

# Access to Finance Launch



# Steven Scullion

## Director, Corporate Finance

### Invest NI



# Access to Finance History

- **1995** – Invest NI and its predecessor, IDB, first get involved in access to finance, with creation of first Government backed fund in NI
- **2008** – The European Investment Fund carried out a market gap study and estimated a funding need of £80m across the equity and debt market in NI
- **2011** – Invest NI created a structured programme to address this market failure and the Access to Finance Programme was born



# Access to Finance Objectives

1. Reduce the market gap in provision of finance to start-ups and SMEs
2. Produce economic benefits for the NI economy
3. Develop a sustainable funding environment by encouraging the entry of other funders





# Access to Finance Objectives

1. Reduce the market gap in provision of finance to start-ups and SMEs	✓
2. Produce economic benefits for the NI economy	✓
3. Develop a sustainable funding environment by encouraging the entry of other funders	



# NI Funding Ecosystem





	SBLF III	Co-Fund III	Techstart III	Techstart III PoC
Type	Debt	Equity	Equity	Grant
Invest NI Commitment	£5.9m	£39m	£48m	£7.2m
Private leverage targets / recycling	£2m	£61m	£90m	N/A
Total investment expected	£7.9m	£100m	£138m	£7.2m
Target businesses	Established micro and SME	Seed/early stage in priority sectors	Start-up / Seed	Concept stage
Max investment in business	£125k	£2.5m	£2.5m (£4m in two companies)	£40k
Fund Manager	Ulster Community Finance	Clarendon Fund Managers	Techstart Ventures	Techstart Ventures





# Panel Participants



**Nicole Ross**  
**Ross Engineering**



**Laura Haldane**  
**SciLeads**



**Alan Foreman**  
**B-Secur**



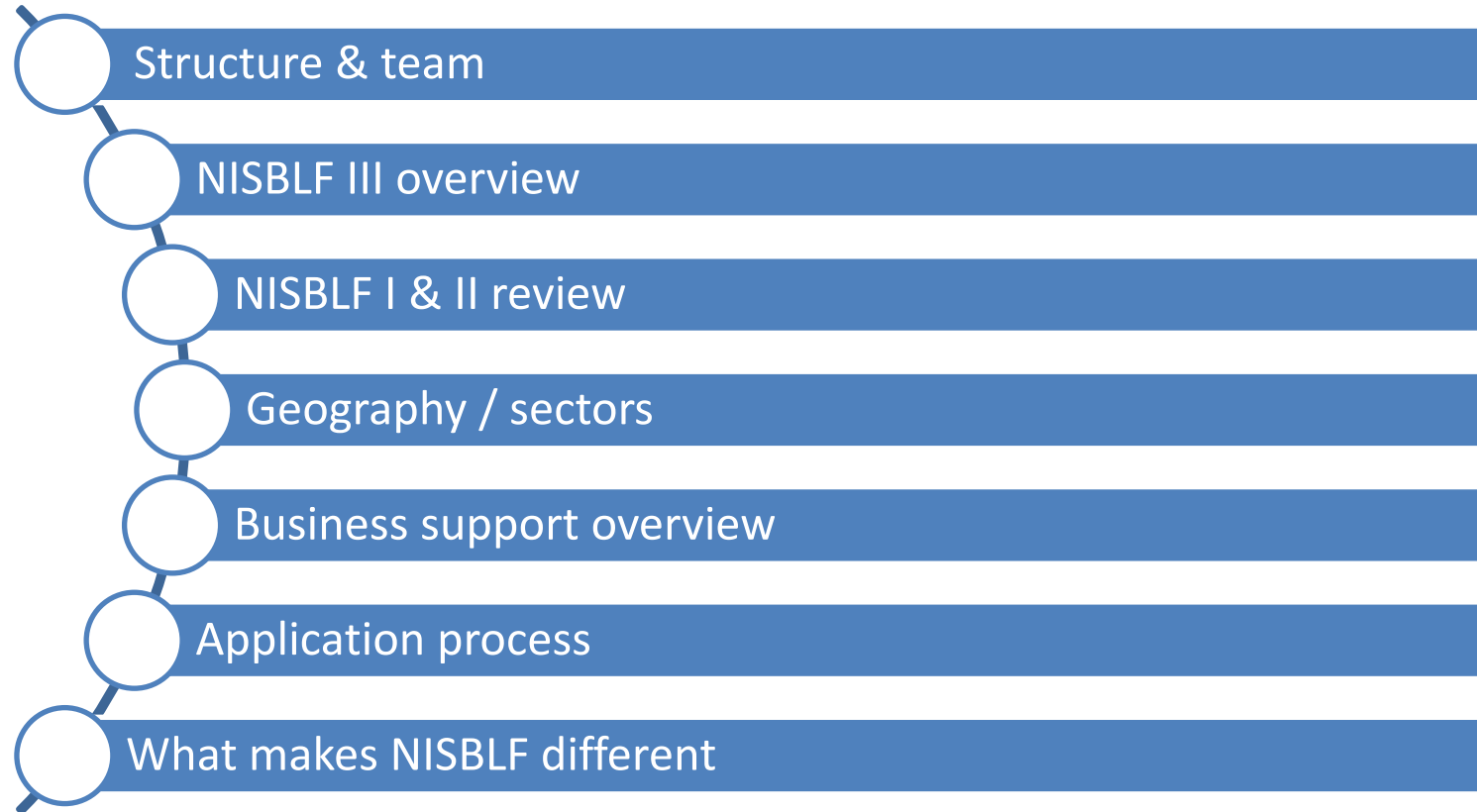
# Fund Manager Presentations



# NI Small Business Loan Fund

14 May 2025





# Structure & Team



Provider of loans and support to third sector organisations across the island.

Loan support for workspace, sports projects, and community groups.

Works closely with each client to maximise potential for creating sustainable change.



Representative organisation for the region's 27 Local Enterprise Agencies.

Provides access to workspace, development services, access to finance, and informed support.

Lobbies on behalf of self-employed, micro, and small businesses.

Geographical reach across Northern Ireland.  
Social enterprise structure and ethos.

# Structure & Team



## Managing Partner

### Responsibilities:

- Financial management of Fund
- Compliance with contracts & KPIs
- Reporting to Invest NI & FCA
- Compliance with Consumer Credit Act
- Approval of loans
- Sign-off of offer letters and drawdowns
- Pursue legal action against defaulters

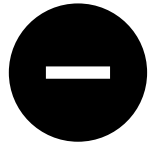


## Delivery Partner

### Responsibilities:

- Filter & process all enquiries and applications
- Assess applications and recommend to manager
- Draft offer letters
- Perform credit control
- Maintain Management Information System
- Provide website for NISBLF II
- Report to managing partner

# NI Small Business Loan Fund III overview



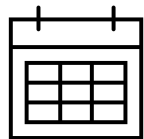
To combat perceived 'market-failure' – growing businesses unable to borrow from traditional providers



Invest NI commitment £5.85m



Up to £125,000 (£15,000 start-ups)



Duration: 1 – 5 years



6.7% flat rate – established businesses  
8% flat rate – start-ups



Personal guarantees required for limited companies – to provide equality with sole traders / partnerships  
(effectively all NI Small Business Loan Fund borrowers are owner-managers)



# NI Small Business Loan Fund III overview

## Sectors supported

Retail	E-commerce
Manufacturing	Engineering
Wholesale	Information Technology
Artisan Foods	Gyms / Leisure
Construction	Tourism
Personal Services	Social Enterprise

# NI Small Business Loan Fund III overview

What can finance be used for?

Working capital	New product development
Commercial premises	Plant and machinery
Website / E-commerce	Stock purchase
Export trade	Growth plans / employment
Software development	Restructuring

# NI Small Business Loan Fund I review

Approvals:  
£8.3m

Disbursals:  
£7.6m

Clients  
supported:  
345



West Coast  
Camper Vans



# NI Small Business Loan Fund II review

Approvals:  
£10.4m

Disbursals:  
£9.8m

Clients  
supported:  
297



HALL McKNIGHT

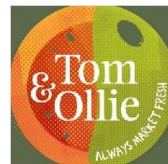


SciLeads

The  
**WINE**  
company

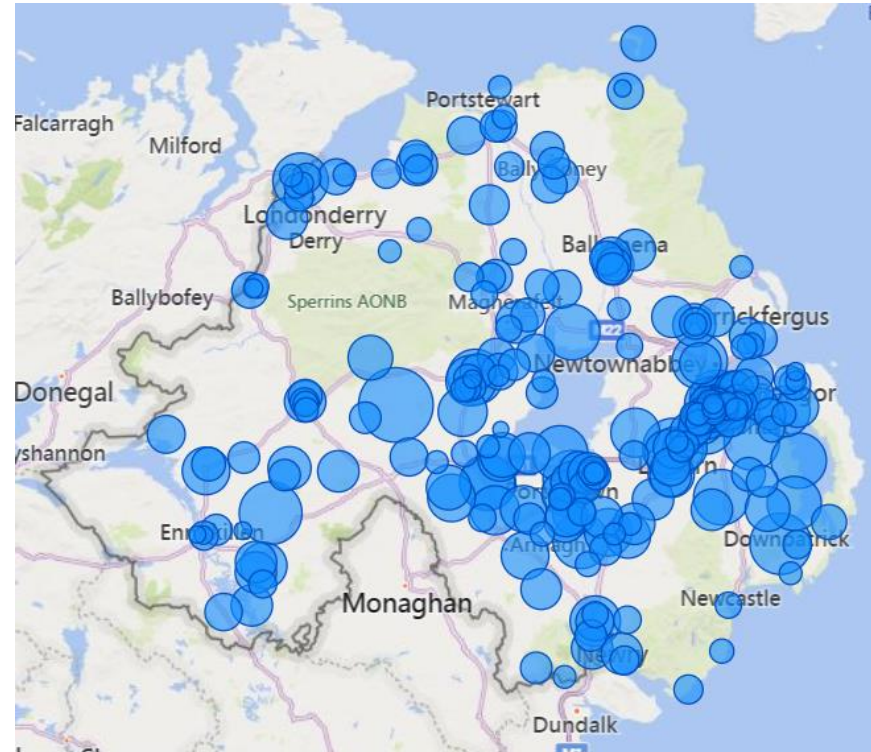


**MOLLOY**  
engineering



# NI Small Business Loan Fund II review

Council Area	Approvals	%
Antrim & Newtownabbey	9	2.9%
Ards & North Down	17	5.4%
Armagh, Banbridge, & Craigavon	38	12.1%
Belfast	69	22.0%
Causeway Coast & Glens	20	6.4%
Derry & Strabane	18	5.7%
Fermanagh & Omagh	33	10.5%
Lisburn Castlereagh	19	6.1%
Mid & East Antrim	13	4.1%
Mid Ulster	47	15.0%
Newry, Mourne, & Down	31	9.8%
Total	314	
Belfast	69	22.0%
Outside Belfast	245	78.0%
Total	314	



# Case studies

## AM Civil Engineering Ltd



Owned and managed by Chartered Civil Engineer with over 25 years experience.

Strong client base including well known names, Graham Construction, Lowry Building and Civil Engineering, Kier Infrastructure etc.

£550k turnover and growing, profitability and EBITDA available, no other debt.

Only trading 2-3 years which may have been the reason the bank would not support.

Funding provided to assist with growth plans, and assist with the creation of 5 new high value jobs at an average salary of £45k per annum.



## Martin Hurls

Small home based business, operating for many years as a hobby now turned full time business.

Outside of Start-up loans criteria, however still small with historic turnovers of £70k

Ash Dieback disease badly affecting the supply chain in terms of availability and increased cost from Irish suppliers.

Our £10k was to contribute toward a bulk buy purchase of Ash from Ukraine which would cover his stock requirements for the next year, eliminating supply risk and ensuring he can get the best margins on his products.



# Case studies

## Stepping Stone Timber



Stepping Stone Timber Products Ltd is a family run business established in 1997.

It produces and supplies firewood & kindling products to customers throughout the UK and Ireland.

£1.5m turnover and growing, profitability and EBITDA available

Wholesale retail customers include Hendersons, Lidl, LCC Group, Fuel Express and Home Bargains.

Funding was provided to allow the business to purchase stock to cater for anticipated seasonal demand from their increasing customer base. The business has successfully secured funding with NISBLF on three separate occasions since first applying in 2014.

## Tom & Ollie



Belfast-based artisan food production company Tom & Ollie (Tomato and Olive) was established in 2014 by friends Seamus Mullan, Hugh Cushnan and Fergal McGrainne from Broughshane. The business has its roots in local artisan and farmers markets across Northern Ireland, with a regular stall at the weekly St George's Market in Belfast.

Tom & Ollie is a SALSA approved artisan producer of pesto, tapenades, hummus and sun-dried tomatoes along with specialising in cheese and charcuterie.

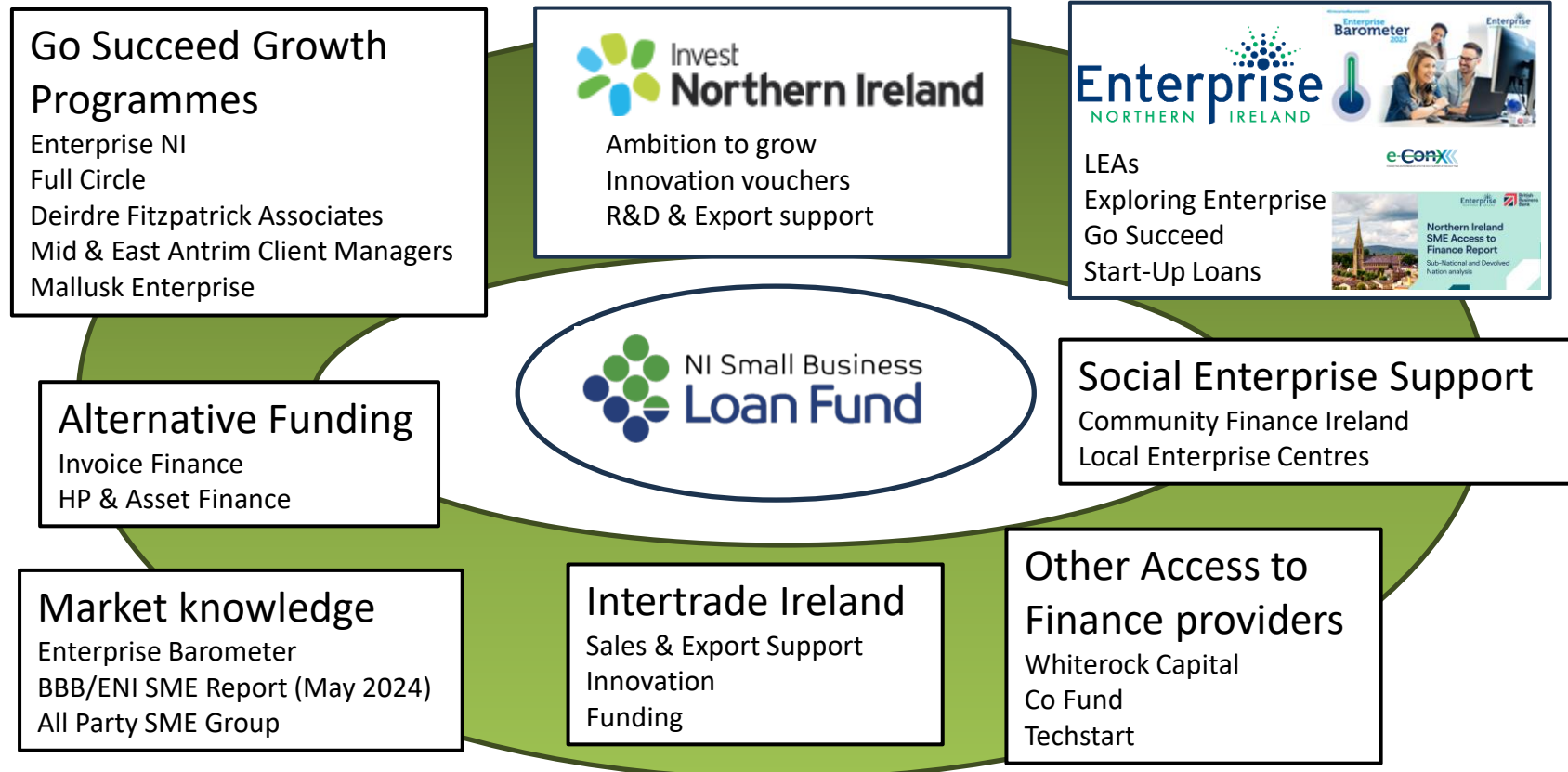
The business works with some high profile customers including Aldi Ireland, Lidl, Sheridan Cheesemongers & Sysco Ireland.

Funding was provided to support their ongoing growth and associated working capital requirements

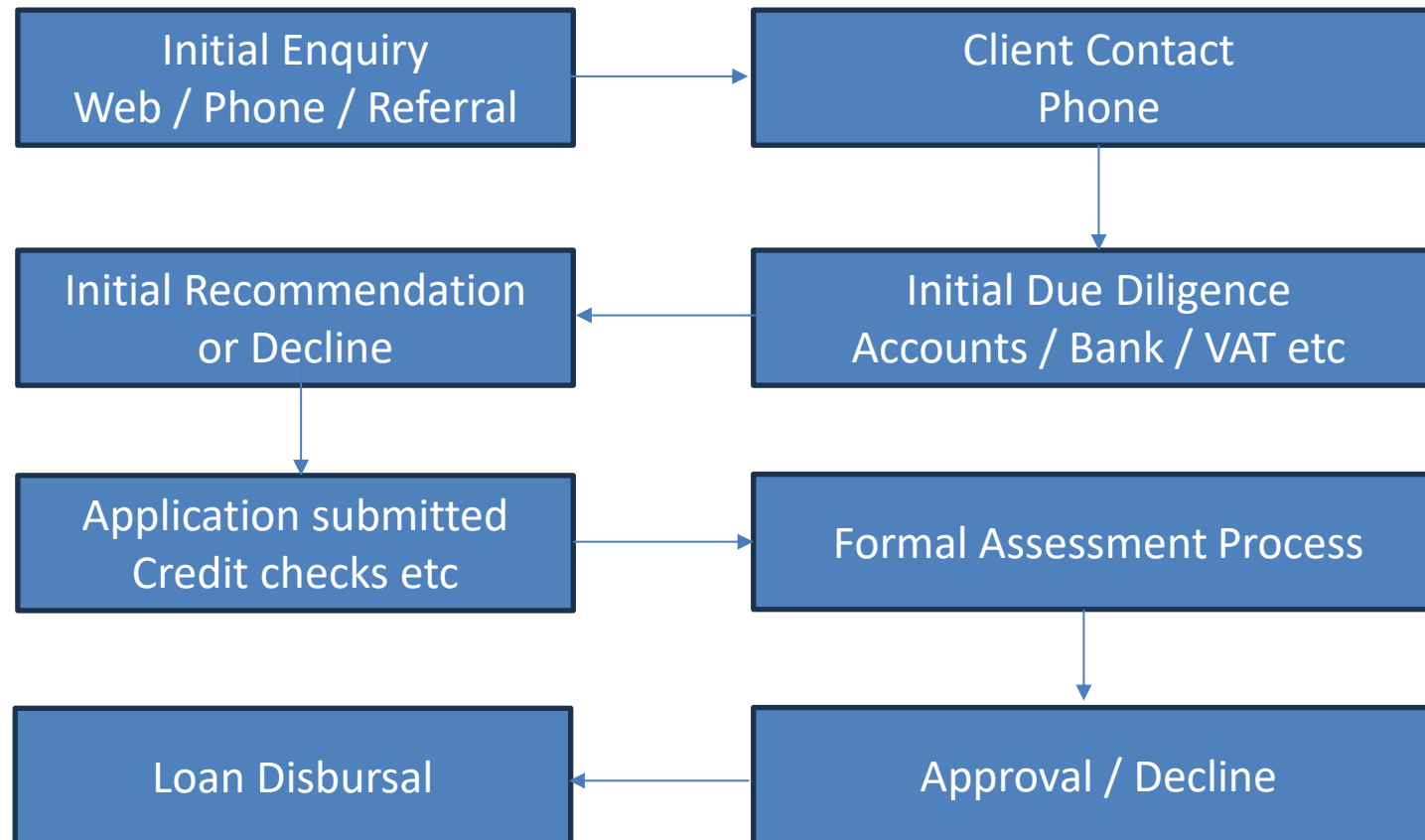


# Business support overview

NISBLF has expert market knowledge of the business support ecosystem across Northern Ireland  
– can provide guidance for SMEs in a confusing marketplace



# Application process – loan assessment



# Application processes - timescales



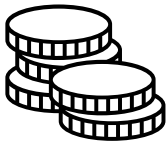
Initial due diligence through review of financial information carried out usually within 2 days of enquiry



Clients proceeding to assessment submitted for approval within 1-2 weeks (depending on information provided by client)



Letters of Offer issued immediately on approval (maxz 1-2 days)

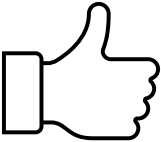


Funds disbursed between 1-2 days on receipt of signed documents

# What makes NISBLF different



Risk – wider risk threshold



Flexibility – ability for repayment breaks, reduced repayments where requirement exists



Speed – no “slow-no’s” – if we can support the business we identify it early and proceed with application



Relationship – loan executive contact from initial enquiry right through the assessment/approval process



Fixed transparent pricing with no hidden fees

# CLARENDON FUND MANAGERS



## Co-Fund III Launch



14<sup>th</sup> May 2025

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the Financial Conduct Authority*



# AGENDA

- Welcome
- CFM Background
- Intro to Co-Fund NI
- Co-Fund III Overview
- Co-Fund III Investment Update



# CFM Team

- NI's **largest** equity investment team operating since **2002**
- Extensive knowledge and track record of **Patient Capital co-investing in NI**
- Deep Team **Sector experience**
- Extensive **Private Investor Networks**
- **Diverse investment team experience** with backgrounds in finance, marketing, HR, engineering and data
- Adding value at a **strategic level**
- Early-stage and Growth venture equity specialists



**Brian Cummings**  
*Investment Director*



**Neil Simms**  
*Investment Director*



**Jim Curran**  
*Investment Director*



**Damien Curran**  
*Chair*



**Stuart Gaffikin**  
*Senior Investment Manager*



**Claudine Owens**  
*Senior Investment Manager*



**Sian McLaughlin**  
*Senior Investment Manager*



**Matthew Ward**  
*Investment Manager*



**Jill Wilson**  
*Investment Associate*



**Jack Langan**  
*Investment Associate*



**Shauna Leonard**  
*Investment Analyst*



**Daniel Lartey**  
*VC Intern*



# CFM Overview



CLARENDON  
PRIVATE INVESTOR  
NETWORK



## Co-Fund NI

- Combined **c£95 million fund**, across Co-Fund I, II & III, made available to invest alongside private investors (individuals & or syndicates) into eligible SMEs based in Northern Ireland
- **Patient capital**
- Investments typically in early-stage companies with an expectation to provide **follow-on investment**
- 108 portfolio companies - 3 IPOs & 11 exits to date. Active portfolio of 73 companies.

## CPIN (Clarendon Private Investor Network)

- CFM identifies the most **innovative and high potential growth** companies and introduces investments to investors who have an interest in Northern Ireland.

## Investment Fund for Northern Ireland (IFNI)

- Dedicated equity fund for the Investment Fund for NI through British Business Bank
- £33m fund launched in November 2023 with 7 investments and £7.25m invested to date
- Can complete equity investments up to £5 million to help SMEs start up, scale up and / or stay ahead.

# Co-Fund NI Overview

CLARENDON  
FUND  
MANAGERS



## Co-investment

**Business Angels**

**Corporate Investors**

**University Funds**

**Venture Capital Funds**



## Deal Size

**Initial investments:**

£150k - £500k

**Typical total round size:**

£300k - £2m of equity



## Geography

NI registered companies

Or those with a **significant presence** in NI



## Sectors

Sector-agnostic

High export growth potential

Innovation Driven Enterprises

**Current portfolio split:**

40% **Digital ICT & FinTech**  
30% **Life & Health Sciences**  
20% **Adv Manu & AgriTech**  
10% Other incl **FMCG**



## Deal Stage & Activity

**Start-up & Early Stage**  
through to **Series A**

Fund invests around **£8m PA**

Portfolio raises around  
**£50m PA**

# Co-Fund I & II Status

## Investment

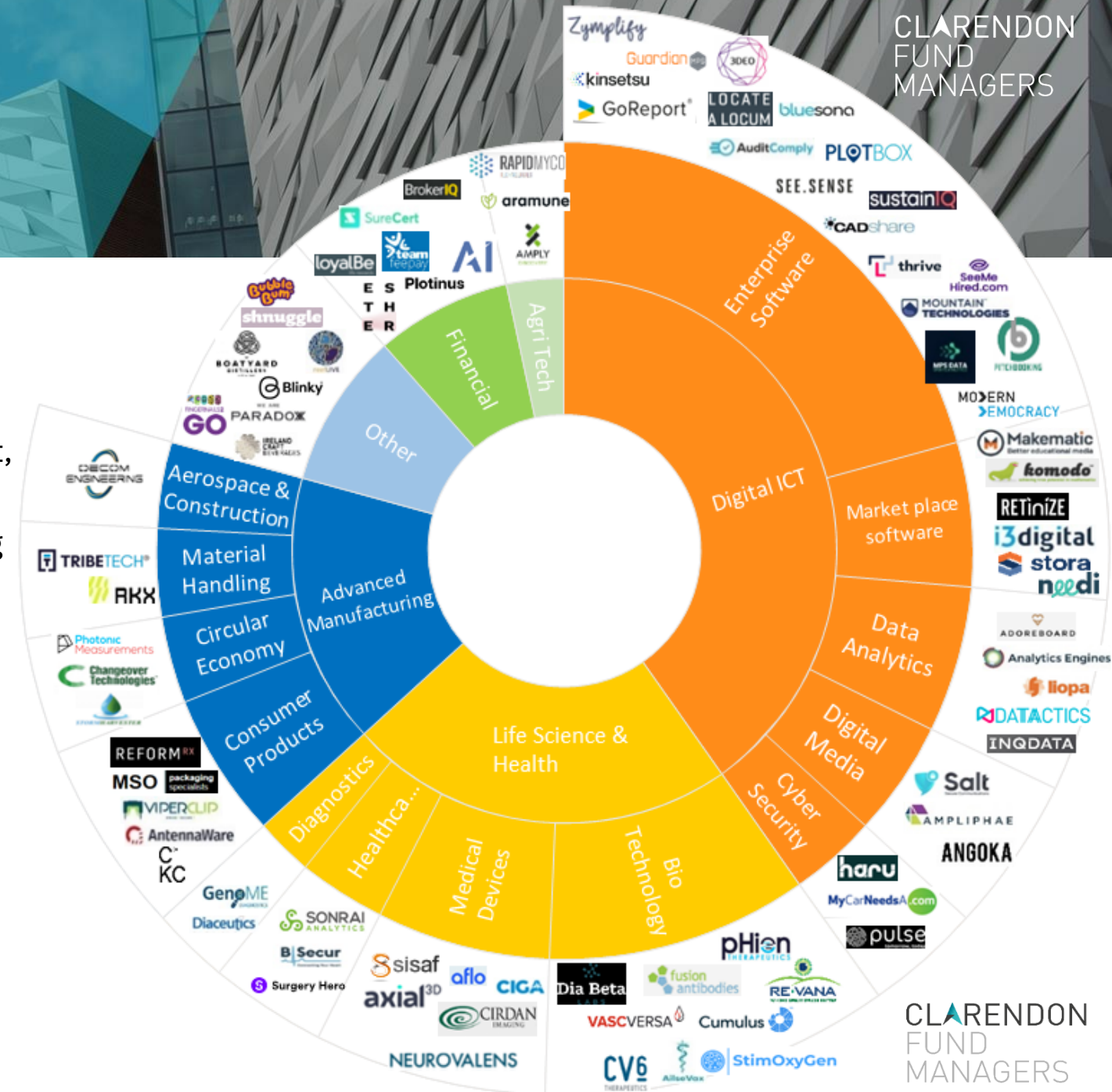
- Invested £51.1m in 102 companies across 363 rounds
- Directly matched £113.2m of private investment, bringing total matched investment to £164.3m
- Leveraged additional funding of £210m, bringing total funding to £374m

## Exit environment

- 11 successful exits & 3 Stock Market Listings
- 18 Liquidations
- 73 remaining live investee companies

## Co-Fund I & II portfolio supports:

- £112m of revenues per annum
- 1,603 employees
- £39m GVA per annum





# Co-Fund III Overview

## What is Co-Fund III?

- £39m equity fund launched in December 2024
- Funds provided by Invest NI
- Initial Investment size typically £150k to £300k
- Strong focus on investing across the whole of Northern Ireland
- Co-invests alongside other private investors

Business funding designed for growth to help boost productivity, innovation and employment, supporting a wide range of business finance needs including:



Machinery purchase



Capex



Product development



Hiring



Export finance



Working capital

## What Co-Fund III is looking for?

- Ambitious management teams
- Large addressable international market
- Strong product or service offering
- Business potential to grow rapidly through investment
- Alignment on exit expectations
- Sector agnostic
- Can support companies in building out their Boards

## INVESTMENT ACROSS START-UP & EARLY STAGE



# Co-Fund III Status & Regional Balance

- Invested in 6 companies for a cumulative £1.5m since commencement
- Investments completed across the whole of Northern Ireland
- A minimum of £16.25m of initial capital to be deployed outside of Belfast
- A strong pipeline of potential investments

**LUMEN**STREAM

## NORTH



**Sian McLaughlin**  
Snr Investment  
Manager



**Matt Ward**  
Investment  
Manager



**Jack Langan**  
Investment  
Associate

## WEST



**Brian Cummings**  
Investment  
Director



**Stuart Gaffikin**  
Snr. Investment  
Manager

## SOUTH



**Neil Simms**  
Investment  
Director



**Claudine Owens**  
Snr Investment  
Manager

## REGIONAL TEAM SUPPORT



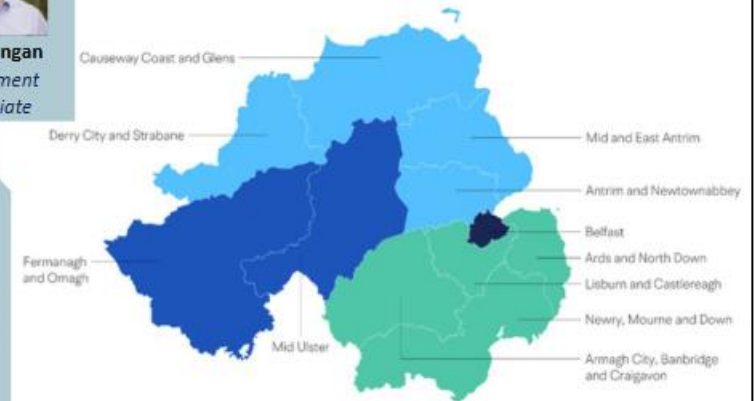
**Jill Wilson**  
Investment  
Associate



**Shauna Leonard**  
Investment  
Analyst



**Daniel Lartey**  
Investment  
Executive



# Get in touch

CLARENDON  
FUND  
MANAGERS

**Please say hello!**

**Office Email:**

[info@clarendon-fm.co.uk](mailto:info@clarendon-fm.co.uk)

**Team Emails on our website:**

[www.clarendon-fm.co.uk](http://www.clarendon-fm.co.uk)

Connect with us on **LinkedIn**





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# TECHSTART VENTURES LLP

Techstart Ventures is an early stage technology investor funded by Invest Northern Ireland

# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

**£200M+ FUNDS UNDER MANAGEMENT**

**PORTFOLIO OF 130+ COMPANIES ACROSS NI & SCOTLAND**



89 Portfolio Companies  
150+ Founders



48 Portfolio Companies  
80+ Founders

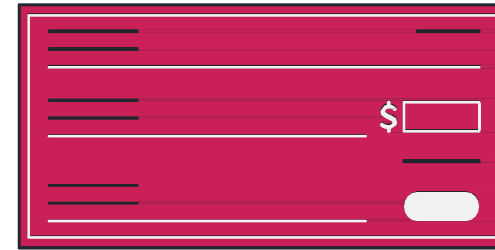
# THE SUCCESSOR SEED CAPITAL FUND



**£48m of Investable  
Capital Across 40  
Companies**



**£500k-£600k Average  
Cheque Size with  
Significant Follow On  
Capacity**



**First Cheque Lead  
Investor**

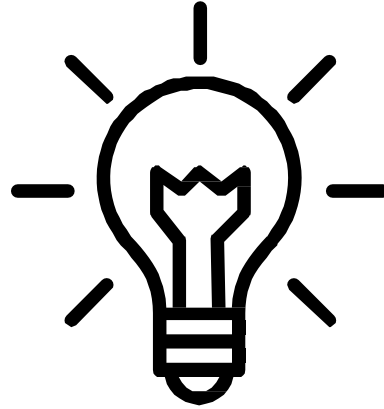


**Focus on Founder  
Opportunity Fit**

# WHY IT'S NEEDED



**Focused on  
Globally Ambitious  
Founders**



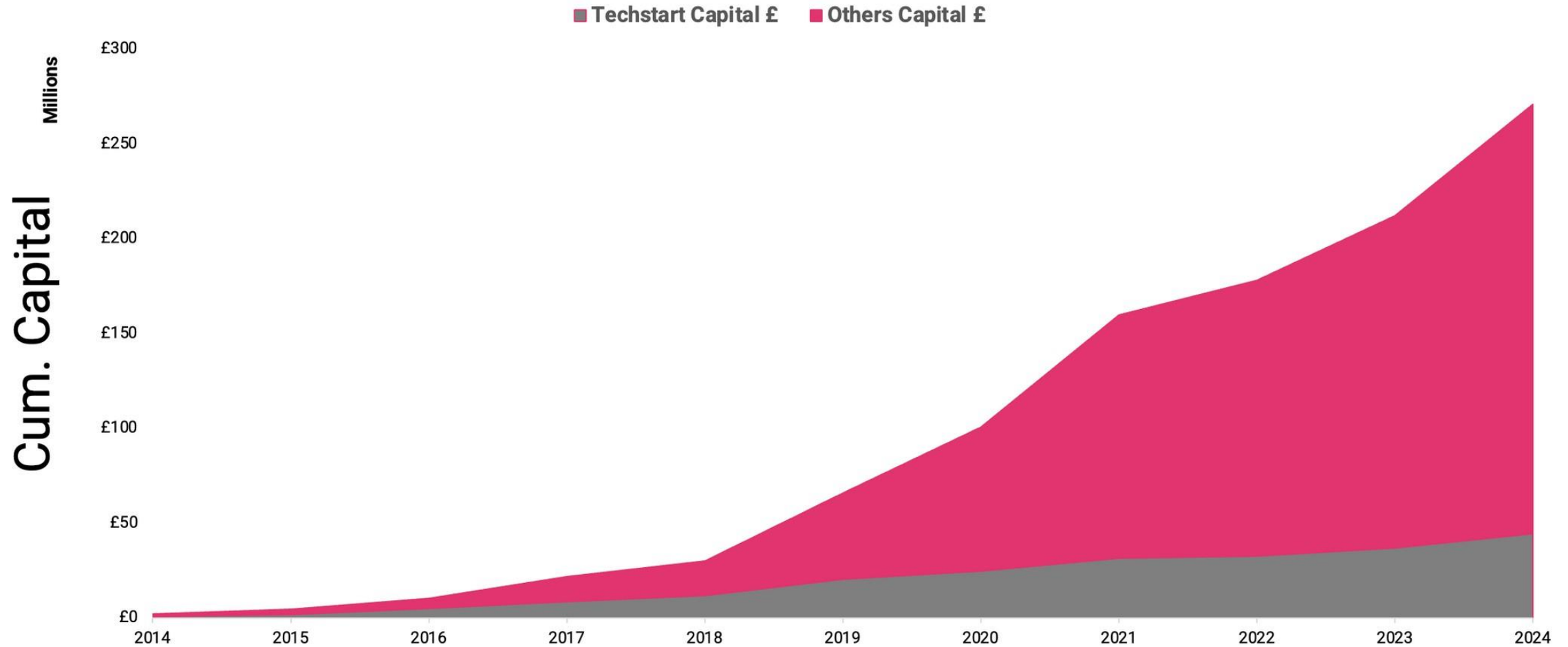
**Early-Stage Capital to  
Prove Market Need**



**Unlocking  
Out of Territory  
Institutional Capital**

# INVESTMENT LEVERAGE

## LEVERAGING OTHER SOURCES OF CAPITAL





# PROOF OF CONCEPT GRANT FUND

Supporting entrepreneurs at the earliest stage to help test and prove their business idea

**Novel & Innovative Concepts**

**10**

Years

**1802**

Applications

**506**

Awards

# THE SUCCESSOR POC GRANT FUND

## CONCEPT GRANT

Up to **£15,000**

## CONCEPT PLUS GRANT

Up to **£40,000**

**£7.2m in Grant Funding Available**

**5 Year Fund**

**280 Grants to be awarded**

**Regional and Female Initiatives**

# FROM GRANTS TO EQUITY



## Route from Grant to Equity (52 Companies)



# Fund Manager Q&A



# Closing Remarks

