Johnsons Coffee, and Maynard Mawhinney, Invest NI Food Director, celebrating the company's new coffee deal in the US.

Bite size news

Membership of the new Industry Advisory Panel (IAP), established to support the agri-food sector, has been confirmed. The IAP gives the industry a key role in advising government directly on public policy and support for the food sector.

The initiative is being taken forward by Economy Minister, Arlene Foster,

through Invest NI and in association with Agriculture and Rural Development Minister, Michelle Gildernew.

In the latest of a series of 'meet the buyer' events Invest NI enabled 14 local companies to present their products to David Moran, a senior

representative from RK Foodland of Mumbai, during his visit to Northern Ireland. Companies will be able to follow up leads from this event through the Invest NI office in Mumbai and by taking part in trade missions to the market planned for later this year and early next.

Tyrone Fabrications expands to meet demand

Ballygawley-based company Tyrone Fabrications is investing £680,000 in an expansion project to increase its turnover to almost £9 million by the end of next year. The investment is being supported by Invest NI.

Tyrone Fabrications designs and manufactures high quality cabinets and enclosures to house electronic equipment for telecommunications, transport and energy sectors throughout Europe.

It is now focusing even more on export markets and is extending its production facilities to deal with higher demand. Brendan McDermott, Managing Director of Tyrone Fabrications, says:

“Invest NI is helping us to grow our business through increased export sales. We are introducing new equipment and principles to our manufacturing processes, which is helping us to provide new solutions for clients, broaden our product range and capitalise on new market opportunities in countries such as Holland and Denmark.”

Fifteen new jobs are being created as part of the investment, bringing employment to 73.

Shower company expands range




Spa-Jet, the Coleraine designer and manufacturer of shower trays, has developed a new product range with the help of Invest NI's Product and Process Development Programme.

The new shower trays are much more flexible and aesthetically pleasing than traditional trays due to the reduced side wall profile and smooth base. They are the result of a significant investment by the company in technology and innovation.

Eric McKay, Spa-Jet's Managing Director, says: “Our business growth strategy is focused on building sales in key European markets such as the Netherlands and Great Britain by offering innovative and quality products. Invest NI's technical support for the development and production of the new shower trays has been immensely important.”

Invest NI is also providing support for marketing to help the company bring the new products to market faster.

Des Gartland, Invest NI's North West Regional Office Manager, says: “Our support for this project is in line with our strategic focus on encouraging entrepreneurial North West companies to grow faster through innovation and exporting.”

 Pictured with Spa-Jet's latest shower tray, left, Eric McKay, Spa-Jet Managing Director, and Des Gartland, Invest NI North West Regional Office Manager.

Export success for Carmac Waste




Carmac Waste Handling Systems, of Carrickmore, Co Tyrone, a specialist in the design and manufacture of recycling machinery, has won substantial contracts in Great Britain and North America with help from Invest NI.

The company has provided all the systems for a new state-of-the-art recycling facility in Norfolk operated by Pearsons, one of the UK's leading recycling companies. It is also designing

and producing waste processing machinery for a major customer in Canada.

Declan McNally, Managing Director, says: “The contract with Pearsons is of strategic importance for us in the UK, one of our target markets. It gives us an important reference site in England that shows all our machinery in a fully integrated recycling operation. The Canadian deal is among a number of key contracts that we are currently handling due to our unique expertise in, and knowledge of, waste handling machinery.

“Invest NI's advice and practical support in areas such as marketing has been extremely important.”

 Nishi Ward, Carmac Commercial Director; Alan Kingston, Invest NI Trade Director; Declan McNally, Carmac Managing Director; and Mary Gormley, Invest NI Western Regional Office Manager.

Derry firm is shipshape




Invest NI is helping start-up Londonderry firm, North Atlantic Rib Marine, to export ASIS Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIBs), to the European market.

The company, which was set up last year by Francis O'Loughlin and his two sons, all successful businessmen, has acquired the distribution rights for Europe from Solico Trading, the Dubai manufacturer of the boats. The RIBs are imported as 'open boat shells' and the engines, consoles, seats, dive tank rails and electronic equipment are fitted by North

Atlantic Rib Marine to suit customer applications. The company also provides a consultancy service to advise customers on the onboard design, layout and servicing of boats.

Francis O'Loughlin says: “Our decision to move into the boat business was made following extensive market research for an export product that could be assembled and supported from our base in Derry. The agreement with Solico provides us with a successful sea-going boat which is popular in the leisure and sporting marine industry.

“We launched the boats at a recent leisure exhibition on the Isle of Wight and are now setting up a dealer network as part of an aggressive marketing drive,” he adds.

 Launching the new craft are, left, Des Gartland, Invest NI North West Regional Office Manager, and Francis O'Loughlin, North Atlantic Rib Marine.

McKendry steps up export drive

Through its Growth Accelerator Programme (GAP), Invest NI is helping McKendry Fabrications and Installations in Coleraine to develop its export marketing activities, particularly in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Colin McKendry, Managing Director of McKendry, says: “We've identified significant opportunities in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain. We are already doing some business in the Republic and have a number of good contacts showing considerable interest in the new products we are developing, particularly in areas such as architectural stainless steel.

“We now need to invest substantially in a programme of marketing activities. Invest NI is offering quick access to financial support that will enable us to exploit these niche export opportunities,” he adds.

McKendry Fabrications provides a range of products in stainless steel, aluminium, brass, copper, mild steel, galvanised steel and powder coated steel. Products include landmark sculptures, gates, staircases, catwalks, balustrades, handrails, conveyors, cabinets and guard rails. The business currently employs 40 people.



 Des Gartland, Manager of Invest NI's North West Regional Office with Colin McKendry, Managing Director of McKendry Fabrications.

Camco aims to treble turnover

Ambitious Lisburn furniture components company, Camco Group, is investing £700,000 in a project to increase its exports and treble its turnover to £3 million by the end of next year.

Camco, soon to become Uniwood Ltd, supplies woodworking machinery and furniture components such as PVC banding for home and office furnishings.

Supported by Invest NI, Camco is investing in upgrading its IT systems, introducing new machinery, recruiting additional staff, implementing staff training initiatives and executing a specifically targeted export marketing campaign.

David Philips, Camco's Managing Director, says: “By investing in key operations across the business, we are improving our processes and turnaround times, and significantly increasing our sales outside Northern Ireland.

“We recognised the potential to ultimately increase our turnover by upgrading IT systems. We've also improved our customer relationship management by using new software to help us to retain and build business with our existing customers whilst focusing on the development of new opportunities.”

The answer is blowing in the wind

In the continuing search for viable sustainable energy sources, wind energy is emerging as a real contender. Not only is this good news for the environment, but with the UK offshore wind energy market estimated to be worth around £40 billion within the next 20 years, it's also good news for business.

The UK is rapidly becoming a world leader in offshore wind energy supply capability, with projects under construction around its shores accounting for almost half of global capacity.

Some Northern Ireland companies are already taking advantage of the opportunities arising from the increasing demand throughout the wind energy supply chain. Among these is Harland and Wolff, continuing its long tradition of engineering innovation. Alongside shipbuilding and offshore

oil and gas sector activity, recent diversifications for the company have included marine renewable energy projects, and the development of renewable energy technologies, such as offshore wind farms, tide and wave power generators.

Current projects include the assembly of 60 offshore wind turbines destined for Robin Rigg, in the Solway Firth off southwest Scotland. This will generate sufficient power for 120,000 homes, equivalent to a city the size of Belfast.

But the opportunities are not limited to the big players. With just 27 staff, Limavady Gear Company, is a small company that is making its mark on the industry. It has developed an innovative new wind turbine which it is launching in UK, European and world markets, with support from Invest NI's trade team. The LGC Sykrota is a 5kW unit aimed at the domestic and light industrial markets, where it will provide substantial energy contribution. The company is also in the process of using Invest NI product development support to develop a larger 20kW unit.

With demand for wind energy set to grow rapidly, there are clearly opportunities for more Northern Ireland businesses to get involved all along the supply chain. To highlight these opportunities and advise on how best companies can exploit them, Invest NI hosted an event at which expert speakers in the field, including wind farm developers and renewable energy policy advisors, shared their insights with over 100 delegates. Those attending also heard how Invest NI can help them with innovation and R&D to improve their chances of securing business in the industry.

Olive Hill, Invest NI's Director of Technology and Process Development, says: "Government targets require 10 per cent of all electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2010, so the focus is clearly on finding viable solutions. Wind energy is proving to be an increasingly popular choice and there are expected to be 7,000 wind farms operating in the UK by 2020. This presents significant commercial opportunities for local engineering companies.

"Invest NI can help companies exploit these opportunities by assisting them to build on their current strengths, identify improvements to products and processes and carry out R&D."



For more information please contact Invest NI's Sustainable Development Team: tel: 028 9069 8868; e-mail: sustainabledev@investni.com

Wind energy facts

- Europe is the biggest user of wind energy of all continents, representing 55 per cent of global wind energy capacity with Germany and Spain the leading European countries.
- The USA is now the fastest growing wind energy producer in the world. In terms of overall capacity it ranks third behind Spain. (www.alternate-energy-sources.com/wind-energy-facts.html)
- The largest wind turbine in the world is in Hawaii. It stands 20 storeys high and has rotors the length of a football field.
- Wind is the fastest growing energy source worldwide.
- An average wind speed of 14mph is required to convert wind energy into electricity. (www.uk-energy-saving.com/wind_energy_facts.html)
- There are currently 20 wind farms in Northern Ireland, with a further four under construction, 13 consented and 47 projects in planning. (www.bwea.com/statistics)



Custom-made success



Cookstown engineering company TES (NI) Ltd has achieved sustained growth since it was set up in 1999. It has recently announced a £4.4 million investment that will take it to the next level.

TES designs and builds state-of-the-art water and waste water treatment facilities and complex process control systems. Currently employing 45, but with plans to double that number over the next three years, the company has firmly established itself as a dynamic and highly professional enterprise, leading the way in the water treatment industry.

Set up by Brian Taylor and Noel McCracken, TES experienced early rapid growth and within a few years had over 30 staff and a turnover of some £1.5 million.

As TES grew, Brian and Noel had to deal with simultaneously building the company's infrastructure, its team and its client base. They recognise the value and positive impact of the advice

and support that Invest NI has been able to give along the way.

"Right from the start Invest NI was there with a range of very practical support that helped us with everything from drawing up job descriptions and contracts of employment, through marketing support, to getting the right IT systems in place to ensure the efficient running of the business," says Brian.

Brian believes that the company's success is largely due to its focus on quality, customer service and continuous innovation. This is reflected in the accolades it has attracted, including being Regional Winner of the Parforce Worldwide Small Business Awards in 2003 and being highly commended at the Belfast Telegraph's Business Awards 2003.

In 2004, to support the company's export drive, TES appointed a Sales and Marketing Manager. Again Invest NI was able to help, with a grant towards salary support. The company's


growing export success led it to set up an office in North Staffordshire in 2005. Now it is looking further afield.

"We feel that there is potential for us in the Middle East but we need to explore the market thoroughly," says Noel McCracken. "So we've enlisted the help of Invest NI's Trade Advisory Service."

The Trade Advisory Service gives Invest NI clients access to in-market trade advisors to help with assessing and developing business opportunities in specific overseas markets. The advisors provide consultancy and help to set up initial meetings with potential customers or partners.

TES's confidence in its potential to significantly grow through exports is reflected in its recent announcement of a £4.4 million investment in new factory facilities, capital equipment and IT systems. Supported by Invest NI, the investment will also strengthen the existing management team and help with a structured training programme. TES is also planning to develop new products and services and increase marketing expenditure.

Noel McCracken says: "We have set ambitious targets for further growth, including achieving 74 per cent of sales from outside Northern Ireland by September 2010. Over the next three years we also expect to double exports, overall sales and employment. We're confident that this investment, coupled with the ongoing support we receive from Invest NI, will provide the foundations for us to achieve this."

 Brian Taylor, TES (NI) Ltd, Economy Minister Arlene Foster and Noel McCracken, TES (NI) Ltd, during a tour of the facility in Cookstown.

Fast track support finding favour



Invest NI's new Growth Accelerator Programme (GAP) is helping small local businesses access essential support quickly and easily and is already delivering results.

The GAP scheme, launched late last year, aims to fast track support for small businesses to ensure that they increase exports, innovation and value added. Under the scheme businesses can get support for market development visits, market research, and consultancy relating to marketing, business planning, graphic design, PR, web design or specialist areas. There is also grant support for a key worker, which must be a new post that will help the company to grow in export markets.

The scheme requires just one application form and assistance is often offered to successful companies within two weeks.

Among the companies that have benefited from GAP assistance is


out and clinching new business in the Republic.


"Our objective is to grow exports to 50 per cent of our business by 2010. Our research indicates that this target is achievable but only if we deploy sufficient manpower and financial resources, GAP will help us to do this."

The introduction of GAP generated a substantial increase in the number of smaller offers Invest NI made to small companies in the last financial year. With a minimal amount of paperwork and a speedy approval process for applications, the scheme is proving to be an effective support mechanism for small projects.

Ian Murphy, Invest NI's Managing Director of Clients and Entrepreneurship, says: "Small businesses need to be able to act quickly to exploit market opportunities and even a modest cash injection to help support specific export related activities can be the difference between growth or missed opportunities.

"We've had a very favourable response from clients who have used GAP and who have found it user-friendly and responsive to their immediate needs."

 **For more information** on GAP, please contact your Client Executive or your nearest Invest NI office.

 Paul McGowan of neu designactivists, Des Gartland, Manager of Invest NI's North West Regional Office, and Jonathan Johnston of neu designactivists.

Coleraine architectural services company neu designactivists. Through the GAP scheme the company has been able to strengthen its architectural team and undertake a series of marketing initiatives in the Republic and further afield.

Paul McGowan, a Director of neu designactivists, says: "We believe that our experience in environmentally-friendly designs gives us a competitive edge in the Republic and other markets that we have been exploring such as Scotland and the Netherlands.

"GAP support enables us quickly to take the steps needed to establish a position in the Republic in particular. It's potentially a very important marketplace for us and could provide a springboard to other external markets.

"We are using the scheme to recruit an additional member of staff for project management and this will enable us to deploy a director to focus on seeking

Construct for Growth



A new initiative developed by Invest NI's North West Regional Office is helping construction companies in the north-west to pinpoint new business.

The three-stage initiative, called Construct for Growth, was developed in response to the problems currently being experienced by the construction industry.

The pilot programme ran in September and involved 50 companies in a three-step process. This kicked off with a

breakfast seminar which featured a range of speakers from across the industry including Neil Gibson, Director of Regional Services, Oxford Economics; Zara Lamont, Performance Improvement Director, Carillion Plc, a major international construction corporation; Sam McCloskey of White Young Green; and Gerry McCaughey, founder and former Chief Executive of Kingspan Century Homes.

The breakfast seminar was followed a few weeks later by a workshop at

Draperstown. It focused on opportunities and threats to help companies develop strategies for growth and ensure they were aware of the relevant Invest NI support programmes.

The programme culminated in a visit to the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) Innovation Park in Watford, a recognised centre of expertise in sustainable technology and new building techniques. During the visit to the centre the participants were able to explore 'best in class' technology. The park features demonstration properties showcasing near zero-carbon homes, modern methods of construction, and over 200 different innovative and emerging technologies.

Des Gartland, NWRO Manager, says:

"We were delighted at the response to the initiative from local companies. The programme's goal was to help them appreciate how the sustainable agenda and modern construction techniques will impact on their business. They also got the chance to find out how market leaders are responding to that agenda to ensure business success, and to network with local and international business leaders."

"During the programme the attendees got the opportunity to identify collaboration opportunities with other companies to help them drive innovation in the industry," adds Mr Gartland.

📍 The BRE Innovation Park in Watford which showcases the very latest in innovative methods of construction.

Photograph courtesy of Peter White, BRE.

Guides to family-friendly working

The rules and regulations around employing people is the area that many business people find most challenging. To help employers, Invest NI has developed a new section for its nibusinessinfo.co.uk website covering Work and families: www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/workandfamilies.

The new section forms part of the Employing People section and contains guides to help you manage your obligations when a worker has a child, becomes a parent, or needs to take time off for a family emergency. These guides will help you to understand statutory rights to leave and pay, make the right decisions and effectively manage and support your employees.

Pregnancy at work

This guide sets out pregnant employees' rights in relation to health and safety, antenatal care and dismissal or discrimination.

Maternity leave and pay

This will help you to be aware of the statutory right to leave and pay when your employee has a baby.



Paternity leave and pay

You also need to consider employees' rights in relation to paternity leave and pay for births, and both UK and overseas adoptions.

Adoption leave and pay

This guide covers employees' rights to leave and pay for UK and overseas adoptions.

Parental leave and time off for dependants

If you have employees with young or disabled children you need to be aware of the statutory right to unpaid leave and your obligations when employees need time off to care for dependants.

The site's section on **Work and families** also includes guides on the benefits of flexible working. You'll also find two useful interactive tools: **Managing expectant and new mothers at work** and **Managing paternity and adoption leave and pay**. These are in the form of short questionnaires that will provide you with tailored information to help you manage the specific circumstances in your business.

Helping businesses prepare for regulation changes

Details of legislative changes, which came into force on 1 October, and which may affect businesses in Northern Ireland, have been posted on the nibusinessinfo.co.uk website www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/ccd.

Twice yearly, key government departments issue new regulations and make changes to existing ones. Some of these changes simplify existing legislation for businesses.

Changes to legislation announced this time cover the following areas:

- the national minimum wage
- occupational pension schemes
- employers' liability compulsory insurance
- trade marks and trade mark applications
- limited liability partnerships
- doorstep selling.

Rodney McMullan, Invest NI's nibusinessinfo.co.uk Manager, says: "Clear guidance on regulations is one of the many benefits businesses get from using nibusinessinfo.co.uk. We know that this is important information which users value, particularly this alert on new regulations."



1 Businesses of all sizes can also register to receive email alerts on the new regulation updates. Go to www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/ccd for further information.

Take time for design



Good design can help your business grow by differentiating your product or service in the marketplace. Building design knowledge and capability can help you respond to opportunities, generate new market and product ideas or create design management tools appropriate to your business.

Invest NI's Design Service guides businesses through a range of design and product development issues, including packaging design, branding, problem-solving, reducing costs and building customer loyalty.

The Design Service consists of three distinct elements:

Design advice - this is delivered through a free half-day session with a professional design advisor covering design issues from graphic design through to engineering and product design.

The new mini Design Development Programme - this is an introductory insight into the value of design including a group workshop, one-to-

one mentoring support and two days' consultancy per client company.

Main Design Development Programme - delivered over a four-month period, this includes one-to-one consultations with an assigned mentor, workshops, networking and seven days consultancy per client company.

Places are available for programmes commencing 12 November.



For further information

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Social enterprise broadcasts success

Just a year after it was founded, Media Ireland, which broadcasts Newry's only local community radio station IUR-fm and the local community television channel, Newry.TV, is a resounding success.

Launched with support from Invest NI's Social Entrepreneurship Programme, the business provides local communities with an opportunity to produce and broadcast radio and television programming reflecting their views, aspirations and lives. It has no shareholders and its directors act on a wholly voluntary basis, so any profits are used to fund local charities and community initiatives.

In June, Media Ireland clinched the top Social Enterprise Award for Armagh, Craigavon, Banbridge, Down and Newry & Mourne District Council areas in the Greater Newry Area Business Awards 2008, run by Newry Chamber of Commerce and Trade. Earlier this year the business also reached the finals of the national Edge Upstarts Awards 2008, which recognise excellence in all aspects of social enterprise.



Sharon Polson of Invest NI's Entrepreneurship Development Team says: "The social entrepreneurship sector is growing fast in Northern Ireland and is opening up opportunities for many people to get involved in business while at the same time contributing to their local community. Media Ireland is a great example of an enterprise that combines social responsibility with sound business management."

Media Ireland is currently working towards the launch of its second community radio service in Belfast.

Stephen McClelland, Social Enterprise Newry & Mourne, presenting the Greater Newry Business Award to the Media Ireland team.

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