

Investin

The Corporate Magazine of Invest Northern Ireland

Issue 21 November 2010

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Northern
Ireland

Building Locally
Competing Globally



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Refocusing our efforts



Alastair Hamilton
Chief Executive

In the current climate, where businesses continue to suffer the effects of the economic downturn, and where government funding will be under pressure, we must refocus our efforts on those areas that will generate maximum benefit for the economy.

Clearly inward investments remain a core priority, as they deliver jobs directly and along the local supply chain. We've been delighted therefore to have been able to announce several major inward investments recently, all of which have been hard won. In general, however, we are finding that Northern Ireland's strong reputation for academic excellence and a cost-effective business environment is attracting interest from potential investors globally as well as reinvestment from existing investors. In this issue we report on several of these investment successes and in particular on the strong and mutually beneficial links between Northern Ireland and the US.

As usual we also feature overseas markets that offer exporting opportunities for local companies. Russia and Kurdistan are both investing hugely in their infrastructure and this

is creating demand for construction products and services. With the current slump in the construction industry locally, it is a good time for our local companies in this sector to look abroad for alternative sources of work. Invest NI is working with several companies to help them target export markets.

Another core focus for us is encouraging research and development and in this issue we feature several companies that are developing new products or refining processes with our support. These range from very small companies taking their first steps into R&D with help from our Innovation Voucher scheme, to larger companies that have a long history of innovation.

The food sector continues to perform well and we highlight in this issue the success of many local companies at the Great Taste awards. Alongside well established businesses are new companies in the sector that are targeting high-end niche markets which offer opportunities for growth and export success.

As we move forward now our focus will be on streamlining our support. We must also ensure that companies are fully aware of the range of assistance we offer, particularly the wealth of advisory support available, and how we can help them achieve long-term viability and growth.

NEWS

Coca-Cola opens £93 million facility

First Minister, the Rt. Hon. Peter D. Robinson MLA and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MP, MLA, officially opened the new £93 million Coca-Cola HBC Northern Ireland manufacturing plant in Lisburn in September.

Coca-Cola HBC Northern Ireland is part of the Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company, the world's largest producer of Coca-Cola branded beverages with a presence in 28 countries, employing 45,000 people and serving 560 million consumers. In 2005, Invest NI announced that it had secured the project with an offer of support totalling £6.75 million.

Doros Constantiou, CEO of Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company, said: "The Knockmore Hill facility combines technical innovation, efficiency and environmental sensitivity in a modern, comfortable workplace. Its location was chosen because of the established production and operations capabilities in the area, a solid infrastructure and the strong support received from Invest Northern Ireland."

Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster said: "This facility will deliver a wide range of benefits for the local economy, including sustained employment, adding value to the drinks manufacturing sector and investment in green energy and tourism."

Major contract win for Harland and Wolff



Global engineering company Siemens has awarded a multi-million pound contract to Harland & Wolff Heavy Industries Ltd in Belfast.

Harland and Wolff is a heavy engineering company specialising in the shipbuilding, marine and renewable sector, including offshore construction. The Siemens contract will see Harland & Wolff design and build two substation platforms for the Gwynt y Môr offshore wind farm approximately 10 miles off the coast of North Wales.

Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster said: "This is a significant contract win for Harland and Wolff as it continues to build its presence as a key player in global renewable energy markets.

"Northern Ireland's strong knowledge base, skilled engineering capability and favourable geographical location will result in significant opportunities for local firms throughout the manufacturing supply chain to win business in an emerging offshore wind sector valued at over £100 billion.

"Given this potential, Invest NI is working to ensure that Northern Ireland companies compete at the forefront of the renewable sector."

>> Pictured are Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster and Robert Cooper, Chief Executive Officer at Harland and Wolff

Healthy prognosis for Fortress

Antrim-based Fortress Diagnostics is investing £893,000 to expand its operation, with support from Invest NI.

The company, which develops, manufactures and distributes a range of medical diagnostic and point of care tests, is aiming to substantially increase its export sales, improve production processes and create an additional 11 jobs. Invest NI has offered £110,000 of support.

Dr Morteza Afrasiabi, Fortress Diagnostics' Managing Director, says: "This is a significant investment for the company which we hope will enable us to more than double our turnover over the

next three years. Invest NI's assistance will make a crucial contribution, allowing us to invest at a higher level and within a tighter timescale than would otherwise be possible, to ensure we can fully exploit market opportunities."

Fortress Diagnostics currently employs 23 people and exports its products to more than 80 countries worldwide.

Ian Murphy, Invest NI's Managing Director of Clients and Entrepreneurship, says: "Life Sciences is a strategically important sector for the Northern Ireland economy and one that Invest NI has identified as a priority."

Indian investor already exceeding targets



>> Pictured with Alastair Hamilton (right) is VV Subramanian, Head of European Operations and Business Insurance for L&T

In September Invest NI Chief Executive Alastair Hamilton visited L&T Infotech, the latest Indian owned company to locate in Northern Ireland.

L&T Infotech is a global provider of IT services and solutions, with more than 10,000 employees worldwide. In June it announced a £5.8 million investment to establish a European software development and maintenance centre in the Northern Ireland Science Park, Belfast. Invest NI offered £891,000 of support for the investment, which will

create 85 high quality jobs over the next three years.

During his visit Mr Hamilton discussed the firm's recruitment success to date which has seen the company exceed its initial targets.

He says: "Developing Northern Ireland's ICT sector is one of Invest NI's priorities and attracting this kind of high quality investment strengthens our international reputation for IT excellence."

45 new jobs for HR consultancy firm

Mercer, one of the world's largest HR consulting firms, is creating 45 new high quality jobs with £450,000 of support from Invest NI. The expansion will double Mercer's existing presence in Belfast and generate additional annual salaries of over £1 million.

Headquartered in London, Mercer Ltd's Retirement, Risk & Finance business provides a wide range of strategic and compliance-related pensions advice. Mercer's Retirement Service Centre in Belfast currently provides back-office actuarial services for Mercer's UK business. The investment will see it expand its services to support Mercer's customers in mainland Europe.

Gregor Law, Head of Mercer's Retirement Service Centre in Belfast, said: "Our network of retirement service centres around the world continues to provide an efficient actuarial service to a growing client base. In seeking a location from which to develop the European marketplace, Belfast stood out for us given our existing experience of this region, the strongly skilled people and the support offered by Invest NI."



>> Pictured are graduate recruit Lyn McCreadle; Gregor Law, Head of Mercer's Retirement Service Centre in Belfast; and Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster

NEWS

NEWS

Inward investment for Lurgan

Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster has announced Invest NI support of £259,000 towards a multi-million pound investment in Lurgan by UK company, MITIE Security Ltd.

MITIE's security business is part of the MITIE Group, which employs over 56,000 people and provides facilities, property and asset management services. Its clients include Rolls-Royce, UBS and Marks & Spencer.

The Minister made the announcement during a visit to the company's new operation in Silverwood Industrial Park, Lurgan, where it has set up a state-of-the-art technology centre called MiTec. The investment will create 37 new jobs.

Bob Forsyth, Managing Director, Security, said: "MITIE is seeking to strengthen its total security management offering and meet the future needs of our clients by investing in risk-based products and specialist services. Our new MiTec centre will not only use the latest technology to deliver cutting edge solutions to support and enhance our core offering, but will also enable our business to support MITIE in its growth aspirations outside of the UK market. We chose Northern Ireland because it offers a commercially attractive, cost competitive location for the company."

Boston Bruins in Belfast



In October Minister Arlene Foster welcomed the Boston Bruins ice hockey team to Belfast for the exhibition match against the Belfast Giants in the Odyssey Arena. Formed in 1924, the Boston Bruins is one of the most famous hockey teams in the world and has one of the largest fan bases of any ice hockey team.

The Minister said that the game was a significant occasion in Northern Ireland's sporting history. "International sporting

events like tonight's match not only bring financial benefits to the hospitality industry and the local economy, they also have a positive impact on the wider community. It is through the delivery of high quality events such as this that Northern Ireland continues to build its reputation as a destination for major world-class events," she said

>> The Boston Bruins take on the Belfast Giants

New premises for Magdalene Ltd

Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster has officially opened the new Harbour Estate offices of telecoms company Magdalene Ltd. The Cambridge-based company is an independent telecoms service provider that supplies solutions and services for private and public operators including fixed and mobile operators, utility companies and telecom equipment vendors.

Last year Magdalene announced that, with support from Invest NI,

it was to set up a Telecoms Services and Engineering Support Centre and a Network Operations Centre in Belfast that would promote 52 jobs by 2011.

Operating temporarily from the Gasworks, the company currently employs 13. The move to its new high-tech premises will allow it to proceed towards its full planned staff complement for both centres.



» Pictured with Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster is (left) Ken Volpe, Senior Vice President of Products and Technology, ATG, Donal Durkan, Invest NI and Susan McChesney, ATG

ATG to double Belfast workforce

US-owned company ATG is set to almost double its Belfast-based workforce. The company currently employs 62 people at its Gloucester St offices and is now planning to create 50 further high quality software development jobs, with £500,000 of support from Invest NI.

With a client base of over 1,200 companies that conduct business in more than 50 countries, ATG (Art Technology Group) is a leading global player in the development of e-commerce software and cross-channel commerce solutions. It counts among its clients many of the world's best brands, including Tesco, B&Q, Tommy Hilfiger, Bol.com and JC Penney.

Announcing the expansion Minister Arlene Foster said: "Generating upwards

of £2 million in salaries annually, this is great news for the local economy and underscores Northern Ireland's position as a highly regarded investment location."

Ken Volpe, Senior Vice President of Products and Technology, ATG said: "Our experience in Belfast has been excellent, and our continued investment here reflects our confidence in our existing team and the calibre of local technology professionals we are looking to recruit. We consider our Northern Ireland office to be an integral part of our worldwide research and development operations, which play a pivotal role in our overall company growth."

Further expansion by BroadSoft

US-based BroadSoft Inc. is expanding its Belfast facility with support from Invest NI. The leading global provider of Internet Protocol based communications services to the telecommunications industry, BroadSoft International, a wholly owned subsidiary of BroadSoft Inc., has been operating in Belfast since 2006 and currently employs 23 people. It plans to add up to 12 high calibre telecommunications jobs.

Alastair Hamilton, Invest NI's Chief Executive, says: "This is a great testament to the quality of the workforce that Northern Ireland has to offer and the excellent telecommunications infrastructure that we have in place. Over 14,000 people are employed by US companies in Northern Ireland and their success sends a strong signal to other potential US investors that Northern Ireland is an excellent investment location."

BroadSoft's Vice President, Operations, Geoffrey K. Hicks, says: "To date our Northern Ireland operation has delivered exceptional results in terms of quality support. It has further enabled us to strengthen our European presence and leverage regional market opportunities. We have been impressed with the support received from Invest NI to grow our business capabilities in Belfast."



» Pictured with Alastair Hamilton are Geoffrey K. Hicks, Vice President, Operations with BroadSoft (right), and Paul Humphries (left), Director of BroadSoft's Technical Assistance Centre in Belfast

NEWS

ICT advice brings business benefit

Invest NI's eBusiness team supports over 1,000 businesses a year to apply new technologies that have a direct impact on profitability.

Businesses looking to ensure they are getting the most out of their ICT systems can call upon an Invest NI ICT Advisor to help them assess their current ICT position. The advice is free and impartial and the Advisor will provide recommendations on changes or improvements in ICT equipment and processes that would benefit the business.

Financial assistance may also be available for software development, hardware acquisition or other specific ICT projects. Among the local companies that have benefitted from this service are Powershield and Boozeberries.

EASING BOTTLENECKS WITH SPECIALIST SOFTWARE

Powershield, based at Lisburn's Knockmore Hill Industrial Park, manufactures a range of high-performance steel doors and windows. Powershield recognised that it was losing valuable time and potentially business as a result of bottlenecks in the drawing office and realised it needed to take urgent action to try and alleviate the situation and achieve efficiencies.

The company met with a local Invest NI ICT Advisor who helped to develop an ICT Strategy and examine potential technology solutions which would speed up the design process. Powershield incorporated Radan, a 3D design tool specifically for the steel industry, into their production systems. The software package has been in use for a number of months and the company is reaping the benefits.



Graham Crymble of Powershield said: "The software implemented with support from Invest NI has made such a difference in reducing our lead times for customers. The drawing is sent straight to the factory floor for manufacture, reducing bottlenecks in the design process. Its ease of use means that there is less training required and we can free up senior engineers to work on larger projects."

BOOSTING BUSINESS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Boozeberries in Dromore, Co Down, produces a premium artisan berry liqueur, naturally enhanced with the infusion of whole, wild fragrant berries. Boozeberries wanted to build brand awareness for this new product and signed up to attend Invest NI's seminar on online marketing. The seminar introduced the concept of building an online presence with the customer at the centre and explored the strategies that could be used to create awareness, engage interest, drive action and build advocacy.

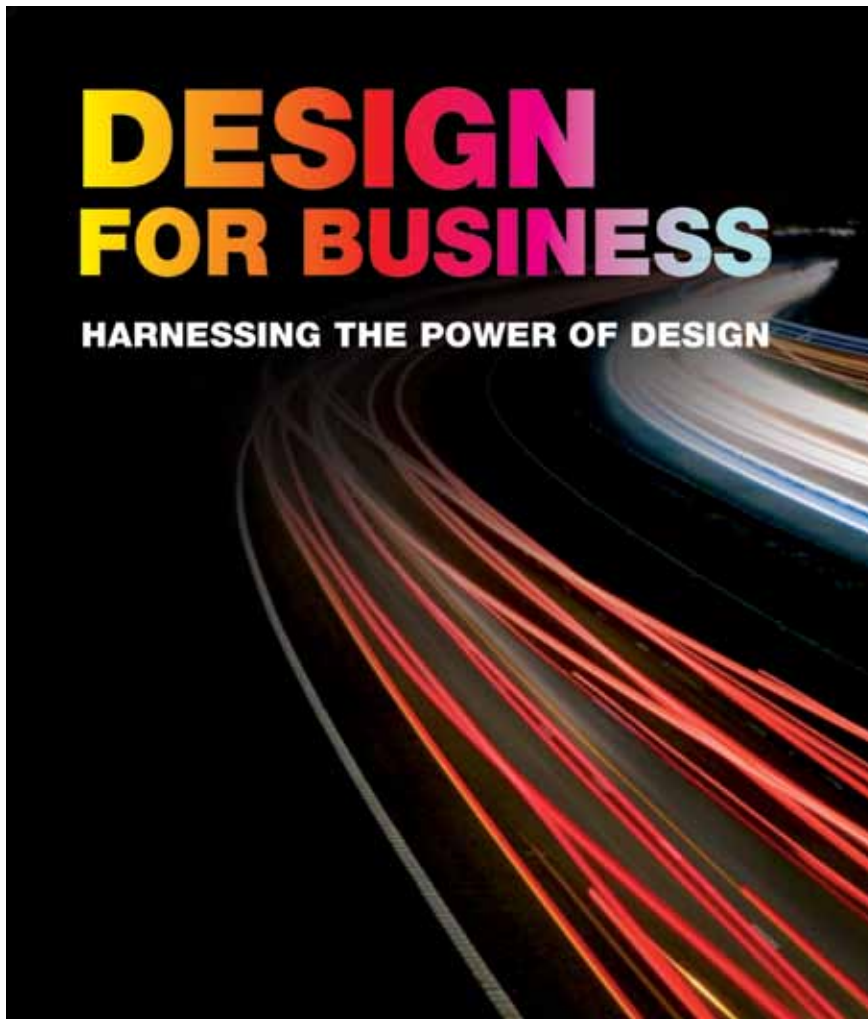
Following this two-hour session, the firm arranged for a one-to-one consultation with an Invest NI ICT Advisor and consequently set up a

Boozeberries Facebook and Twitter page, integrating these within Boozeberries' own website. The company's online marketing activities have taken off with its Facebook and Twitter pages attracting over 10,000 followers.

Boozeberries has experienced a significant increase in export leads since setting up its social networking profiles and recently gained interest from potential customers in USA, Canada and New Zealand.

Stuart Hughes of Boozeberries said: "Building our presence on the Facebook and Twitter social networking mediums has been a tremendous catalyst to increasing our export sales. Invest NI's support and guidance helped to strengthen our online capabilities and highlighted the strategies we needed to implement to achieve our goals."

>> For more information visit www.investni.com/ict_advisors



THE POWER OF DESIGN

World renowned design expert **Richard Seymour** shared his experiences of the power of design at a major design event organised recently by Invest NI.

Over 100 local businesses attended the event to consider what design improvements they could make to boost their company's performance.

Richard Seymour, co-founder of Seymourpowell, one of the world's top product design agencies, spoke about how design has changed the fortunes of companies across the world such as Virgin, Nokia and Nestlé.

The event was also an opportunity for Invest NI's technical experts to offer one-to-one advice to delegates to help them understand how design can help their business. Workshops run during the day focused on key areas that can deliver success including digital design, strategy, as well as brand and product design.

Speaking at the event, Tim Brundle, Invest NI Board Member, said: "Design is a powerful business tool which can bring significant benefits to all organisations. Simple measures implemented effectively can open

up valuable opportunities for companies and become a catalyst for future growth.

ff

Invest NI offers a wide range of tailored design support to help companies exploit the potential of this valuable strategic tool. By cultivating a design driven environment within their organisation, local firms can deliver top and bottom line benefits.

ff

Hundreds of companies have received design advice and consultancy from Invest NI to help them increase competitiveness in target markets. Invest NI partners the firms with specialist consultants who provide advice on improving key areas including brand and communications strategies, innovation processes and product design.

Feedback from the companies that have accessed this support has been very positive. Lisburn-based Marturian, which specialises in electronics and software development, is looking to expand its business into new areas after accessing design advice. The company wanted to look at the design of their website to clearly communicate the nature of the services offered and to ensure that there was a strong link to well presented publicity material for corporate brochures, newsletters and special events fliers.

Although the company undertakes the majority of its work in the medical sector, Marketing Manager Stephen Ellis says they're hoping to win further work from new areas. "We got design advice from Invest NI to help us upgrade our website and our Managing Director has decided to take a more strategic look at our sales and marketing, so hopefully when we come out of the economic downturn we will be well positioned."

Kitchens CRUSHERS AND cow pillows

Invest NI's R&D support is helping companies big and small to invest in new product development and find market success. Here we feature examples of how businesses are innovating in response to customer need.

>> Pictured is Carol Keery of Invest NI and Patrick Butler, owner of Butler Mobile Systems



Flexible thinking

Patrick Butler, owner of Butler Mobile Systems (BMS) in Randalstown, decided to develop a mobile kitchen unit following enquiries about this type of product from customers in the catering sector. "We wanted to increase sales outside Northern Ireland and this was an opportunity to develop a product for which we knew there was a demand," he says.

The Co Antrim firm designs, manufactures, repairs and maintains bespoke exhibition, catering and refrigeration trailers as well as operating a hire service for a selection of trailers and marquees. The project was to develop a modular kitchen facility with portable units that would give customers the ability to adapt the unit's layout to meet the requirements of different events.

The unit can be fitted with the required number of ovens, refrigerators and serving space to accommodate the needs of individual customers, who range from outdoor catering firms, film companies, marquee companies for weddings and corporate events, to hotels, local councils and trade fairs.

BMS invested over £40,000 in research and development of the unit and was offered £16,000 of support from Invest NI. To date the company has secured over £50,000 in sales and expects this figure to rise to almost £300,000. The target markets are the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.

Patrick Butler says: "I am delighted with the response to date, particularly in ROI and will continue to focus on product development and innovation as the path to achieving sustainable growth."

On track for success

Herbst Machinery Ltd in Omagh recently launched its latest product for the construction and agriculture industries, a track crusher machine developed with support from Invest NI.

Noel Good, Herbst's Managing Director, says: "We developed this latest product in response to customers and dealers who wanted a crusher to complement our Compac 8140 screener. Our strategy for growth is focused on listening to our customers, developing more new products and exploring sales potential in new markets. Invest NI has helped us with both financial support and technical expertise for R&D. Most recently we have also put our Compac 8140 Screener on tracks."

The new track crusher, which is unique in the UK and Irish markets, has been developed for smaller quarries, recyclers and contractors to handle hard abrasive stone, demolition waste, limestone and aggregates.

Its development follows the success of the company's Compac 8140 screening machine, which also received research and development support from Invest NI.

Research & Development

Herbst Machinery, which employs 22, was set up in 1983 and has developed a range of products including a dump trailer, low loader trailer, gravel trailer, livestock trailer, 3-way split screen and vacuum tanker. These products are sold in the UK, Republic of Ireland, Europe, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

The new track crusher machine will have many unique features such as an easily removable tail discharge conveyor controlled by a remote radio console. It will also be easy to transport from site to site using the Herbst Standard Low Loader.

Milking market opportunities

Coleraine-based J Wilson Agriculture has developed a unique cow pillow, Moovapillow, to improve conditions and productivity for dairy cows. Invest NI offered the company assistance towards the development and marketing of the new product.

Andrew Wilson, J Wilson Agriculture Managing Director, says:

Moovapillow is the outcome of our longstanding focus on products, including cow stalls and mattresses that substantially improve conditions for cows and horses. Research shows that a comfortable cow produces higher levels and better quality of milk.

"The latest product, a one piece, high absorbency and robust pillow, helps farmers meet the challenge for higher milk production. Given the volatility in milk prices over recent years, anything that helps to increase production can lead to better yields and returns for dairy farmers.

"Invest NI's support for the new product in areas such as R&D and marketing has been invaluable. Currently, we have good business in Great Britain, Hungary and the Czech Republic and have identified substantial opportunities in these and other markets, especially Germany, for the product.



"We aim to drive current levels of sales in Great Britain and Europe to above 80 per cent of turnover. With Invest NI's support and advice, we are implementing e-commerce technology to enable us to reach a much wider marketplace."



J Wilson Agriculture was formed in 1995 to manufacture products such as cow cubicles, mattresses and ventilation systems for the farming industry. It currently employs seven people at its manufacturing operation near Coleraine. It also has a sales operation at Bristol.

Innovating for the customer

Carol Keery, Invest NI's Director of Innovation, Research and Technology, says: "BMS, Herbst Machinery and J Wilson Agriculture are just three of the many companies that we've given R&D assistance to, to help them develop innovative products in response to customer demand and changing market trends.

"It is encouraging that demand for our Grant for R&D is high, as that reflects an awareness among businesses that, particularly in difficult economic conditions, a focus on innovation can pay dividends.

"These companies have developed products that have the potential to generate high levels of export sales, and which will strengthen their unique selling propositions."

» For more information about R&D support please contact Brona Fitzpatrick
T: 028 9069 8607
E: grantforr&d@investni.com
or visit www.investni.com/r+d

RUSH TO RUSSIA FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Trade Mission



- Power/energy
- Sports and leisure infrastructure (particularly the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics)
- Airports, construction, creative industries, rail and water.

Con Gallagher, Sales Director at Anaconda Equipment International, said: "In Russia, we signed up with a major dealer in Moscow and have since received orders for our conveying machinery and also our new screen. We're also currently following up many excellent leads which will result in further business.

"Overall the Invest NI trade mission to Russia was extremely worthwhile and will strengthen our export sales. Invest NI's practical support was excellent," he added.

>> Vicky Kell, Invest NI Director of Trade, with Ashley Piggott, AJ Power Managing Director



>> The next Invest NI mission to Russia is expected to take place in the spring of 2011. For more information, please contact Kate Gilmore:

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Recent successes of companies such as AJ Power, Craigavon, Anaconda Equipment International, Cookstown, and Holywood's Ulster Weavers in Russia are an indication of the diverse opportunities there for local companies.

They join a list of other local companies, including Ulster Carpets, Craigavon, FM Systems, Newry, Powerscreen, Dungannon and Radox Laboratories in Crumlin, which are well established in what is the world's largest country and one of the most dynamic global markets.

With its rich natural resources, especially gas, a well-educated workforce and a developing industrial base, Russia has the potential for substantial economic growth in both short and long terms. With a population of 142 million people, Russia is also the eighth largest retail market in the world and the fourth largest in Europe.

Despite slowing growth and reduced public and private investment programmes, significant business opportunities continue to exist due to the Russian oil and gas boom.

Joe Bradley, AJ Power's Sales Director, said: "While there's been a bit of a slowdown in the market, the Russian authorities are still investing heavily in major infrastructure projects. Russia has money to invest from its huge oil and gas reserves."

Russia remains a long-term market of immense potential for Northern Ireland exporters and investors. Companies can benefit from the strength of UK-Russia economic relations and the good reputation which UK and Irish companies have there. Russia is now the UK's 12th largest export market and UK exports of goods to Russia were valued at £2.4 billion in 2009.

There are substantial opportunities for local companies prepared to invest the time and other resources in building business contacts, especially in key commercial and industrial centres such as Moscow and St Petersburg.

Up-to-date research available from Invest NI's Business Information Services shows that UK goods and expertise remain in demand. The most promising opportunities for local companies are in:

- Advanced engineering
- Financial services
- ICT

TIME TO EXPLORE PROSPECTS IN KURDISTAN

Trade



Anaconda Equipment International in Cookstown recently shipped a consignment of mobile conveyors to Kurdistan for use in stockpiling sand and aggregate products. The company is one of the first local businesses to gain a foothold in Kurdistan, a secure and stable region of Northern Iraq that is currently investing extensively in projects to upgrade its infrastructure and make it more attractive to inward investors and tourists.

>> Enterprise Minister, Arlene Foster welcomes Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, Kurdish Regional Government High Representative to the United Kingdom, to Parliament Buildings. Ms Rahman briefed Northern Ireland companies on the business opportunities in Kurdistan

A delegation from the Kurdistan Regional Government recently visited Belfast to brief local companies about market opportunities. They will be supporting businesses taking part in next January's Invest NI trade mission.

Rich in natural resources such as oil, gas and other minerals, Kurdistan has been a safe and stable region since 2003. It has its own democratically elected prime minister and president who have firmly committed to business development. The opportunities for Northern Ireland companies, according to Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, Kurdistan's UK High Representative, are substantial. "Most of our wealth is in oil and gas, but we also have plentiful, if underused, agricultural resources.

"Construction projects are expanding in hospitals, housing schemes and shopping malls. Infrastructure to link these projects has led to opportunities for construction supplies required to build new roads, underpasses and tunnels. In addition, the planned development of Erbil

International Airport is one of the most important projects.

"Our services and infrastructure are also blossoming. Telecoms and IT are major growth sectors, as is agriculture." The regional government, she adds, is focusing resources on tourism and aims to build an open market economy, a commitment that "requires external expertise and investment after decades of war, oppression and neglect".

Kurdistan also offers the benefits of the "most pro-business investment law in the Middle East - offering 100 per cent land ownership, customs relief, tax holidays and the freedom to repatriate profits and interest".

Dr Vicky Kell, Invest NI's Trade Director, says a very broad range of companies could benefit from major investment projects underway or planned there. "Our research and contacts with the authorities in Erbil and Sulamaniah City have pinpointed opportunities in construction, education, agri-food, energy, healthcare, professional services including IT, as well, of course, as oil and gas.

"It's also a region where English is widely spoken, that is very keen to do business in trade, technology transfer and joint ventures with our companies. We would certainly urge companies able to operate in less well developed markets to explore the opportunities by taking part in next year's mission," Dr Kell adds.

KURDISTAN FACTS

Location:

Borders Syria in west, Iran to east and Turkey to north

Population: 5 million - median age just over 20

Capital: Erbil (pop 500,000) - one of the world's oldest settled cities

Economy: Iraq economy projected to grow by 7% this year, 7.9% in 2011

In 1976 brothers Jim and Jack Dobson set up a butcher's shop near Dungannon. Within 10 years they had built a slaughter facility in Dungannon and over the next 25 years the family business grew into a 10-site operation employing 2,700 staff.

DUNBIA, formerly Dungannon Meats, is now one of Europe's leading suppliers of top quality beef and lamb products for the national and international retail, commercial and foodservice markets. Its growth has been fuelled largely through acquisitions across the UK and Ireland and its success through innovative product development.

In the last two years alone the company has invested in four research and development projects, all supported by Invest Northern Ireland. The projects have led to the development of new products and improvements to processing mechanisms. Dunbia has also carried out surveys into consumer preferences so that it can stay abreast of changing trends in the market.

Jim Dobson, Managing Director of Dunbia, added: "The red meat industry is highly competitive but innovation has been our key to growth and success. As a result of



these four R&D projects the company has already broadened its range of award winning added-value products and expects to significantly increase profitability and competitiveness.

As a result of this investment the company has attracted several major new customers and has secured a widespread reputation for innovation and forward thinking. It has won several awards, most recently the Best Pork Product category at the Supermeat & Fish Awards in London.

Dunbia has also benefitted from a range of other Invest NI services including business improvement services, staff development support and advice on environmental issues. The company has also taken part in 'meet the buyer' events organised by Invest NI's Food Division.

**>> For more information on Invest NI's Grant for R&D
T: 028 9069 8607
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Despite its size and its success, Dunbia has never lost sight of its beginnings. "Although we're a multinational enterprise, at the heart Dunbia is still a family-owned business rooted in down to earth values," says Jim Dobson.

>> Sampling an award-winning pork belly product produced by Dunbia for leading retailer Sainsbury's is Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster with Jim Dobson and Michael Doran, Dunbia

'MEATING' the customers' needs

From a small butcher's shop to an award-winning meat processing company, Dunbia's evolution over 34 years owes much to its passion for new product development.

Easy access to experts

Special Feature



Invest NI's Innovation Voucher scheme has helped over 400 businesses to access knowledge and expertise in universities and colleges. As a result of a £4,000 voucher, small companies are developing products and processes that are helping them reach new markets and increase profits.

The scheme has attracted some 870 applications since it was launched in 2008 and feedback from the participants has been very positive. For many businesses it has been an easy first step into the world of research and development and having seen the benefits they are keen to continue to innovate. Several are now being assisted through Invest NI's other R&D programmes.

Olive Hill, Director of Technical and Process Development in Invest NI, says: "Companies have been using the Innovation Vouchers for all sorts of projects from new product development, enhancement of existing products and services to improvement of processes. They are benefitting not only from the initial project but also from follow-up work with the knowledge providers and through linking into the academic network."

Among the companies that have been awarded vouchers is Mallusk company Golden Popcorn which used the Innovation Voucher to help it develop healthier popcorn. So successful was the project that a leading beverage company is now selling the snack, which is free from added salt and sugar, naturally high in fibre and doesn't contain any artificial colourings and flavourings.

Lucy McDowell, Golden Popcorn Managing Director, says: "I was motivated to make this important and strategic investment by discussions I've had with school principals over the past few years. I've been alarmed by their stories of overweight children with breathing problems that make it virtually impossible for them to take part in any sports whatsoever, as well as other conditions including diabetes, mouth ulcers and tooth decay."

Using the voucher the company was able to access expert advice and support from the Food Innovation team on the Loughry campus in Cookstown, part of the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise.

Invest NI's Innovation Voucher was immensely beneficial because it enabled us to access expert support and helped offset the extensive costs of developing a new product, adds Lucy.

WHAT ARE COMPANIES USING THE VOUCHERS FOR?

Belfast company Abacus Professional used the voucher to access expertise from the University of Ulster to develop ways of using the latest multimedia marketing techniques to target new foreign markets.

Whoosh, a successful Portstewart-based event catering business, used the voucher to help develop a new sauce product for the retail market. It got assistance from the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) at Loughry campus, near Cookstown.

Be-Entertainment, a Belfast-based digital media studio used the voucher to access the University of Ulster's expertise to combine animation and special effects with live action for a new drama series.

Mainplant Engineering in Dungannon used the voucher to develop an industrial magnet for use as a separator in recycling machinery. It got assistance from the InnoTech Centre at South West College in Cookstown.





Issue Focus

Stateside Success

INWARD investment is a core element of growing the private sector here and the recent US-NI Economic Conference gave Northern Ireland the opportunity to pitch to the highest levels of corporate and political America.

Hosted by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the conference reflected the very positive view of US business towards Northern Ireland as an investment location. Northern Ireland has become the UK's leading location for Financial Services Software Development, attracting over 35 per cent of total foreign direct investment projects in the last five years, while Belfast has attracted the most software development projects in the UK after London. While these are not all American investments, they stand as a testament to the quality of our workforce and infrastructure, which reverberates with a US audience.

Coinciding with the conference and underpinning the strong relationship that already exists between the US and Northern Ireland were a number of investment announcements by companies that already have a presence in Northern

Ireland and are keen to develop it. ATG, a leading global player in the development of e-commerce software and cross-channel commerce solutions, announced that it is creating 50 further high quality software development jobs in its Belfast operation, while Mercer, a global pensions specialist, revealed that it is expanding its Belfast Retirement Service Centre, adding 45 jobs.

Terex Corporation, a global manufacturer producing an extensive range of equipment for a broad spectrum of sectors including the construction, infrastructure, recycling, shipping, transportation and maintenance industries, and which already employs over 1,000 at its Dungannon and Omagh sites, announced that it is investing £1.7 million and creating 35 high skilled jobs in a new European Global Business Services Centre to be based in Northern Ireland.

Issue Focus

Ron DeFeo, Chairman and CEO of Terex Corporation, commented: "Establishing the European GBS centre in Northern Ireland is a major step in our plans to organise and deliver internal support services more efficiently and effectively.

"The assistance offered by Invest NI has been instrumental in our decision to base the centre in Dungannon. With a highly talented labour force to work with, we are confident of a successful outcome from our investments in Northern Ireland." Indeed, at the conference several US executives spoke of the success of their Northern Ireland based operations and their high regard for the region as an investment location.

Jeremy Fitch, Invest NI's Managing Director of Business International, says: "The success of existing investors sends a very strong signal to other potential investors that Northern Ireland is an excellent investment location, offering both a high quality and a cost-effective working environment.

"Companies continually cite the work ethic, adaptability, loyalty and quality of the people as a crucial determining factor in their decision making process. As we continue to seek out and win new investment, it is vital that we continue to build and refresh our talent pool."

Northern Ireland's reputation is strong and was further endorsed by the announcement at the conference that the Dow Chemical Company (NYSE:DOW) is to establish a Dow Design & Modify Supply Chain Centre in Belfast, creating 25 high quality jobs. Dow is one of the largest chemical companies in the world with annual sales of approximately \$45 billion and over 52,000 employees worldwide.

In keeping with almost 75 per cent of the new jobs arising from foreign direct investment, and in line with Invest NI's objective, the Dow investment will pay salaries above the Northern Ireland private sector median," says Jeremy Fitch.

"I am confident that the outworkings of the US-NI Economic Conference will add to our pipeline of potential investments. Our collective challenge is to convert this pipeline of opportunity into firm projects," he adds.

US-NI AEROSPACE EVENT

A US-NI aerospace business event in Washington, organised by Invest NI and taking place the day after the US-NI conference, gave nine of Northern Ireland's leading aerospace companies the opportunity to meet buyers from four major US aerospace firms.

The US aerospace companies were Honeywell Aerospace, Parker Hannifin, Pratt & Whitney and Spirit AeroSystems. The one-to-one meetings were a direct result of the four US firms being key Bombardier Aerospace suppliers. Invest NI is working closely with the Bombardier Aerospace teams in Belfast and Montréal to maximise the economic impact of Bombardier's aircraft programmes in Belfast.

The event was opened by First Minister Rt Hon Peter D. Robinson, MLA, and deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MP, MLA.

Mr Robinson said: "The aerospace industry in Northern Ireland comprises over 40 companies, with a combined annual turnover in excess of \$1bn. These meetings will enable our highly innovative design and manufacturing businesses to extend their reach in global markets and support the future growth of the economy in Northern Ireland."

Mr McGuinness said: "This region's aerospace industry employs over 8,000 people and continues to invest significantly in research and development, skills and efficiency processes. By building genuine, mutually beneficial relationships with these US businesses, our aerospace companies can maximise the global opportunities in this lucrative industry."



PROPELLING IDEAS

into fast-track businesses

Invest NI's Propel programme provides innovative entrepreneurs with salary support and the skills, expertise and networks to fast track their business ideas into profitable global enterprises. Here's how four entrepreneurs have benefited.

MAKING BAKING FUN

Award-winning designer Rose Kane got inspiration for her business idea when she was at the University of the Arts, London. "Actually I was messing about in the kitchen one day instead of going to tutorials and I discovered a new way to bake. That became Doodle Bread," says Rose.

Rose's idea was to create a range of educational toys aimed at getting kids creative in the kitchen and providing unique cooking experiences just for them. With support from Invest NI she developed Doodle Bread, a home baking kit for kids that produces loaves of bread with logos or doodles on every slice. After spending time testing it out with kids, prototyping and branding the product, Rose launched Doodle Bread online. It has already won a national design award.

"We've sold nearly 1,000 Doodle Bread kits online, have built up a community and will soon be launching our first retail consignment with the House of Fraser. Our vision is to be the Lego of educational food toys," says Rose.

The Propel programme gave Rose the opportunity to add business skills to her creative skills. She says: "The Propel programme has given me the ability to focus and streamline my thinking. It is also helping



>> Alastair Higgins, Invest NI and Rose Kane

me get the business ready to seek investor funding next year. We've been awarded the E-Synergy Proof of Concept grant for £40,000 but will be seeking further investment. As well as providing group master classes and expert advice, Propel offers access to a mentor on a one-to-one basis, which is invaluable."

SENSING SENSOR POTENTIAL

After getting a degree in Physics with Materials Science from Queen's University, Belfast, Dr Simon Grattan worked for a number of years as a research physicist for Radox Laboratories. Returning to Queen's to carry out a PhD in the civil engineering department opened up a new career path for him as he realised the commercial possibilities of his research into fibre optic sensors.

"Fairly soon into the project the commercial opportunities became apparent for fibre sensors across a range of sectors, and so the idea was formed

of taking advantage of the tremendous research that had been ongoing between City University London and Queen's University in this field," says Simon.

The result was Sengenica, a spin-out company from the two universities. The company specialises in fibre optic sensors and offers a complete range of the latest state-of-the-art sensor reading equipment and sensors.

"Propel has been a fantastic boost, in terms of the support that is made available but also the opportunity to meet the other entrepreneurs. Looking forward I can see how the programme will help position us for the investment of resource that will be required to take the company where I believe it can go," says Simon.



MANAGING MUSICIANS

Rich Dale is a musician who understands business and a businessman who understands musicians. With this unique insight he came up with the idea of software that helps performers to develop their music industry career and make money from their music.

"As a musician myself I understand the pain involved in managing my band. I know that musicians need to learn about and manage the processes that underpin their music business," says Rich. "I have a background in business and come from an entrepreneurial family. My parents and grandparents all ran their own businesses and I started my first company when I was 21."

Having been involved in IT professionally for 15 years, Rich had the skills to take his idea forward. With co-founders Phil Norton and Conor Green, he set up Planzai, a new business that is developing a web-based application that helps musicians manage the business side of their activities.

"Planzai removes the trial and error for musicians by providing step-by-step templates and links to an industry contact network. We're still fine-tuning the business model, but bands will access the system



>> Rich Dale and Alastair Higgins, Invest NI

for free and can choose from a range of free and inexpensive templates to suit their needs," explains Rich.

Achieving a place on the Propel programme, says Rich, has had quite an impact on Planzai. "Propel has been a real wake-up call for us. It is a practical yet intense experience that has helped us focus on the right priorities. We would still be fiddling around trying to get a prototype made without Propel," he says.



APPLYING IT TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

While scoping a project with a company that provides water hygiene monitoring, Nick Cranney, a senior IT professional, realised that the manual paper-based system the company was using could easily be replaced by a technology solution.

"I could see that a web-based solution linked to a handheld application would increase efficiency and allow the company's clients to manage their compliance by giving them real-time access to their data on the basis of which they could make informed decisions," says Nick.

From this came Puredrop Ltd, which has developed a web-based SaaS application and a handheld application that enables organisations to manage their compliance with environmental health and safety.

"The Puredrop solution is built around a compliance rule knowledge base which drives the monitoring scheduler, remedial action and alert management systems. Although the system is currently focused on water hygiene compliance management, we plan to move into various other areas in the next 12 months," says Nick.

The technology allows organisations to do away with paper logbooks and use an eLogbook to store all relevant

compliance information. This makes the process more efficient, reduces errors and increases transparency and accountability.

Nick's aim is to make Puredrop a major global player for environmental health and safety compliance management technology, and he's confident that participating in the Propel programme will help fast track his progress.

"The practical workshops in the Propel programme have helped us understand and focus on what needs to be done to get to market sooner, get our message across and make that first sale. The programme has allowed the business to progress at a more rapid rate than if we were going it alone and has increased the odds in our favour of being successful," says Nick.

>> For further information
www.propelprogramme.co.uk

Food

SAINTS ALIVE!

Farmer revives brewing tradition



Inishmacsaint Brewing Company

in Derrygonnelly is reviving a brewing tradition in Fermanagh that dates back to early Christian times. The company, a farm diversification project assisted by Invest NI, is developing an innovative wheat beer near Inishmacsaint Island in Lough Erne where ancient Christian monks first started brewing ale.

The Fermanagh microbrewery has used an Invest NI Innovation Voucher to team up with the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise at Loughry in the development of the handcrafted beer, which will be available in bottles and novel 19 litre kegs.

The brewery was launched by Gordon Fallis on his 30-acre farm in 2008. The new wheat beer, unique in Northern Ireland, is being developed on the back of the company's success in producing and selling lager and ale in small volumes to local restaurants in Fermanagh.

Olive Hill, Invest NI's Director of Technology and Process Development, said: "The Innovation Voucher has enabled the brewery to tap into the knowledge that Loughry possesses in brewing techniques and packaging.

"The voucher provides funding of £4,000 to small companies wishing to turn new business ideas into products for clear market opportunities pinpointed by innovators."

Gordon Fallis said:



Our objective is to produce a range of unique handcrafted beers with an emphasis on quality and strong links with the local history and character of our Fermanagh base.



"I set up the microbrewery as another revenue stream to supplement earnings from our smallholding. While our existing ales and beers are popular in the local area, I saw the need to develop a unique product with potentially wider appeal. There are presently no examples of wheat beer or beer packaging formats commercially available in Northern Ireland. Wheat beer is a style of beer very popular in countries such as Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Belgium.

"The Innovation Voucher has given me the opportunity to access advice and guidance from Loughry in areas such as recipe formulation, process control measures, manufacturing, packaging, dispensing methods and sensory evaluation of the finished products."



Food



» Pictured are Alison Seaney and Colin Monaghan of Big Pot Company in Cookstown, and Maynard Mawhinney, Invest NI Food Director, with a range of the company's soup products



» Pictured outside Cloughbane Farm Foods in Pomeroy is Maynard Mawhinney, Invest NI Food Director, with Lorna Robinson of Cloughbane Farm Foods



» Pictured are DETI Minister Arlene Foster, Fane Valley Chief Executive Trevor Lockhart, Chair of the Industry Advisory Panel, and DARD Minister Michelle Gildernew

BITE SIZE NEWS

Big Pot stirs up more business

Invest NI is helping the Big Pot Company in Cookstown to develop a range of soups for markets outside Northern Ireland. The soups will be free from artificial colours, flavours and preservatives, low in fat and gluten-free. Big Pot was formed in April 2009 and produces a range of fresh hand-made soups, sauces and stew for food service customers. Invest NI is also helping the company increase its marketing capability and develop contacts with major retailers in the Republic of Ireland.

Meaty expansion in Pomeroy

Cloughbane Farm Foods in Pomeroy is investing £625,000 to expand production, develop new products and strengthen its management and marketing capability. Invest NI and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development are supporting the investment, which will create 11 new jobs. The family-run business is hoping to expand sales of its meat and poultry products, particularly in markets outside Northern Ireland.

Thirty strike gold for taste

Thirty food and drink companies from across Northern Ireland have gained over 100 gold stars for local produce in the annual UK Great Taste Awards. The awards are organised by the Guild of Fine Food and sponsored and promoted locally by Invest NI. There were gold awards for many of Northern Ireland's leading food companies including Mullin's Ice Cream of Kilrea, Co Londonderry, which achieved the top rating of three stars for its goat's milk ice cream with vanilla.

Focus on food strategy

A new food strategy launched in June aims to establish Northern Ireland as one of the most sustainable and successful food producing regions in Europe. Underpinning the strategy is a partnership between the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Department of Employment and Learning, Invest NI and the agri-food industry through the Industry Advisory Panel.

Major meat study

GIRA, a leading French consultancy specialising in the global meat industry, has completed a major study commissioned by Invest NI in conjunction with the Livestock and Meat Commission. The study, Long-term Strategic Trends in World Meat Markets 2010-2020, recommends that Northern Ireland's £1.5 billion meat industry must work on strategies that will reduce costs and increase its ability to exploit opportunities in European and global markets over the next decade.

Spanish meat mission

Invest NI has helped local beef and lamb suppliers to pitch for business from seven leading Spanish meat companies, by organising a 'Meet the buyer' event. The Spanish companies were visiting Northern Ireland for the first time. The Spanish delegation is the latest in a series of meat buying missions to Northern Ireland arranged by Invest NI.

Regional NEWS

Regional News



>> Pictured are (left) Des Gartland, Invest NI North West Regional Office Manager, and Michael Carlin, Managing Director of InstaGiv

Texting technology for charities

Invest NI is helping InstaGiv, a Portstewart-based specialist in mobile communications, to develop technology that will help charities in the United Kingdom and Ireland raise funds.

The company is investing £148,000 to develop and market its technology products and has received assistance from Invest NI of £10,480. It plans to employ two people at management level by the end of next year.

Des Gartland, Manager of Invest NI's North West Regional Office, says: "InstaGiv is a business model with immense

potential. It harnesses the latest mobile communications and internet-microsite technologies to offer charities new ways to raise the funds."

Michael Carlin, InstaGiv's Managing Director, says: "Increasingly texting is being used by companies and organisations to market their services. I decided to set up InstaGiv because I saw an opportunity in the decision by the UK government to allow charities to use texting services as a way to raise funds without having VAT deducted at source."

Tyrone manufacturer generates £5 million in orders

Autogen Manufacturing has secured orders in the Middle East worth £5 million following support from Invest NI.

The Coalisland based company designs and manufactures a range of diesel powered generator systems. As a result of its Invest NI-supported investment of £95,000 to regulate the quality of products and processes and undertake marketing activity, Autogen has secured three major orders to supply companies based in Dubai, Qatar and Sudan with bespoke generator systems.

Damien McCabe of Autogen Manufacturing comments: "Assisted by Invest NI, we have been able to carry out extensive market research and capture all the relevant data to enable us to secure this new business. We are committed to driving export development and will continually improve our level of service and product quality to ensure we are best placed to exploit new market opportunities across the globe."

'Ex-sporting' success for hydrotherapy firm

Dromore firm CET Ltd has secured contracts worth over £400,000 with major sports clubs across the UK, Italy, South Africa and the USA, following support from Invest NI.

CET Ltd was established in 2002 by Colin Edgar as the first manufacturer of Equine Therapeutic Spas in Europe. While Colin initially specialised in equine hydrotherapy units, he quickly realised the potential to introduce a similar product for human sports recovery and launched the innovative CET CryoSpa on the market last year.

CET CryoSpas, which use cold saltwater for sports recovery and the treatment and prevention of injuries, are now used by elite athletes and sports professionals across the world. The company has secured orders to supply CryoSpas to a number of professional sports organisations including the New York Jets American Football Team, AC Milan, Manchester City and Fulham Football

Clubs as well as Celtic Crusaders Rugby League in Great Britain.

Invest NI assistance helped with research and development to design the therapeutic saline water technology for the spa and the product applications to make the unit portable, as well as supporting marketing activity.

>> Pictured are (left) Colin Edgar of CET and Mark Bleakney, Invest NI Southern Regional Office Manager





SRS

Libyan Success

A major housing project in Tripoli, the Libyan capital, will feature concrete blocks made by machinery from SRS in Ballygawley. SRS secured the business, its first in Libya and expected to be worth around £200,000, from its participation on Invest NI trade missions to India.

The missions led SRS to link up with a marketing operation in New Delhi which then introduced the company to a major Indian construction company involved in the Libyan government-backed building project in Tripoli.

Julian Fegan, SRS Sales and Business Development Director, said: "Invest NI missions to India and other global markets have enabled us to expand our business through the many important contacts we've made. Following one of the Indian missions I decided to tie up with an experienced operation there that would give us an ongoing presence in this huge marketplace.

"They introduced us to the construction company with the Libyan contract and this led to the deal to supply our block-making machinery, a relationship which could lead to further business."

Formed in 2001, SRS manufactures and markets worldwide a range of concrete block-making and handling machinery.

"India is a massive marketplace in its own right but linking up with Indian construction and machinery companies expands the opportunities for our equipment," adds Mr Fegan.

The Zip Yard sews up new franchise agreement

Belfast-based clothing alterations firm The Zip Yard has secured a Master Franchise Agreement, which is set to triple the company's turnover following assistance from Invest NI.

From its establishment in 2005, The Zip Yard has grown steadily achieving success not only in Northern Ireland but also in the Republic of Ireland by recruiting a Master Franchisee. Invest NI assistance helped the firm exhibit at the Irish Franchise Exhibition in February 2010. Following connections made there with businessman Nigel Toplis, ex-Chairman of the British Franchise Association, The Zip Yard has signed a Master Franchise Agreement that will see up to 48 new branches

rolled out across England, Wales and Scotland in the next five years. Brian Kielt, Co-Founder and Director of The Zip Yard, commented: "Through Invest NI's support we have gained the knowledge and connections to successfully progress in new markets. Our Master Franchise Agreement represents a major milestone in the development of our company and we are delighted to have the opportunity to work with Nigel Toplis in launching our business model across Great Britain."

>> Brian Kielt of The Zip Yard measures the potential of the firm's new Master Franchise Agreement. Pictured with him are (L-R) Nigel Toplis and Invest NI's Gren Armstrong

Social enterprise expands

Londonderry-based technology business Cúnamh ICT aims to more than double sales of its bespoke software and create four new jobs with support from Invest NI.

The company, a social enterprise based in Pennyburn Industrial Estate, is investing in a £63,000 expansion.

Des Gartland, Invest NI's North West Regional Office Manager, says: "Our support will enable this ambitious company to expand its capabilities and experience, particularly in key areas such as marketing, and to exploit new business opportunities.

"Software that Cúnamh ICT has developed enables community and voluntary groups to demonstrate the extent of their impact on areas in which they are based. This information should

help them when seeking support from donor organisations."

Peter MacCafferty, Cúnamh ICT Managing Director, says: "We have had success with our Social Impact Tracker product. A new online version is a secure web-enabled database that provides organisations with the ability to capture and report on their social impact."

Green energy growth



Invest NI aims to position Northern Ireland as a leading region in renewable energy development.

Northern Ireland has an abundance of renewable energy resources, world class port facilities, a strong engineering and construction heritage, a highly skilled and qualified population and relatively low operating costs. This puts us on a strong footing when it comes to exploiting opportunities in the renewables sector.

To help companies do that, Invest NI is actively undertaking a range of activities to:

- develop and promote market opportunities emerging from the renewable energy sector;
- raise awareness of the benefits of collaboration and networking with other local companies to develop supply chain opportunities in the renewable energy sector;
- provide mainstream support and assistance to companies to help them deliver new products and services in the renewable energy sector; and
- position Northern Ireland as a key player in the sector to attract relevant foreign direct investment.

Invest NI is also working in partnership with Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and other key stakeholders, inside and outside government, to maximise the opportunities for local companies.

TRANSLATING AIMS INTO OUTPUTS

Invest NI has, since April 2009, offered £5.2 million of support to companies within the renewables sector. This assistance is supporting over £25 million of company investments in research and development, training, job creation and the development of collaborative networks.

Invest NI's support for the sector also includes helping companies to identify and develop renewable technologies, profile Northern Ireland's capabilities globally and help local companies realise their potential in areas ranging from offshore wind to biomass and tidal energy. More than 90 companies have participated in renewable trade events this year. Most recently this has included helping four companies to exhibit at the world's most important event for the wind energy sector, the Husum WindEnergy Exhibition in

» For more information contact the Invest NI Sustainable Development Team on T: 028 9069 8868 or E: sustainabledev@investni.com



Germany, and supporting 15 companies taking part in All-Energy - The Renewables Show at Aberdeen, which is Europe's largest event devoted to clean and renewable energy. Sales of £15.7 million have been forecast over the next 36 months as a direct result.

But the agency's support is not limited to helping existing renewable energy companies. It recognises that by helping companies across all sectors to identify their business skills and capabilities, and apply those to the renewables sector, it can help ensure that Northern Ireland companies can compete in, and benefit from, the wider renewables supply chain.

Olive Hill, Invest NI's Director of Technology and Process Development, says: "Invest NI has specialist in-house resources that understand the technologies and can identify opportunities in the renewables sector and help to build awareness of them within local industry. One of the things we're doing is compiling a database of local business capability in renewable energy supply chains that will help market Northern Ireland businesses as strategic partners in export markets. The database will also help us decide where our resources will have most impact in growing the renewable energy sector further."

WORKING WITH OTHERS

Invest NI also works with a number of other organisations to support the sector. It provides considerable funding to the Carbon Trust and through them, channels funding to accelerate the development of new low carbon technologies including those owned by local companies. Funding has recently been provided for two marine energy projects and for one carbon capture and storage project.

It supports collaborative networks including the Global Wind Alliance, the Global Maritime Alliance, the Biomass O&M, the Biomass Plant Manufacturing Consortium and Smartgrid Ireland. While scale is important in the sector, many Northern Ireland companies are benefitting from becoming part of a network that can present a more strategic partner to large customers such as the major utilities. Collaboration is giving companies access to multinationals in a way they could never achieve on an individual basis.



Collaborating with other organisations is also key to maximising the impact of our support," says Olive Hill. "For example, following the success of a major event co-hosted by Invest NI and the Crown Estate about supply chain opportunities around UK waters for offshore wind, several companies were able to follow up potential leads. We are planning a second similar event early next year to coincide with the work being done by DETI on the release of licences for Northern Ireland waters.



over 100 potential US inward investors to Northern Ireland as part of the US and All Island Renewable Marine Energy and SmartGrid Workshop, designed to showcase Northern Ireland's capabilities in the emerging marine energy sector. The two-day cross border event also outlined plans to further integrate renewable energy sources into the all-island electricity network using the latest developments in SmartGrid technology.

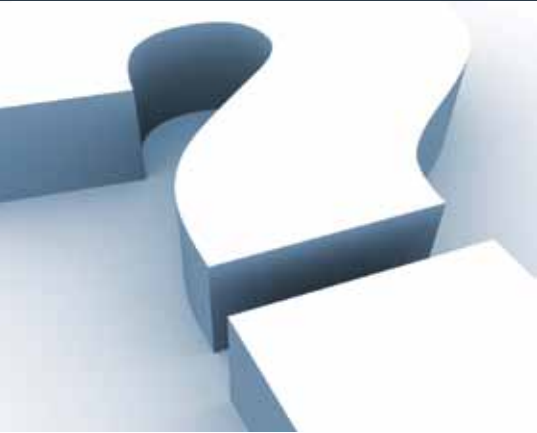
"Investors are coming to Northern Ireland because they recognise Northern Ireland has unique capabilities in the renewables space. Our natural resources, strong research base, well positioned infrastructure and existing business capabilities make Northern Ireland a potentially leading player.

"Our challenge is to continue to differentiate ourselves from other regions. Invest is focused on promoting and building Northern Ireland's strengths in the renewables sector and targeting our support so that as many local companies as possible can benefit from the opportunities arising in this fast growing sector," adds Olive Hill.

In May, Invest NI, working with the US Embassy in Dublin and a range of agencies north and south, brought

What's New?

WHAT'S NEW?



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

Companies in the Life Sciences sector can keep up to date with market intelligence by accessing Biopharm Insight (www.biopharminsight.com), available in Invest NI's Business Information Centre. This is a leading provider of forward-looking insight and intelligence to the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industry including comprehensive drug profiles and detailed contact info on:

>> Launching the Ulster Bank Business Achievers Awards are, from left: John Moran from Moran's Retail, Nigel Walsh, Regional Director, Ulster Bank and Des Gartland, Invest NI

- over 24,000 biotech and pharmaceutical companies;
- over 36,000 investigational and more than 23,000 approved drugs;
- 250,000 industry contacts (includes email and direct phone); and
- more than 4,500 detailed company profiles.

>> For further information contact the Business Information Centre
T: 028 9069 8135
E: bic@investni.com

INVESTMENT AMBASSADOR

Hanif Lalani OBE is to act as an investment ambassador for Northern Ireland. Mr Lalani, a former Chief Executive of BT Global Services, has volunteered his time to support Invest NI's inward investment activities with a focus on key strategic areas, including London and India.

Mr Lalani has substantial experience in the IT, telecoms and business process outsourcing sectors. This will complement Invest NI's in-market activities, which are focused on securing new inward investment and helping local companies exploit trade links in valuable markets, such as India.

ULSTER BANK BUSINESS ACHIEVERS AWARDS 2010

Entries are now being accepted for the 17th annual Ulster Bank Business Achievers Awards, once again held in partnership with Invest NI, Intertrade Ireland and the Belfast Telegraph.

The awards celebrate entrepreneurship and success across Ireland. Companies will be judged on a variety of merits including sales performance, market

share, growth, company milestones, innovative new products or services and successful achievements by key personnel.

Following the initial judging process at the preliminary stage of the awards, competing businesses are shortlisted for provincial awards. Provincial award winners will then go on to compete for the national title and individual title at an all-island awards ceremony in April 2011. Businesses can enter in up to two of the following categories:

1. Innovation and Emerging Technology Award
2. International Business Award
3. Social Entrepreneurship Award
4. Best Business Start Up Award
5. Family Run Business Award
6. Green Business Award
7. Agriculture, Food and Drink Award
8. Service Business Award

The national Business Achievers winner will win a specially commissioned trophy, business laptop, a significant media bursary, membership of the Institute of Directors and an executive programme at Harvard Business School.



>> For more information see www.businessachieversaward.com
Closing date is 30 November.

'Here's how' videos are a hit

Local companies are sharing their experience of overcoming business challenges in a series of videos available to view on nibusinessinfo.co.uk. The practical advice is proving to be a hit with visitors to the site. Here's a taste of what's on offer.

HERE'S HOW KNOWING OUR CUSTOMERS' NEEDS BENEFITS OUR BUSINESS - MICHAEL JENKINS, UP AND RUNNING NI LTD

"Understanding the customers' needs is really the backbone of the business. We would focus on what I would call marketing segmentation. So we would look at up to maybe eight different segments within the running market in terms of trail running, mountain running and elite athletes running around tracks, to people walking and jogging.

"We need to understand these customers' needs and have the right

products in place and the right value proposition in terms of price and product and service that we deliver on.

"Our unique selling point is probably knowledge. People would tell us our unique selling point would be our digital gait analysis system because we are the first people to use this in Ireland in a retail capacity, but in terms of knowledge, I think that's the crucial differentiator between us and our competitors in the market place. Our customers expect from us, as a running specialist shop, a certain level of knowledge.

"The four tips I would give about understanding customers' needs would be: one, look at segments, so it's not just one big market you are looking at. My second tip would be to actually live your business, be around your business, talk and listen to your customers as opposed to being stuck in an office.

"My third tip would be to get outside your business, talk to people outside, find out what they think of your business, how your business is viewed externally and you will get a lot of interesting feedback.

"And finally, in terms of customers' needs it is very important your staff are trained and developed so they can listen to and understand the customers and connect with them."

TOPICAL TOPICS

nibusinessinfo.co.uk now has a presence on a number of social media sites: Twitter, YouTube, blogspot and Facebook. This allows businesses to keep updated on the latest business news, events, and new guides and tools added to nibusinessinfo.co.uk. The Twitter presence (twitter.com/nibusinessinfo) also gives businesses a way to have their business queries answered.

The nibusinessinfo.co.uk YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/nibusinessinfo) has over 45 business videos covering topics from how to start a business to how to develop export markets. nibusinessinfo.co.uk's web blog (nibusinessinfo.blogspot.com) is updated regularly with the latest news, events and features affecting Northern Ireland businesses today.

The latest channel to be added is Facebook and it is hoped that it will help nibusinessinfo.co.uk to reach a wider audience by presenting a human face for the site and helping to build a community around the brand and its messages.

Is it time to grow your business?

Find out with smart advice from our free business guides.

Healthy growth is essential to every business. But progress needs to be planned carefully. Our free growth action plan tool will help you get started.

Visit nibusinessinfo.co.uk/grow - growth made easy.

Part financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland.



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View from overseas

THE INVEST NI TEAM IN SAN JOSE



Northern Ireland native Jane Dawson has just celebrated a year in the Invest NI San Jose team, having worked in the New York team for over two years. The office is part of the US office network, which includes a head office in Boston and an office in New York. Here Jane talks about life in Silicon Valley and about raising the profile of Northern Ireland in one of the world's most vibrant technology markets.

THE TEAM

The US team is led by Senior Vice President Gary Hanley, based in Boston. The San Jose team has almost doubled over the last year as we increase our efforts on the West Coast, acknowledging the importance and potential of this market. We have three Vice Presidents Business Development - myself, Aengus Murray and Aidan McKenna, supported by our Business Development Managers Alan Stevenson, David McKeown and Harry Jones. Mark Johnston has the role of Channel Manager, working to develop relationships predominantly with venture capitalists and other influencers in the network. We also work closely with our colleagues in Belfast and across Invest NI's international office network.

FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY

Named originally because of the region's large number of silicon chip manufacturers, Silicon Valley is home to some of the biggest names in technology - Apple, HP, Intel, Oracle, Cisco. It is also a hot bed for start-ups that can very quickly become household names and continues to be one of world's leading hubs for high-tech innovation and development. A 2010 Forbes Survey of Most Innovative Cities ranked US cities based on the number of patents per capita, venture capitalist investment per capita, and ratios of high-tech science and creative jobs to population. Top scorers in all categories were San Jose (considered the capital of Silicon Valley), and neighbouring Santa Clara, Sunnyvale, Mountain View and Cupertino.

Overseas

Key investors from the Valley into Northern Ireland include Seagate, Openwave, Intelliden, CyberSource and 3PAR. These companies are trail-blazers in their technology fields, acknowledged for their innovation and quality. They offer superb testimonials about their experiences in Northern Ireland. This, along with the recent surge in mergers and acquisitions in the Valley involving our investors, further investments like that of Seagate and CyberSource in R&D, as well as the outstanding reputation these companies have, helps us position Northern Ireland as a very credible, quality, attractive, cost-competitive, low-risk location for IT operations in Europe.

STRATEGY

With a bigger team in the San Jose office over the past year, we've increased efforts to create awareness of the benefits of doing business Northern Ireland. We've concentrated on developing existing relationships with companies in Silicon Valley. In addition, we have been meeting other technology companies where we have great synergies thanks to existing clusters and expertise in Northern Ireland, and the work of the universities and centres of excellence there. These technology subsectors include security, virtualisation, creative, mobile, connected health and renewables. Beyond Silicon Valley, we work the West Coast to build awareness of Northern Ireland and develop networks in high-tech markets such as Washington, Southern California, Texas, Arizona and Colorado.

The impact of the global recession has been a tightening of available funding for start-ups and expansions, as well as a reluctance to increase current headcount either domestically or internationally. With an unemployment rate of 12.6 per cent in the state of California, the motivation for setting up operations in another market comes from the need for nearshore support for existing customers, and the search for specific technology skills sets and clusters of activity.

There is a large tech community which is highly competitive. So developing relationships to promote the brand in this market is critical to our success.

We achieve this in several ways including a dedicated strategy aimed at venture capitalists and the legal and financial community who are close to the up-and-coming tech companies. We align ourselves with events which bring together companies interested in the technologies we're good at, for example, RSA - security in IT, the Wind Power Exposition in Dallas, and the Broadsoft Connections annual conference. We work with existing investors, and other teams in Invest NI and sponsor events that will give us targeted access to key players. And we use hospitality, for example, running salon event to bring together a small group of prospective clients and people with experience of Northern Ireland to generate awareness of Northern Ireland and build key relationships.

We had the pleasure of hosting Minister Foster and Jeremy Fitch in June this year, with US Economic Envoy to Northern Ireland, Declan Kelly, also joining us. The visit included meetings with key clients such as CyberSource, 3PAR and Openwave. A business lunch in Palo Alto made a tremendous impact on our efforts, bringing together some 80 business leaders and influencers from our network to hear Minister Foster and Declan Kelly promote Northern Ireland and to hear from Bill McKiernan, Founder of CyberSource, about his very positive experiences of Northern Ireland. Support like this allows us to accomplish in one session what might normally take weeks, or indeed months, to achieve.

Recent milestone events have included the US-NI Economic Conference in Washington DC. This event was focused on attracting potential investors to the region. They listened to recent investors paying testament to Northern Ireland, as well as local politicians and representatives of Invest NI promoting the benefits of locating in the region.



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>> Staff from the Invest NI San Jose office pictured with DETI Minister Arlene Foster during a visit to the West coast

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