

# Investin

The Corporate Magazine of Invest Northern Ireland

Issue 20 March 2010

Invest  
Northern  
Ireland

Building Locally  
Competing Globally



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## Realising the vision

Invest NI's programme of change

Find out what Invest NI can do for your business at [www.investni.com](http://www.investni.com)

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# Realising our vision



Alastair Hamilton  
Chief Executive

**As I approach the end of my first year in Invest NI, I have much to reflect on. A year during which the economy has undergone its worst recession in many years meant that forward planning had to be combined with immediate action to support our clients and the wider business community. I am confident that Invest NI rose to that challenge.**

It was also a year, of course, during which significant review and stocktaking in the economic development arena produced a longer term view of our role. As a result of this I believe the agency now has the opportunity to accelerate the work already underway and to realise the vision to create a fast moving, responsive, customer focused organisation. In this issue I have outlined Invest NI's programme of change, Transform, which will move us towards that goal.

Our support for the business community will remain a combination of advice and financial assistance. There is a wealth of specialist expertise within Invest NI that is available to businesses free of charge. On pages 8 and 9 we profile the work of our Technical Advisory Unit and the immense benefit it has brought to local companies.

Likewise, the training and mentoring provided through our Go for it programme is helping entrepreneurs to set up and grow early stage businesses. On pages 18 and 19 four entrepreneurs describe how Go for it has helped them to turn their business ideas into reality.

We also highlight in this issue the free consultancy available through our Sustainable Development Team to help companies carry out projects in the areas of resource or energy efficiency and waste management. Again this advisory support is invaluable to companies that do not have the technical capability to progress projects themselves.

Many of our local companies are winning contracts in export markets and their successes are featured in this issue. Our trade mission programme for 2010, recently launched, will help many more to explore new markets and increase their export activity. More information about this is given on page 13.

We will soon begin the final year of our current Corporate Plan and begin preparation of our next one. Coupled with changes emanating from our Transform programme, it promises to be a period of intense activity that should deliver real benefit to Northern Ireland businesses.

# NEWS

## Parity Solutions expands

Parity Solutions is to establish a Microsoft Centre of Excellence in Belfast. With over £630,000 of support from Invest NI, the company plans to create up to 94 highly skilled software development and consultancy positions by 2012.

Parity Solutions, one of the first Microsoft Gold Certified Partners in Europe, will develop innovative information management solutions, based on the Microsoft Platform for Public and Private Sector Organisations.

Announcing the Centre of Excellence, Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster, said: "Parity's decision to expand operations in Belfast reflects the success of its current operation, the confidence it has in being able to recruit high calibre information technology professionals and its commitment to Northern Ireland."

Parity's CEO Alwyn Welch said: "We are delighted with the support and funding from Invest NI and this investment truly illustrates Parity's strategy to capitalise on new technologies and market opportunities that we have identified."

>> Minister Foster is pictured with Parity's CEO Alwyn Welch at the company's office in north Belfast

## High Brow investment



Belfast-based Brow Packaging is investing £360,000 in a new range of packaging products and to expand its sales, particularly in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Invest NI is supporting the investment, which will enable the company to offer customers in food processing and waste management new film for polythene bags, sheeting and wrapping products.

The family-owned and managed business has identified new markets for its longstanding expertise in the extrusion and printing of lighter gauge polythene film and has invested in new equipment and marketing initiatives.

Jamie Brow, Brow Packaging's Financial Director, says: "As well as investing in

new equipment and modernising existing machinery, we have improved our information technology systems to cope with the increased volumes of work. We are undertaking a 'Process Improvement Mapping' exercise to score operations and improve efficiency and overall effectiveness.

"This investment will enable us to offer customers much lighter gauged bags, which, apart from making us much more competitive, opens up new business opportunities," he adds.

>> Jamie Brow, Financial Director of Brow Packaging in Belfast, and Maynard Mawhinney, Invest NI Food Director



## Major R&D investment by Seagate



>> Professor James McElroy, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Queen's University; Minister Arlene Foster; Steve Luczo, Chairman, CEO and President of Seagate Technology; and Alastair Hamilton, Chief Executive, Invest NI

Seagate Technology in Londonderry is investing £60 million in two major R&D investments. Invest NI has offered £12.7 million in support of the investments, which are expected to increase R&D related jobs there by 85 and to create a further 10 related research posts at Queen's University, Belfast.

Announcing the investment Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster said: "Encouraging innovation and boosting business research and development are hugely important to our economic future and will be key drivers in helping us deliver the productivity goal contained in the Programme for Government.

"One of the greatest values of collaboration is the potential for entirely new opportunities to arise as a consequence of cross-fertilisation. This is what we hope to see as Seagate and QUB bring their collective intellects to bear in exploring new ideas and concepts with a view to commercial realisation and exploitation.

"This was a mobile investment which could easily have gone elsewhere within the Seagate corporation, but for the strong case made by local management and the support offered by Invest NI," she added.

## Renewable firm expands

Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster has announced a £377,000 investment by an Enniskillen based renewable energy firm, supported by Invest NI.

Future Renewables, which designs, supplies and installs domestic renewable energy solutions, is one of the first businesses to get support from the growth element of the Invest NI Enterprise Development Programme.

As a result of the advice received, Future Renewables is now investing in an expansion plan which will help the firm to move into the Republic of Ireland and UK markets over the next two years.

Invest NI has offered over £35,000 to support the project which will create 10 new jobs.

# NEWS

## Mobile innovator sets up in Belfast

Movidius, an award winning mobile technology company from Dublin, has set up a £2.7 million R&D centre in Belfast with support from Invest NI.

The new company, Movidius (NI), will apply revolutionary technology to enable manufacturers of mobile phones and other hand-held devices to offer customers the ability to capture, view and edit high resolution video directly on their handset to share with others.

Movidius will provide nine high quality jobs for research engineers in the advanced area of silicon chip technology over the next 18 months.

Alastair Hamilton, Invest NI's Chief Executive, says: "This project is focused on highly innovative technology which will position Northern Ireland at the forefront of next generation mobile communications."

Sean Mitchell, Movidius' Chief Executive Officer, says: "The new Belfast centre, which we selected because of the availability of engineering professionals, will develop sophisticated imaging software and semiconductor technology to expand our Myriad based product offerings for a rapidly growing market."

# NEWS

## £2.5 million investment to expand exports

Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster has announced that local food processor Finnebrogue is investing £2.5 million to expand exports. The company has already created 35 new jobs since June as part of the investment project and it currently employs 65 people.

Finnebrogue is being assisted by Invest NI and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development through the EU Processing and Marketing Grant scheme, to expand its successful range of added-value sausage and venison products. The premium products have already been listed by major food retailers.

Arlene Foster said: "This is an immensely important investment by a company which has established an impressive record in offering major retailers highly innovative products, backed by excellent customer-focused services."

Finnebrogue Managing Director Denis Lynn said: "We are making this strategic investment to enable us to strengthen further our competitiveness in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland markets. It increases our production capacity and capability in key areas."

>> Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster; Peter McArdle, Invest NI; Denis Lynn, Managing Director and the staff of Finnebrogue

## Trade mission delivers hat trick



Bubble (NI), the Belfast-based digital technology business, secured contracts for its product in three major markets from its first Invest NI trade mission.

The company clinched deals that could be worth around £80,000 for its innovative SpeechBubble product, during the mission to Dubai, Qatar and Oman last November. SpeechBubble enables customers to develop health and safety presentations to employees using 16 different languages

Jim O'Neill, Bubble Sales Director, says: "We decided to target the Gulf region because of the extent of construction work currently underway there. Invest NI helped us with essential research

through the Trade Advisory Service. This gave us an idea of the market potential, but we weren't quite sure how SpeechBubble would be received. The only way to find out was the take part in the Invest NI mission. As it turned out, we were overwhelmed and delighted by the interest shown in our unique technology."

Dr Vicky Kell, Invest NI Trade Director, adds: "Winning contracts in all three centres on one of our missions is a very impressive achievement. The company approached the mission in a thoroughly professional and structured manner and is now reaping the benefits."

>> Vicky Kell, Invest NI Trade Director, and John Hill, a Director of Bubble NI





>> Pictured (l-r): Lens Westhoff, Deputy Head of Mission, Netherlands Embassy, London; Len Helden, Vista Print (Netherlands); Tracy Meharg, Invest NI's Managing Director of Innovation and Capability; and Gary Nicholls, Northern Ireland Plastics, Killyleagh

## Dutch focus brings export success

**Local companies secured £6 million worth of business in the Netherlands last year, thanks to Invest NI trade initiatives.**

The Netherlands is now the sixth most important European market for local manufacturers.

Last year, 17 local companies benefited from Invest NI's innovative Going Dutch programme, which offers businesses extensive on-the-ground, practical support from an experienced marketing consultancy.

In January at the fourth annual Northern Ireland-Netherlands (NI-NL) Trade and Export Society dinner, Invest NI's Managing Director of Innovation

and Capability, Tracy Meharg, said: "The Netherlands is an excellent role model for Northern Ireland as an export-focused community with a concentration on innovative products and services."

NI-NL is a not-for-profit organisation for companies and professionals involved in trade between Northern Ireland and The Netherlands.

Also speaking at the NI-NL event, Mr Laurens Westhoff, Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Head of Mission, said: "Despite the recent economic downturn we see a lot of interest and activity in Northern Ireland from Dutch companies, and vice versa."

## Tribute to Sir Allen

Following the death earlier this year of Almac Chairman and founder, Sir Allen McClay, the Board and management of Invest NI paid tribute to his contribution to economic development.

Chairman Stephen Kingon said: "I had the privilege of knowing and working with Sir Allen since the early 1970s and his personal drive, ambition and visionary leadership was always evident. The Almac Group has grown to become a Northern Ireland company of

global stature. That would not have been possible without the huge personal contribution of Sir Allen, who could see the potential for Northern Ireland to be a global presence in Life Sciences. This was underpinned by his realisation of the need to combine economic development with academic research as evidenced by collaboration projects between the McClay Foundation, Queen's University, and Invest NI. There is no doubt that he will be greatly missed."

## Programme delivers substantial savings

Invest NI has helped Mallusk company, Brett Martin, to make substantial savings through a programme of continuous improvement.

Brett Martin, manufacturers of roof lights, drainage products and semi-finished acrylic and PVC sheets, employs over 700 people at six sites across the UK and the Netherlands.

Invest NI part funded a dedicated business improvement agent for a three-year period, who was tasked with generating savings for the business. These savings were secured by systematically examining key processes including material usage, assembly costs, maintenance and suppliers.

Niall Casey, Invest NI's Director of Business Improvement Services, says: "This has been an extremely successful programme for Brett Martin. The company has benefited from the efficiency gains so far and will continue to benefit in the months and years ahead."

Harry McGrath, Brett Martin's Production Director, says: "We operate in a highly competitive market which means ongoing continuous improvement and cost reduction is essential to ensuring that we can maintain market share."

# NEWS

# Ask the Experts

Innovation begins with creative thinking, but developing the idea into a marketable product often requires expertise in highly technical or scientific areas, something many small businesses don't have. Invest NI's Technical Advisory Unit (TAU) can help.

Staffed with highly qualified and experienced engineers, industrial chemists and intellectual property specialists, the TAU is a mine of free expertise for local businesses.

Many TAU staff have worked in industry and have first-hand experience of the problems or technical issues that they are called upon to solve. These issues can range from product development and approval, CE marking, through engineering and manufacturing problems and workplace health and safety concerns, to assisting in the design of a revolutionary new process or patent/trade mark searching.

TAU's support for companies can often be central to the success of a new product or process, as recent success stories show:

## PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Co. Armagh business Jackson Reece recently won a gold accolade from the UK's leading parenting magazine *Mother & Baby* for its Kinder by Nature herbal baby wipe developed with assistance from TAU. The product has a unique formula containing a completely natural blend of organic essential oils, is hypoallergenic, dermatologically approved and biodegradable and compostable.

Dr Kieran Coogan of the TAU team has been working closely with Jackson Reece to help develop the product. He says: "The company had a great idea for a baby wipe that would suit

sensitive skin but lacked the technical expertise to take it forward. It asked us for help with a range of issues including ensuring the wipe and its packaging were fully biodegradable, proper labelling of ingredients and testing the shelf life of the product."

Dr Coogan arranged for the Advanced Materials section of the University of Ulster to undertake stability testing to find out if the product would retain all its properties during its lifecycle. Jackson Reece was able to get financial support to fund this testing through Invest NI's Technical Development Incentive and Dr Coogan was on hand to interpret the university's final report.

**"Our role is often to help non-specialist business people access and understand highly technical information. I've accompanied Colin Cordner, the Managing Director, to meetings with packaging suppliers, and I was able to interpret important US reports on biodegradable packaging to allow Colin to ensure his packaging was suitable for the US market," says Dr Coogan.**

TAU also signposted the company to Invest NI's Innovation Voucher scheme through which it got support for the development of its newest product, a flushable cloth wipe. Recently TAU has helped with all-important intellectual property advice and patent searches for this product.



Colin Cordner comments: "The technical support we've received from TAU has been really excellent and was essential in allowing us to develop the very high quality product we had envisaged and bring it to market so successfully."

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Choc O Bloc is an innovative chocolate workshop based at Dundonald International Ice Bowl. The outlet offers customers the opportunity to make novelty chocolate bars using its unique method and apparatus for tempering chocolate. Additionally it has developed a mouldable chocolate product for the retail market.

With such a unique product, Choc O Bloc was keen to protect its intellectual property and turned to Invest NI's TAU for advice. As a first step it was advised to take part in Invest NI's Intellectual Assets Management programme and helped to undertake an intellectual assets audit.

Martin McAteer of TAU says:

**This kind of audit helps companies identify everything that is of value to them in the business. This includes things that can be protected as intellectual property under, for example, patents, copyright or design registration, as well as more intangible things like goodwill, know-how, skills and so on that need to be protected in other ways.**

The audit led to the company filing a patent application for protecting the process for tempering its pliable chocolate. It also identified an opportunity to register a UK Trademark application for its mouldable chocolate product branded as Crafty Candy.

To protect its 'softer' intellectual assets, TAU helped Choc O Bloc to put in place systems to protect its Trade Secrets and employee contracts that would safeguard the recipe and process for producing the unique chocolate product.

"We were able to advise the company on a range of actions that it could take to protect its product and wider brand. This included guidance on website protection, copyright and handling of confidential information. We will be advising them further on trade marks and design registration," adds Mr McAteer.

Stephen Lennie, Managing Director of Choc O Bloc, says: "The Intellectual Assets Management programme expanded our knowledge of intellectual property protection and allowed us to develop our intellectual property portfolio. Our new intellectual property registration has helped us to expand into external markets and to establish an internal matrix to identify IP issues as part of our new product design and development processes."



## CE MARKING

Testing products to ensure that they meet quality and safety standards expected in export markets is essential to the success of any company involved in manufacturing machinery, electrical or electro-mechanical equipment. Invest NI's CE Marking programme run by the TAU helps companies to do that.



Belfast company, Audio Processing Technology (APT), is an established technology leader in the development of audio compression algorithms and broadcast audio hardware. It has regularly engaged with the CE Marking programme both for training its staff and for accessing laboratory time for product testing.

Colin Graham of TAU says: "APT has benefited in a number of ways from the CE Marking programme. Without the CE Mark on its products it would not be able to sell into the European market, but beyond this it has found the programme very beneficial for staff training and ensuring consistency of approach.

"Embedding CE Marking principles also has efficiency benefits. Adopting CE Marking techniques at the design stage avoids subsequent amendment of design at implementation stage, when alteration is more costly," he adds.

The CE Marking programme takes the form of two seminars backed up by three days' consultancy for each company and concludes with a final forum. The programme is currently being extended beyond European requirements to integrate global technical product compliance requirements.

John Lindsay of APT says: "The CE Marking programme has embedded good practice in the company and above all has provided a flexible and affordable option for local testing of our products at the design stage."

**>> For information about TAU's range of advice and programmes contact Ian Wilkinson  
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# Innovating to stay

# AHEAD

Research & Development



Even companies that are global leaders in their field recognise the importance of investing in research and development to help them retain their trading edge.

**In the fast moving world of computer technology, continuous innovation is essential to survival. Recognising that it is central to its primary goal of increasing business productivity in Northern Ireland, Invest NI is keen to support investment in innovation. Two major investments in R&D were recently announced that will not only strengthen the companies involved but will also enhance the skills base in the local IT sector.**

>> Pictured with Arlene Foster are (from left) Bill McKiernan, Chairman and Chief Executive, CyberSource and Jeremy Fitch, Invest NI

## CyberSource invests in Belfast talent

In February CyberSource's plans to invest almost £2.8 million in R&D at its Belfast centre were announced by Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster.

CyberSource is a world leader in the development of payment-management solutions with approximately 295,000 customers worldwide. The investment means that over the next three years, the company's Belfast team will design and develop cutting edge technologies based on Java software to enhance its payment platforms.

Invest NI has offered over £625,000 of support for the initiative.

Announcing the investment the Minister said: "Innovation is at the heart of CyberSource's success and is also key to economic growth. Projects like this contribute to the development of high level R&D capability in Northern Ireland, and will further strengthen our IT and financial services sectors."

Michael Walsh, President and CEO of CyberSource, added: "The level of talent and energy our Belfast team has brought

to the organisation has exceeded our expectations. As the team grows, it will play a central role in achieving the strategic objectives of the company."

## NaviNet recognises quality workforce

Last October NaviNet, America's largest real-time healthcare communications network, announced a £4.4 million investment to set up a software R&D centre in Belfast. It is the Boston-headquartered company's first expansion outside the US, and will create nearly 60 highly skilled, high-value jobs over the next three years. Invest NI offered £944,000 towards the project.

Brad Waugh, NaviNet's President and Chief Executive Officer, said: "At a time when healthcare reform is one of the most pressing issues facing the American government and public, NaviNet has committed to investing in resources both domestically and internationally to deliver solutions that address US healthcare challenges and contribute to improving quality of care and reducing costs.

"NaviNet looked at various options and locations for our new R&D centre, but as a result of discussions with Invest NI and our recognition of the many attractions of Northern Ireland as a good place to do business, notably the quality of the workforce, we decided to invest here. I'm confident that the Belfast centre will play an important role in the future growth and success of NaviNet."

The investment will deliver over £2 million annually in additional salaries and underlines Invest NI's ability to secure quality investors for the region. NaviNet will join the growing cluster of world-class healthcare and ICT companies in Northern Ireland.



- 32 per cent of respondents said that their Compete project would not have taken place without support.

In terms of regional benefits, the report revealed that:

- 57 per cent of companies recorded that new or improved products have been launched in their markets as a result of the support. Similarly, 24 per cent recorded new or improved processes, and 20 per cent identified new or improved services.
- The increase in total spend on R&D by Compete funded organisations was significant.
- 873 net additional jobs were created in the sample of 43 companies.
- 119 new R&D or innovation linkages were identified.
- 89 per cent of Compete projects in the sample resulted in new areas of knowledge being created in the companies involved.

Carol Keery, Invest NI's Director of Innovation, Research and Technology, says: "This evaluation report shows that overall the programme created tangible and significant benefits for the companies taking part and more widely throughout the region.

"Increasing innovation and R&D among local companies is one of Invest NI's priorities. Our Corporate Plan 2008-2011 sets ambitious targets to increase business expenditure on R&D as a means of increasing productivity and steering our economy towards a high value, knowledge-based one. Our targets include securing R&D investment commitments of £120 million and helping 300 companies to engage in R&D for the first time."

Compete has now been subsumed into Invest NI's Grant for R&D programme which offers a single gateway through which businesses can apply for support across the whole R&D continuum from industrial research through to experimental development.

# Helping companies Compete

**A recent report commissioned by Invest NI concluded that the agency's support for R&D has created tangible and significant benefits for the companies taking part, and the region as a whole.**

The report by CM International analysed Post Project Evaluations of 65 Compete projects completed by 43 companies up to 2006. Compete was open to all Northern Irish companies that wanted to engage in a project involving a technologically innovative product or process development. Between February 2002 and March 2006 the programme invested approximately £22.9 million by

way of grant in 207 development projects, giving an average cost per project of £110,628.

The report identified substantial benefits for both the participating companies and the wider economy. Key benefits for companies were:

- 61 per cent of companies achieved their project objectives from a commercial perspective and 90 per cent achieved their project objectives from a technical perspective.
- Just under a quarter of the companies (22 per cent) felt that 'the outcome was crucially important to the company' and that, without the Compete funded project, the company was unlikely to have survived.

**>> For more information about R&D support please contact Brona Fitzpatrick  
T: 028 9069 8607  
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or visit [www.investni.com/r+d](http://www.investni.com/r+d)**

# WHY EXPORTERS ARE NUTS ABOUT BRAZIL

Trade Mission



Invest NI is organising a multi-sectoral trade mission to Brazil in October. The mission will be centred on São Paulo, one of the world's biggest cities.

**BRAZIL** is designated by UK Trade and Investment as a high growth market and is the UK's most important trading partner in Latin America. The UK is currently Brazil's 15th largest supplier, with a 1.9 per cent market share and UK exports of goods valued at £523 million in 2008, up 50 per cent on the previous year.

Moy Park in Craigavon, one of Europe's leading chicken processing businesses, is owned by Brazil's Marfrig organisation. The UK, moreover, is one of Brazil's largest foreign investors, and many large UK corporations have well-established operations in the country.

Brazil has the second biggest industrial sector in the Americas with industries ranging from cars, steel and petrochemicals to computers, aircraft

and consumer durables. The country has a very sophisticated technological sector that includes a highly successful aerospace business in Embraer. It has also pioneered ethanol, an alternative biofuel.

Brazil is among the 10 largest markets in the world, producing tens of millions of tons of steel, 26 million tons of cement, 3.5 million television sets, and three million refrigerators.

There is a growing middle class in Brazil who have real spending power and who appreciate high quality merchandise. If a product or service is generally competitive in world markets it is also likely to be so in Brazil.

## KEY FACTS

POPULATION: 187 million

CAPITAL: Brasília - 2.6 million

OTHER KEY CENTRES:

São Paulo, 11 million, and Rio de Janeiro, 6 million

CURRENCY: Real (1 Real = £0.34)

TIME DIFFERENCE: GMT -2

## WORLD CUP 2014 AND OLYMPICS 2016

Significant opportunities are emerging for Northern Ireland companies to help develop the infrastructure needed for the Football World Cup 2014 in Brazil, as well as the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

With an estimated 600,000 foreign visitors expected for the World Cup alone and with 12 host cities to prepare, Brazil is facing a huge challenge. Estimates of the investment in infrastructure required range from £10 billion to £30 billion.

This will include:

- £1.5 billion on constructing and modernising 12 stadiums;
- £1.4 billion expanding and modernising airports across the country;
- Improving and expanding urban transport systems in the 12 host cities - a potential investment of up to £10 billion.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Medicinal and pharmaceutical products
- Chemical materials and products
- Organic chemicals
- General industrial machinery and equipment
- Environment and renewable energy
- Infrastructure



>> For more information on the trade mission, please contact  
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# NEW

## market visits programme

Trade

Invest NI's new Market Visits Programme for 2010-11 features 70 trade missions and exhibition stands in global markets.

Fifteen events are being planned in the Middle East in markets including the Saudi Arabian centres of Riyadh, Jeddah

and Al Khobar, as well as the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Oman. A new addition to the region is Iraq where local companies will have an opportunity to explore opportunities in Kurdistan for the first time.

First time multi-sectoral trade missions to Brazil, Estonia and Latvia and Vietnam are also scheduled along with visits to established markets of China, India,

the US, South East Asia, Scandinavia and Russia.

Another important feature of the programme is a focus on 'green' technology events such as EcoBuild, London; the Energiesparmesse Exhibition in Wels, Austria; All Energy in Aberdeen; Husum Wind Show, Germany; and Renewable Energy World in Amsterdam.

Companies in Information Technology and Communications will also be able to display their expertise and keep abreast of market trends at events such as the Mobile World Congress, Barcelona; Technology World, Coventry; SxSW Digital Content, Austin, Texas; the Microsoft Worldwide Partnership Conference, Washington DC; and the Apple Worldwide Developers' Conference, San Francisco.

Other major events are scheduled for companies in sectors such as biotech, food and construction.

Dr Vicky Kell, Invest NI's Trade Director, says: "The Market Visits Programme has been developed to encourage as many companies as possible in manufacturing and tradable services to exploit opportunities now developing worldwide, and is one of the most comprehensive and far reaching programmes we have published."

>> Dr Vicky Kell, Invest NI Trade Director, pictured with Kurt Burmeister of Lipari Foods, Detroit, at the launch of the new trade promotion calendar. Mr Burmeister was in Belfast to finalise arrangements for Invest NI's first-ever stand at the prestigious Lipari Food Show in Michigan this April

# SAUDI SUCCESS

Saudi Arabia is fast becoming a key export market for Northern Ireland, as a direct result of a series of initiatives there by Invest NI over the past year.

Among those gaining a foothold in 2009 in this huge marketplace are a number offering professional services. Quigg Golden, for example, a provider of contract resolution and arbitration services, has a joint venture in Jeddah and is exploring a number of opportunities there. Several local

architectural practices are now quoting for projects in Saudi.

In addition to those offering professional services, our strategic focus on the construction industry there has led to worthwhile business for several companies providing building products.

Many local companies are now doing business there or are talking to contacts about opportunities for joint ventures. Efforts to develop strong relationships with major contractors such as the Saudi bin Laden Group and Emaar, two of the biggest construction businesses in the

Middle East, have proved exceptionally successful.

Those developing business there now include two Lisburn companies - Boomer Industries, a manufacturer of plastic extrusions, and Powershield, a specialist in steel doors. Rapid International of Tandragee now provides its concrete manufacturing and recycling machinery to this market.

Larne company FG Wilson Engineering continues to grow its presence in Saudi. Following a recent Invest NI mission to Riyadh and Jeddah, the company secured new business worth £750,000. Mallaghan Engineering in Coalisland is now providing ground handling equipment to Riyadh International Airport.

**CKOS Kitchens, established with support from Invest NI, specialises in bespoke kitchens to the wholesale market. It offers a unique service to kitchen showrooms by supplying a complete kitchen package including doors, work tops and carcass for direct shipment to customers for fit out.**

The company's main customer base is in Great Britain where it has already secured over 100 wholesalers in the first year of trading. As well as initial start-up and ICT assistance, CKOS got support from Invest NI's Growth Accelerator Programme to recruit a Sales Order Processing Manager to help it cope with its expanding order book.

Having established its products and distribution network in the UK market, CKOS decided that it needed to start looking at the potential in export markets. Again the company enlisted the advice and assistance of Invest NI and, through the agency's Developing Export Sales Strategy Programme, engaged the services of Handel Export Consulting.

Initial research indicated that Denmark presented strong market opportunities for the company and working with Suzanne Hill, Director of Handel Export, CKOS developed

a strategy for entering the Danish market.

"Suzanne was able to clearly explain exactly what we needed to do to ensure that our visit would be a success, what the expectations of buyers there would be and how business negotiations are carried out," says Michelle Bloomfield, Export Sales Manager with CKOS Kitchens. Making sure that the company was well prepared in advance of market visits to Denmark was key to shortening the sales cycle and ensuring rapid results.

Suzanne Hill explains:

**Cultural, social and business customs vary between markets and they all need to be respected; this requires patience and a level of understanding from the company wishing to export. We worked on putting together a sales and marketing strategy to take the company through the different stages of export development, preparation before the market visit, meeting with potential clients in Denmark and then following up the contacts and seeing them through to contract stage.**

Michelle Bloomfield believes that taking advice from the professionals has definitely paid dividends.

"Exporting is an expensive venture and as a small company we do not have huge resources to spend on making costly mistakes," she says.

"Working with Handel Export made sure that we avoided some of the common pitfalls that new exporters may face, allowed us to maximise our return on investment and fast-tracked our entry into the Danish market."

With the specialist export training and advice under its belt CKOS has recently targeted Holland and has just secured new contracts in this market.

Dr Vicky Kell, Invest NI's Director of Trade, adds: "Successful exporting is vital for long-term business success and CKOS has been quick to seize the opportunity to enter new markets. Using the expertise available through our Developing Export Sales Strategy Programme the company has been able to secure not just immediate wins but develop the skills to effectively target other export markets."

**>> For more information on the Developing Export Sales Strategy Programme please contact Patrick McNally  
T: 028 9069 8109  
E: patrick.mcnally@investni.com**

# FAST-TRACK SUCCESS for kitchen company

Antrim based company CKOS Kitchens has recently won significant new business, moved to larger premises and appointed five new wholesalers in the Danish market. Not bad for a company set up just 18 months ago.

IREP



**Independent  
Review of  
Economic Policy**  
(DETI and Invest NI)

# THE MINISTER RESPONDS

Special Feature



At the end of January, Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster delivered her action plan in response to the recommendations from the Independent Review of Economic Policy (IREP) report.

There are four key areas under which the action plan will be implemented: the co-ordination of economic policy in Northern Ireland; DETI and Invest NI assistance to industry; autonomy, flexibility and decision-making; and policy development and monitoring.

## 1. THE CO-ORDINATION OF ECONOMIC POLICY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Minister said she 'strongly supported' the establishment of a new Department of the Economy by merging DETI with the

Department of Employment and Learning.

She added: "I have asked Executive colleagues to consider the creation of a new Department of the Economy, as part of the planned review of strand one institutions.

"I recognise that getting agreement and implementing new structures will take some time, which is why I am advocating the interim steps suggested by the Panel to improve the structures that are currently in place. Central to this is the establishment of an Executive sub-committee to prioritise cross-departmental action on the economy."

## 2. DETI AND INVEST NI ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRY

The Minister agreed with the recommendation that Invest NI should seek to offer support, in its broadest sense, to a much wider business base.

She has asked Invest NI to review how the organisation could develop a tiered portfolio of support across the wider business base to accelerate innovation, R&D and export growth, and also to consider how the development of a Small Business Unit could fit within this model.

The Minister recognised that Invest NI has already taken action to skew more funds towards innovation and research and development, a key recommendation of the IREP report.

Referring to the significant reduction in regional aid limits for selective financial assistance (SFA) from the end of 2010, the Minister said: "SFA should be used in the future to support investment in indigenous companies and help attract new and potential follow-on investments to Northern Ireland," adding that it would be subject to further consideration.

## 3. AUTONOMY, FLEXIBILITY AND DECISION MAKING

In response to criticism of DETI and Invest NI's governance system and the accusation that they remained too complex and time consuming, the Minister said:

"My officials have held discussions with DFP to explore how the current delegated limits might be extended. Where major projects require DETI and DFP approval, I accept the Panel's recommendation that these cases should be considered in parallel by a Central Project Review Group."

## 4. POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND MONITORING

The IREP made recommendations regarding DETI and Invest NI's role in policy development. In light of these, restructuring in DETI is already being addressed.

Reference was also made to performance monitoring, including that DETI should assume responsibility for reporting on Invest NI performance. This will now be undertaken.

The Economic Development Forum has been stood down and will be replaced with a new advisory unit, to be established by April 2010. This unit will include representatives from Invest NI, business, skills and an independent economist. It will also address the recommendation to create an independent economic advisor.

**A steering group has been set up to implement the recommendations that the Minister wants to take forward.**



Alastair Hamilton  
Chief Executive

Issue Focus

Alastair Hamilton, Invest NI's Chief Executive, outlines Invest NI's programme of change

**OUR** ambition is to make Invest NI a world leading economic development agency. And so the Board and Executive of Invest NI welcome moves coming out of the IREP report that will make the organisation more autonomous and give it greater flexibility.

But it is important to note that many of the IREP recommendations, such as increasing resources directed to innovation and R&D, enhancing our export support, reducing the number of programmes we offer, and broadening the range of businesses we offer that support to, are already work in hand as part of our current Corporate Plan.

The other Review recommendations, taken along with the strategic direction provided by our Board, the views I have come to since taking up post, and our ongoing engagement with business, have led to the development of a much wider programme of change, called Transform, which I and my senior management team are now implementing.

Transform is built around the four key priorities of our customers, our processes, our people and our performance. Our aim is to create a new delivery model for our support to businesses in order to accelerate the growth of innovation and exports.

**CUSTOMER**

Delivering to a wider customer base, enhancing the customer experience and rationalising the product portfolio are the key aims of the customer focused area of Transform.

It is essential that we engage with customers through the most appropriate channels, and it is likely that we will see the development of a tiered service delivery model built around clear customer segmentation.

# TRANSFORM

## PEOPLE

In this area the priorities are to get the design of the organisation right and to ensure that we deliver Invest NI support in the most effective way. Transform will embed a customer-led service culture throughout Invest NI, whilst ensuring that we continue to meet, if not exceed, the high standards of corporate governance which the organisation has consistently displayed.

## PROCESS

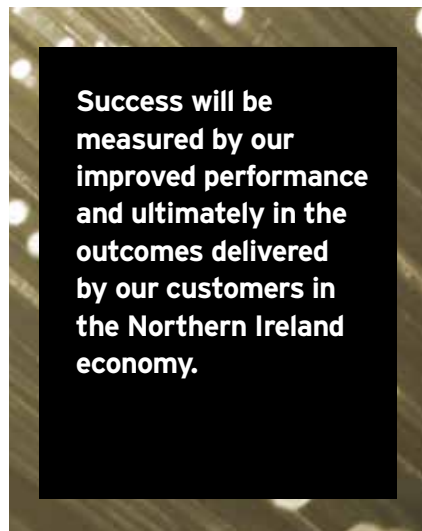
Streamlining Invest NI's processes is essential to improving the customer experience and so we are considering how best to refine our processes. We'll be looking at identifying bottlenecks and duplication, and considering how technology might be employed to shorten processing times. The introduction of a new system later this year will, for example, reduce the amount of paper handling required for a claim.

The Minister's commitment to act quickly to develop new governance arrangements by April of this year, to give early consideration to higher delegation limits, streamlined approvals processes and budgetary flexibility, have the potential to transform Invest NI's operational environment, reduce bureaucracy and enhance responsiveness. These can only be good for the businesses we support. The goal is to develop a corporate governance model that gives Invest NI greater freedom and therefore enhances its customer responsiveness. I'm looking for increased autonomy and delegation, not to get away from oversight and governance, but to allow us to respond quickly to what clients need.

## PERFORMANCE

This element of the programme will focus on identifying key performance

indicators and improving interaction with stakeholders through better communication. It will include ensuring that Invest NI's programmes are aligned with the Programme for Government and that the organisation is results driven.

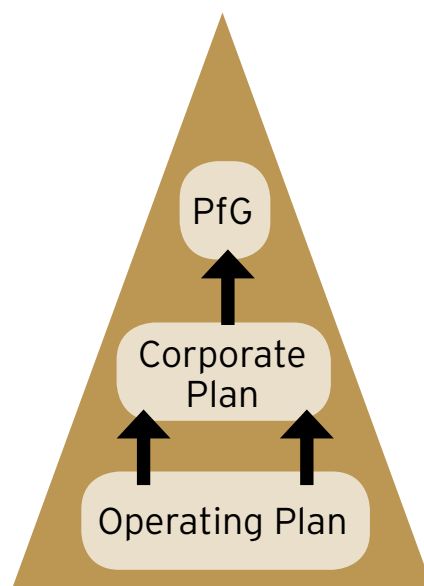


One of the criticisms that has been levelled at Invest NI is that it is risk averse. I want to move from a culture of risk avoidance to one of risk management. Work is underway to establish best practice risk management in both Invest NI and wider government.

I would like to see Invest NI operating a portfolio system whereby we engage with a mix of high risk companies and those regarded as less risky, working to an aggregate target for growth across a variety of sectors and firms. We will continue to encourage companies to bring forward projects that contain high levels of innovation and R&D, since these projects tend to have the potential to generate jobs paying higher wages and salaries.

In driving this change, we will not take our eye off 'business as usual' as we continue to deliver on the commitments of our current Corporate Plan. We will persist in refining our approach to inform future Corporate Plans that will be focused on reducing the productivity gap and contributing to the goals of the Programme for Government.

Across the Transform programme and alongside the Minister's Review Implementation programme, there are many areas of interdependence, but we have set challenging targets which I believe will see real change delivered over the short, medium and longer term.



Communication

## Tailored support for **ENTERPRISING INDIVIDUALS**

Invest NI's Go for it programme, part of its suite of Enterprise Development Programmes, is helping people across Northern Ireland to set up businesses and develop their skills through training and mentoring support.

### THE SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR PEST CONTROL BUSINESS

A pioneering Moira man's pest control business is in full flight thanks to his unusual methods and support from Invest NI. Stephen Mulholland's business, NBC Bird and Pest Control, has gone from strength to strength since he set up the Northern Ireland branch of the franchise last year.

Stephen accessed support via Invest NI's Go for it programme to start his business which tackles pest problems in commercial and domestic environments using a team of experienced technicians.

"Going from full time employment to running my own business was daunting," says Stephen. "But I just thought that if I am willing to work so hard for an employer, why not work just as hard for myself and reap the benefits?"

"In the past six months I have learned more about business than in my whole 18 years of working life. Invest NI and the Go for it programme provided me with a mentor to discuss my business plan and areas which needed improvement, such as marketing. We are in the process of developing a website and business is growing steadily."



>> Stephen Mulholland

Stephen uses the innovative and environmentally friendly falconry method to control feral pigeons, seagulls and other unwanted birds. He trains birds of prey, such as hawks, to scare the birds away from areas like land fill sites, council buildings, public amenity sites and shopping centres provincewide.

### GALLOPING SUCCESS FOR ROCKING HORSES

In October last year, Michael Campbell enrolled in Invest NI's Go for it programme to help him set up a business making outdoor rocking horses. Less than two months later his order book was full as parents scrambled to buy the nostalgic toy for their children at Christmas.

"It has all happened very quickly. One minute I was researching Invest NI, the next I was working a seven-day week

to keep up with the orders in the run-up to Christmas," says Michael.

Michael was in full time employment when he decided to set up his own business and fill what he saw as a gap in the market.

"It was a bit nerve-wracking but I felt it was the right time to do it. I got a lot of help and support from Invest NI, particularly with regard to devising my business plan and setting up the website."

Each of Michael's beautifully handmade horses is constructed with timber, which is galvanised for outdoor use, and has

a unique face and a saddle made of real leather. He has also ensured the horses meet standards regarding child safety. The rocking horses can also be dismantled for transport or storage.

Michael now plans to enrol in Invest NI's Growth Programme so he can exploit the growing demand for his product in areas outside Northern Ireland.



## VISUALISING A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

When Chris Yokes completed his work experience 22 years ago, he couldn't have imagined that he'd be setting up a new business from the very same office. But that's how events have come full circle for Chris, who offers a fully three-dimensional visualisation service to the construction industry, through his new consultancy, VA&D. Belfast-man Chris started the business in September 2009 after participating on Invest NI's Go for it programme.

"The Go for it programme teamed me up with a business advisor and the support I received through workshops and training was invaluable, particularly in areas such as finance and marketing," says Chris.

With extensive experience in the architectural industry, Chris saw a gap in the market to exploit emerging technology to its optimal effect.

"I knew that there was a demand within the industry for CAD solutions, but I believed that software wasn't being used to its full potential to greatly minimise human error and the time expended on complex design plans," he says.



>> Chris Yokes

Having invested in the licence to use the pioneering software that created new visual effects on the movie, *Avatar*, Chris now offers a range of CAD (computer aided design) based solutions, and is able to present the construction industry with vital information on power consumption rates and energy saving measures.

VA&D has already taken on one full-time architecture graduate and has won a number of design contracts.



## FOREIGN TREASURES INSPIRE ONLINE BUSINESS

After the birth of her second child, North Belfast mum Debra McVicker decided to translate her passion for travel and artisan giftware into a web-based retail business. With her sister Tracey Houston, she set up [www.hamptonblue.co.uk](http://www.hamptonblue.co.uk), which offers

a miscellany of high-end sundries from costume and semi-precious jewellery to occasion bags, scarves, photo albums, candles and soft toys.

**The support package that I was offered through the Go for it programme helped me to set my ideas and business plan down on paper in an organised manner, rather than just having it all in my head, says Debra.**

The web-order business, which was started in June last year, allows customers to place their orders using secure online booking software. Having little frontline experience in either retail or e-commerce,

Debra readily admits that the first six months were a massive learning curve.

"We set up in the middle of a recession and just as the postal strike was about to begin. With my hands full with the two children during the day, I had to work nights and at the weekends to get things done. Hopefully, we've been through the most difficult phase, but you still have to reconcile yourself to putting in the hours to make a small business work."

With the Hampton Blue business model now solidly embedded, Debra has her sights set on building the product line, sourcing more local and Fairtrade product, and adding a wedding gift and vouchers section.

>> For further information on Go for it  
T: 0800 027 0639  
[www.goforitni.com](http://www.goforitni.com)

Food

# FERMANAGH'S *Fine* food



**RECENT** successes announced by Western Brand Poultry and Ready Egg Products, both based at Lisnaskea, have emphasised the strength of the contribution that food and drink processing makes to the economic wellbeing of Fermanagh.

Western Brand Poultry, a leading supplier of poultry and egg products to customers in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, invested £4.4 million to expand production at its Lisnaskea site, creating 60 new jobs over the next three years. Ready Egg Products announced that the company has secured new business

worth around £2 million from its participation with Invest NI at the 2009 International Food and Drink Exhibition in London. The company, now the fourth biggest supplier of hard boiled and liquid eggs in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland, followed up leads from the show and landed substantial contracts with major suppliers of cakes to Marks and Spencer throughout the UK.

Food and drink, of course, is the one industry with a significant presence in most parts of Northern Ireland. Producers in Fermanagh are benefiting from the county's rich pastures and clean environment and most are now focused on sales outside Northern Ireland.

The industry also complements Fermanagh's great strength as an international tourism centre, a position which has been recently reinforced by the development of impressive facilities such as the Lough Erne Resort and championship standard golf courses. Fermanagh is particularly well-placed to provide visitors with the quality eating experience they are increasingly demanding.

Creative chefs like Noel McMeel, who appeared in the 2008 series of the Great British Menu representing Northern Ireland and Liz Moore, who runs the popular Belle Isle Cookery School near Lisbellaw, are raising the profile of local ingredients by developing highly innovative dishes. McMeel, for instance, created a unique Lough Erne Mixed Grill of pork and lamb as the signature dish for the Lough Erne Restaurant and Liz Moore produced Braised Belly of O'Doherty's Fermanagh Pork in Guinness with

crispy cabbage for a major investment conference in Belfast.

As well as developing original products such as nitrite-free bacon, O'Doherty in Enniskillen has produced an immensely successful Black Bacon Cookbook of new recipes that includes other local ingredients such as goat's cheese, 'Lisnaskea Lamb', 'Derrylin Soda Farls', potatoes and vegetables, as well as Guinness.

Other successful food innovators in County Fermanagh include Maurice Kettle, who has used his experience in international meat marketing to create Kettle Foods in Lisnaskea. The company specialises in a premium range of dry aged beef from grass fed Aberdeen Angus and Hereford herds in Fermanagh. The company's beef now features on the menus of gourmet restaurants, up-market hotels and catering organisations here and abroad. Company sales outside Northern Ireland currently contribute to around 74 per cent of turnover.

In addition, Rye Valley Foods in Enniskillen sells its highly successful Matteson Fridge Raiders chicken snacks throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. Invest NI also works closely with Tickety-Moo premium ice cream, the Bite Group, Upper Erne Lakes Poultry, Flynn's Fine Foods and the Sheelin Cottage Bread Company, all innovative companies which are currently keeping Fermanagh firmly on Northern Ireland's food map.





>> Pictured (l-r): UFU President Graham Furey; Michelle Shirlow, Invest NI; John Cunningham of the HGCA Board; and Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster



>> Pictured (l-r): Norbert Quinn, ABP (Newry); Giampiero Carozza, Amadori Gesco; John McNally, MD Stonebridge Group; and Keith Chalmers, Invest NI



>> Pictured with Invest NI board member Bryan Keating is Tammy Hoy, Hoys Farmhouse Ice Cream, and Ann McGrath, Rodney Miller Associates

# BITE SIZE NEWS

## Breakfast celebration

In January Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster spoke at the annual UFU Farmhouse Business Breakfast, which she described as "a celebration of an industry that is at the very core of Northern Ireland's economy."

The breakfast, she said, highlighted the importance of building a strong partnership between farmers and processors aimed at satisfying the requirements of consumers. Last year output in the food and drink sector grew by 10 per cent and employment by 2.9 per cent.

## Italian meat buyers

One of Italy's leading retail chains was represented in a group of meat buyers from Milan and Bologna hosted by Invest NI in January. Senior buyers from seven companies explored opportunities to source beef and lamb from local suppliers through the 'Meet the buyer' initiative arranged by Invest NI's Food Division.

The buyers had face-to-face meetings with 10 local companies.

## Designs on success

Ballyclare based Hoys Farmhouse Ice Cream, and Belfast based Rodney Miller Associates, were two of the 15 local companies that participated in an Invest NI initiative to develop their understanding of design and how integrating it into their business strategy can create competitive advantage. As part of the scheme, Invest NI partnered firms with specialist design consultants who provided advice on engineering, product design, graphic design and branding.

## FarmWizard's African deal

Innovative herd management software developed by FarmWizard in Belfast will be used to provide traceability functionality on hundreds of South African farms, following a deal agreed on a recent Invest NI trade mission to the country. FarmWizard reached agreement with Checkers, one of South Africa's leading hyper/supermarket chains. It is the company's first business in South Africa.

## Gulf success

Kestrel Foods, the Craigavon based specialist in healthy snack foods, has won business worth around £250,000 in Dubai from its participation on an Invest NI stand at the Gulfood Hotel and Equipment Exhibition in Dubai. The company is supplying a range of products to top retailers through distribution deals signed following Gulfood 2008.

At this year's show Kestrel exhibited on a stand organised by its Dubai-based distributors while six other local companies showed a broad range of products on an Invest NI stand.

## Chocolatier invests

Gourmet chocolatier CoCouture is investing almost £160,000 with assistance from Invest NI to meet the growing demand for its premium chocolates.

Invest NI's £30,000 assistance package is for new equipment, marketing and recruitment. The company recently set up new premises at Chichester Street in Belfast and aims to recruit four new employees to enable it to develop sales for existing and planned products.

# Regional NEWS

Regional News



## Company **carves out** successful niche

Co Down company Trademark Masons is celebrating export success within its first two years of trading, thanks to support from Invest NI.

The company specialises in a range of highly skilled stonework masonry including restoration, repair, cladding and pointing. Its work has included the extensive rejuvenation of medieval walls around the town of Drogheda.

Invest NI offered Trademark Masons £80,000 towards a total investment of £750,000 in a range of marketing and business development activities. The

company has now secured a contract in France worth over £50,000 for work on a restoration project. It also generates a significant portion of its turnover from the Republic of Ireland market.

Mark Bleakney, Invest NI's Southern Regional Office Manager, says: "Trademark Masons has built a strong reputation as a result of its dedication to quality as well as the skill and commitment of its team of stonemasons."

>> Mark Bleakney, Invest NI's Southern Regional Office Manager and Trevor McKibbin, Managing Director of Trademark Masons

## Online camping site launched

Invest NI has supported the setting up of a new online business to help campsite owners and campers.

CampStead Ltd was set up by a young Belfast entrepreneur, Andrew Norris, from Queen's University. The business has developed a range of web based campsite and caravan park management software systems that allow campsites and caravan parks to manage their parks and their bookings more efficiently.

The CampStead project was recently judged a £1,000 winner in the NICENT Headstart Programme.

Oonagh Hinds, Manager of Invest NI's Eastern Regional Office, says: "This young entrepreneur has identified a gap in the market and has developed an innovative product with global potential. We will be working closely with Andrew to help him fully exploit this."

## Karacha goes for growth

Karacha Ltd, an online music store set up in 2006 by young Bangor entrepreneur Adam Ewart, is investing almost £100,000 to further build the Karacha brand and expand the customer base, with support from Invest NI.

Oonagh Hinds, Manager of Invest NI's Eastern Regional Office, says: "Despite difficult times for the music business, Karacha has sustained its growth. This is due to the flexibility and innovative approach of Adam Ewart, who has been quick to adapt his business strategy to reflect changing market conditions."

Adam Ewart says: "With Invest NI support I'm planning to undertake market visits to research the international music industry. I intend to visit China to seek out new manufacturers to broaden our range of products and accessories, and the USA to develop a trading platform and direct distribution network. Karacha is also going to exhibit at trade fairs in Europe.

"We're also engaging consultants to optimise the performance of our website because, as an e-commerce business, that's vital," he adds.

>> Adam Ewart, the young entrepreneur who set up Karacha online music





## Concrete company sets firm foundations

Invest NI has helped Ballymena-based Moore Concrete Products to save over £320,000 through a programme of efficiency measures.

Moore Concrete Products supplies a range of precast products for the agricultural, civil engineering and building market sectors. Assistance from Invest NI helped Moore Concrete to evaluate and implement necessary changes to key operational areas.

Most of the savings achieved by Moore Concrete to date have been through improving working practices on the factory floor, increasing the effectiveness of equipment and generating new products for export markets.

Wilbert Moore, Managing Director of Moore Concrete Products, says: "This programme of efficiency measures has been a resounding success. We've been able to make a series of improvements to our operations that will bring long-term benefit to the company, ensure that we maximise our profitability and help us attain our vision to become the best supplier of precast concrete products in Northern Ireland."

## Armagh brewery toasts success

Clanconnel Brewing Company in Waringstown has launched its first product, Weaver's Gold, a 100 per cent natural and additive-free ale, with help from Invest NI.

The micro-brewery, the brainchild of Mark Pearson, has received support through Invest NI's Innovation Voucher Scheme and marketing assistance to develop the handcrafted beer, using traditional artisan techniques and with advice from the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) at Loughry campus, near Cookstown.

Mr Pearson says: "So far, the ale is being sold in pubs, restaurants and off-sales across Northern Ireland. The beer is also likely to go on sale soon through a leading retail multiple and has also attracted positive reviews from ale critics in the Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and the US."

>> Toasting innovation, Olive Hill, Invest Northern Ireland's Director of Technology and Process Development, pictured with Mark Pearson, Managing Director of Clanconnel Brewery, at the launch of the new microbrewery

## inphoActive takes digital technology in 'write' direction

A company set up to exploit the potential of innovative digital pen and paper technology is planning to significantly increase export sales with support from Invest NI.

Belfast-based inphoActive builds process, workflow and forms solutions for businesses using digital pen and paper technology to help clients improve productivity, speed up communication of information, and reduce forms processing costs.

inphoActive has secured important partnerships with Swedish company

Anoto and a US technology company, and has already gained a number of prestigious contracts.

Fergus Wallace, Managing Director of inphoActive, says: "Our solutions are suitable for any organisation that uses pen and paper forms to collect and record large amounts of hand-written information. We have already generated a healthy pipeline of potential business."

With Invest NI support, inphoActive is now planning to recruit another two senior staff to develop sales and customer support, and carry

out market development visits.

Oonagh Hinds, Manager of Invest NI's Eastern Regional Office, says: "Our fast track support aims to provide companies with flexible and immediate assistance so that they can take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

"By taking highly innovative forms of information collation technology and tailoring packages to the needs of individual businesses, inphoActive is set for success in niche export markets."

# Green initiative in the frame

Invest NI's Consultancy Framework initiative is about to enter its third year and is on track to meet its target of helping 100 small and medium sized client companies to scope or implement material or energy saving projects.

Under the Framework Invest NI's client companies can get five days' free consultancy to help them to scope or implement projects in the areas of resource efficiency and waste management systems, clean technology systems, renewable technology systems, energy management and efficiency, or the application of new technologies.

The initiative aims specifically to help companies that do not have the technical capability to progress projects themselves and move companies from awareness of resource efficiency issues into taking action. Only projects that have the potential to generate savings of four times the cost of the project can be supported.

## MUSHROOM POWER

One beneficiary of the initiative is Tandragee Compost, which manufactures and sells 15,000 tonnes of mushroom compost each year to mushroom growers across Ireland. The company had found that removing spent compost from growers was becoming an expensive problem as it either had to pay landfill costs or increase space for stockpiling.

At the same time it was faced with not being able to increase its production level because of limits on the electrical supply infrastructure. The company decided to use the Consultancy

Framework initiative to investigate a way to solve both problems by using spent mushroom compost as an energy source for generating electricity.

With the expertise of a consultant, Tandragee Compost was able to establish that it could generate enough electricity to supply all of the requirements of its existing production facility and the proposed increased in production. Moreover, there would be surplus generated that could be sold to the national grid.

David Bell of Invest NI's Sustainable Development team says:

**The company will realise several benefits from this project, including saving at least £40,000 in electricity costs, saving on disposal costs of spent mushroom compost and adding a new revenue stream through selling electricity to the grid.**

Tandragee Compost has applied for assistance from Invest NI's Grant for R&D scheme to define the most suitable plant for this application.

David McKew of Tandragee Compost says: "Tandragee Compost feels that funding for R&D work is very useful especially for small businesses that don't have large budgets to spend on new business ideas which sometimes don't turn out to be successful."



» For further information about the scheme please contact David Bell, T: 028 9069 8610 E: david.bell@investni.com



# Winds of change

The biggest expansion of wind energy the world has ever seen is about to happen around the shores of England, Scotland and Wales. Invest NI is helping local companies position themselves to take the greatest advantage of the business opportunities this will bring.

The Crown Estate, owner of the UK's seabeds, has recently granted new rights to energy developers under what is called 'Round 3' - the third tender round for the development of offshore wind sites around Great Britain. Nine development zones have been allocated to companies and consortia to start the development process.

» For more information on how best to take advantage of the business opportunities arising in offshore wind contact Invest NI's Sustainable Development Team  
T: 028 9069 8868  
E: [sustainabledev@investni.com](mailto:sustainabledev@investni.com)

Although Northern Ireland waters are not included in this Round there is still huge potential for local companies to feed into the supply chains of successful developers. The supply chain includes all the elements required to deploy offshore energy, ranging from component manufacture to research and engineering, installation, operation and infrastructure as well as supporting services like training and hospitality.

Sam Knox of Invest NI's Sustainable Development Team says: "This is an extremely important step forward for renewable energy generation representing a potential market investment of over £100 billion.

"Northern Ireland has a proven track record in engineering excellence and a strong maritime heritage and there are many local companies that have the skills, experience and products needed by the Round 3 developers.

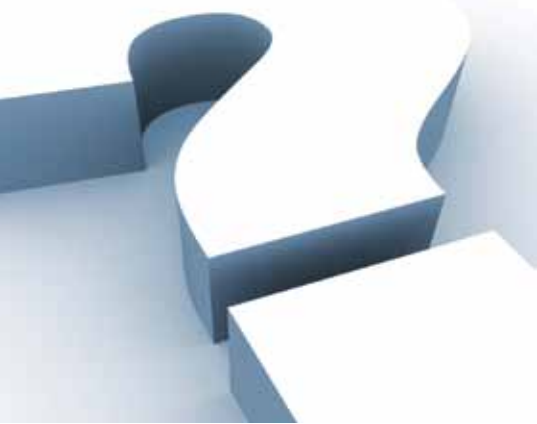
"Invest NI is keen to help local companies develop partnerships with the key players and that's why we worked with The Crown Estate to organise the event on 16 March. Such events provide an opportunity for companies to find out more about offshore wind developments and network with the key players."

Last December DETI launched its Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Strategic Action Plan 2009-2020 and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment with a three month consultation period that closed on 8 March. The plan proposes a target for Northern Ireland waters of at least 600MW of offshore wind and 300MW from tidal resources by 2020. The Crown Estate leasing round for Northern Ireland waters will open in 2010-11.

**Offshore wind is a significant area of opportunity for local companies and we would urge businesses to make themselves aware of what kinds of products and services developers will be looking for and how to gear up to cater for this growing national and international market, says Sam Knox.**

What's New?

# WHAT'S NEW?



## NEW EXPORT WORKSHOPS PROGRAMME

The new programme of Export Skills and Knowledge Workshops is now available for booking. The series aimed at export focused companies involved in the manufacturing and tradeable services sectors comprises 17 one-day workshops and covers a range of core export planning and essential skills topics.

>> Gillian McKee, Director of Marketing and Communications, Business in the Community with Damian McAuley, Invest NI and Susan Kinane, Managing Director, ESB Independent Energy at the launch of the Regional Recognition Awards

The focus of each workshop is on the practical application of skills rather than a purely theoretical approach and areas covered include export planning, winning sales, how to tender effectively and managing sales channels.

>> For further information please visit [www.investni.com/exportworkshops](http://www.investni.com/exportworkshops) or contact Rowan Geddes  
T: 028 9069 8066  
E: [exportworkshops@investni.com](mailto:exportworkshops@investni.com)

## INNOVATION VOUCHERS

The next call for applicants for the Innovation Voucher initiative will be announced in April. The initiative is open to all Northern Ireland registered small enterprises to enable them to access expertise from participating Knowledge Providers (universities, further education colleges or publicly funded research bodies) in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The voucher is worth £4,000.

>> For further information please visit [www.innovationvouchers.com](http://www.innovationvouchers.com)

## BANKING AND FINANCE GUIDE

A new guide to help Northern Ireland businesses raise finance and secure bank credit has been published with support from Invest NI and the British Bankers Association. Produced by the Institute of Directors, the Banking and Finance Guide lists the information that banks want to know before

considering an application for finance. It follows a recent survey about bank lending which showed businesses were facing problems accessing financing because of the credit crunch.

>> To view the guide please visit [www.nibusbusinessinfo.co.uk/financing](http://www.nibusbusinessinfo.co.uk/financing) or [www.nicrunchtalk.com](http://www.nicrunchtalk.com)

## RESPONSIBLE COMPANY AWARDS

Invest NI is sponsoring the Workplace Diversity Award in this year's Regional Recognition Awards for responsible companies in Northern Ireland. The competition is run by Business in the Community in association with Ulster Business Magazine and sponsored by ESB Independent Energy. There are nine categories and the closing date for applicants is Wednesday 31 March 2010.



>> For more information visit [www.bitcni.org.uk](http://www.bitcni.org.uk)

# SEE HOW OTHERS DO IT

New video content has been created for the [nibusinessinfo.co.uk](http://nibusinessinfo.co.uk) website profiling local companies that have been successful in key areas such as energy efficiency, exporting and marketing.

Available to view on the site or on YouTube, the video case studies are a quick and easy way of gaining an insight into the practical steps businesses have taken to grow market share, cut costs and improve profitability.

There are currently four local case studies on the [nibusinessinfo.co.uk](http://nibusinessinfo.co.uk) site. One features Kestrel Foods outlining the company's approach to penetrating new export markets, and a second has Ulster Carpets giving an overview of the process it underwent to achieve a Carbon Trust Standard and the benefits from it. The third case study deals with the subject of marketing new products and features local advertising company Genesis,

and the fourth is advice on managing cashflow from local business consultant and Invest NI board member Ed Vernon.

Several other Invest NI case studies profiling local female entrepreneurs are available to view on YouTube.

Shauna Fenton, head of Invest NI's [nibusinessinfo.co.uk](http://nibusinessinfo.co.uk) team, says: "The success and popularity of the videos highlights the desire for a more engaging customer experience through richer website content. There is also no doubt that hearing about the real experiences of other businesses is invaluable for local companies in seeing how theory translates into practice."

So far the most popular video case study has been Genesis Advertising, which provides five steps for an effective marketing strategy regardless of budget.

"We are planning to develop more video content for the site, covering a wide range of business areas such as forming a business, benefits of flexible working and meeting legal obligations when selling online," adds Shauna Fenton.

To find out more visit: [www.youtube.com/nibusinessinfo](http://www.youtube.com/nibusinessinfo) or [nibusinessinfo.co.uk/videos](http://nibusinessinfo.co.uk/videos)

## TOPICAL TOPICS

### Data protection

A new rule relating to data protection is due to come into force on 6 April 2010.

It will give the Information Commissioner's Office the right to issue fines of up to £500,000 for serious data security breaches. The Information Commissioner's Office will consider whether the breach was accidental or deliberate, and how much distress the leak of information caused.

To keep up to date with data protection regulations visit: [www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/dataprotection](http://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/dataprotection)

### Filing online

As the financial year end approaches businesses will be preparing to finalise their accounts and prepare the many tax related returns required by government. Advice on how to file returns online for PAYE, self assessment, VAT, Corporation Tax and company information is available in the Taxes, returns and payroll section of the site. Go to [www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/taxes](http://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/taxes)

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# View from overseas

## THE INVEST NI TEAM IN NEW YORK



**Northern Ireland** native Andrea Haughian has worked in the Invest NI New York team for over two years. The office is part of the wider United States office network, which also includes Invest NI's US head office in Boston and San Jose in the heart of Silicon Valley. Here Andrea talks about life in New York and about raising the profile of Northern Ireland among the world's financial services companies.

“

**They say that New York is the city that never sleeps and with over eight million inhabitants that may very well be true. It is home to some of the most iconic sights in the world, such as the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building. As one of the leading global cities, New York has significant influence worldwide in the areas of commerce, culture, fashion and entertainment. Invest NI's offices are located just off Wall Street, right in the heart of the financial district and our 20th floor office provides spectacular views across the Brooklyn Bridge.**

”

### THE TEAM

The US team is led by Senior Vice President Gary Hanley who is based in Boston. At the moment the New York team is made up of two members located in Manhattan: me as Vice President - Business Development, and John Chambers, who is responsible for the administration of the office and all our technology requirements. We will soon be joined by Áine Mallaghan, currently based in Invest NI's Omagh office and two Business Development Managers. We are supported by the Invest NI teams in Boston and San Jose, and, of course, those located in Belfast, and also have a close working relationship with our other offices around the world.

## FOCUS ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

With an office in New York City you would naturally expect Invest NI to be focusing on the financial services industry. Alongside London and Tokyo, Wall Street has been one of the world's dominant financial districts since the early 20th century and is home to major financial institutions such as the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). New York is also home to numerous major corporations, including 43 of the Fortune 500 companies.

Since opening in 2004, the New York office has played a crucial role in Invest NI's financial services sales and marketing strategy. One of our early successes was in attracting Citi, one of the world's largest financial services companies, to set up in Northern Ireland. From an initial investment in 2004 the company now employs more than 800 people in such areas as application development and support; technology infrastructure projects; operations and legal and compliance.

At the moment, within the US our strategy for the development of the financial services sector focuses particularly on opportunities in the financial services technology sector. Our success in this sector was recently highlighted by NYSE Technologies' announcement that it was expanding its core engineering centre in Belfast. Thanks to the investment, an additional 400 technology and corporate jobs will be created. The centre is viewed as a centre of excellence for the delivery of innovative technology solutions. NYSE's decision to expand its Northern Ireland operations was based upon the calibre of people that it can attract in Northern Ireland, as well as the support offered by Invest NI.

## STRATEGY

As part of our strategy for promoting the Northern Ireland financial services sector Invest NI exhibits at a number of events throughout the year. In October I joined colleagues from other Invest NI offices at SIBOS, the world's largest financial services event, in Hong Kong.

**This event is the largest gathering of financial services companies in the world and offers Invest NI the opportunity to reach a global audience and develop relationships with new and existing clients.**

As well as this, Invest NI participates at a number of events organised by SIFMA (Securities Industry Financial Markets and Association), including its Annual Technology Management Conference, New York's premier financial services event. The conference provides the opportunity to explore the role of technology in banking, as well as meet up with key stakeholders.

Also, Invest NI sponsors a number of key financial services events throughout the year. Last year we had the honour of sponsoring the annual Wall Street 50 Awards, which honours national leaders from all areas of the financial services world. We also participated at the New York Ten Awards, considered the 'Academy Awards of New York Business'. These awards recognise 10 companies or individuals across all business sectors that have made a contribution through leadership and innovation to the business community. At both events key Invest NI clients and stakeholders were recognised.

## GATEWAY TO NORTH AMERICA

New York is the gateway to North America and as such most ministerial visits pass through the city. In recent months Gary Hanley and I have accompanied the First Minister and deputy First Minister during their time in New York at the Clinton Global Initiative, hosted by former US Head of State, President Bill Clinton. The following day they undertook a comprehensive visit programme and met with key clients such as NYSE Euronext.

In June I accompanied Economy Minister Arlene Foster and Invest NI Chief Executive Alastair Hamilton on a visit to Canada. During this visit the delegation met with companies such as Nortel and Bombardier. During their return visit in December, when they were accompanied by Invest NI Board member Ed Vernon, Invest NI hosted a number of events in both Boston and New York, including a reception in Manhattan at the headquarters of Moët Hennessy for more than 100 business leaders. The delegation also hosted a number of business briefings in conjunction with the US Economic Envoy to Northern Ireland, Declan Kelly.



>> Andrea Haughian, Vice President  
- Business Development, in Invest NI's  
New York office

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