

'Put your money in Northern Ireland and be part of this incredible story. Because investing in Northern Ireland makes business sense.'

David Cameron, former UK Prime Minister

Welcome to the opportunity

Northern Ireland has an economy which has undergone a renaissance over the past 20 years. The restoration of devolution in 1998 put political power back in the hands of local parties and provided the political stability upon which economic growth has been built. Regeneration is continuing, bringing with it many new opportunities for investors and developers.

Over the past six years Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) has supported over 23,000 projects and secured £3.9 billion of investment which will lead to the creation of over 42,000 jobs.

Invest NI recently launched its 2017-21 Business Strategy. It outlines how it will build on this and transform Northern Ireland into a truly leading, internationally competitive economy which provides opportunities for all through a focus on supporting local businesses to create jobs, innovate and grow their exports, and by attracting new inward investment.

With a population of 1.8 million people, Northern Ireland is 13,600 sq km in size, accounting for six per cent of the total UK land area. The region's population is one of the youngest in Europe, with 55 per cent of the population under the age of 40. Northern Ireland's education system is among the best performing in Europe with some 77 per cent of high

school graduates going on to further and higher education. Supporting these academic achievements are two world-leading universities, Queen's University, Belfast and Ulster University.

Building on the region's rich industrial heritage and skilled workforce, Northern Ireland's economy continues to perform well in the current economic climate. Employment is at an all-time high and the unemployment rate is below the Republic of Ireland and European Union averages.

The combination of talent, value and strong market fundamentals has led to over 900 international companies across a range of sectors choosing to locate in Northern Ireland. Belfast is the top city globally for fintech development projects and global interest is growing in its cyber security sector. Strong demand and relatively limited supply mean that there are rental and capital increases in most sectors.

At the start of 2017, there were 30 schemes under construction or recently completed in the capital Belfast alone. This included four new educational facilities, seven new student accommodation projects, six office developments and eight new hotels. Northern Ireland's excellent business credentials are supported by strong and resilient infrastructure. The region has the highest availability of super-fast

broadband in the UK and there are good direct air linkages to London, Europe and the United States. Belfast is only one hour from London by air and two hours from Dublin by rail and road.

Northern Ireland offers a compelling investment proposition for investors seeking regeneration opportunities, and one which is expected to strengthen further given the Northern Ireland Executive's commitment to reducing the rate of Corporation Tax in Northern Ireland to 12.5 per cent.

Northern Ireland provides genuine commercial opportunities with measurable returns. We value relationships with business partners and stakeholders and it's no surprise that 80 per cent of new investors reinvest in the region.

The timing is perfect. Invest NI has worked with the Department for International Trade and the Strategic Investment Board to produce this publication which presents a variety of opportunities across several sectors that are at the heart of our ambition to grow. More detail on the regeneration opportunities can be found at the back of the brochure.

Welcome to the opportunity.



Northern Ireland is the only region in the UK to share a land border with the Eurozone.

Prime location

- Ideally situated between mainland Europe and the US
- 55 per cent of the population is under 40 years old
- 100 gigabyte per second telecoms link between Northern Ireland, Europe and North America
- The highest availability of superfast broadband and 4G download speeds in the UK
- Three airports – daily flights to UK and European destinations. Direct flight to US
- Under two hours by road or rail from Belfast to Dublin, the capital of the Republic of Ireland
- Modern road and rail network
- Population 1.8 million
- Capital city – Belfast, population of c.339,000 and c.670,000 in the wider metropolitan area

Regeneration investment opportunities

Northern Ireland's continued success in attracting quality inward investment is underpinning significant growth in Grade A office accommodation.

Growth is evident in many property development sectors, with around 30 schemes currently underway in Belfast alone, comprising both public and private investment.

That growth can be seen in office rentals with top-end office lettings in Belfast increasing by 40 per cent during 2016. The latest end-of-year figures show some 40,400 sq m of office space rented during the course of 2016 – up 36 per cent (based on a five-year average). A further 53,280 sq m of new office space will be completed by 2018. The annual demand for Grade A property is expected to substantially increase following implementation of the commitment to reduce the rate of Corporation Tax in Northern Ireland to 12.5 per cent. Rising rentals mean that there are opportunities for developers to bring forward schemes in this area.

The £250 million expansion of Ulster University in Belfast city centre will bring 18,000 students and staff into the city each day, stimulating further opportunity for mixed-use developments. Major regional infrastructure is also planned, including a new £450 million (£250 million of private investment) transport hub and mixed-use development in the heart of Belfast city centre.

Northern Ireland's thriving tourism sector has fuelled demand for new and innovative property development schemes with growing numbers of tourists drawn to world-class attractions. The ambition is to double the size of the tourism sector, creating a £1 billion industry by 2020 that will generate further development opportunities.

Transparent regulatory systems covering both planning and land use are in place to protect investors and are accessible through local government support. Since April 2015, responsibility for planning approvals has devolved to Northern Ireland's 11 councils, meaning that decisions are taken at a local level and can be progressed faster than was previously the case.

A strong eco-system of international property-related professional services companies with local market experience, including all major legal and accountancy practices, commercial property agents, architects and town planners, exists to assist evaluation and decision making.

The combination of strong market fundamentals and growing demand presents a series of opportunities for investors across a range of property development sectors which are at the heart of our ambition and commitment to build on our success.



30 development schemes in total. 11 completed during 2016, with 19 currently under construction



53,280 sq m of office space to be completed by 2018



More than 1,000 new hotel rooms in Belfast by 2018



2,500 student bed spaces under construction in advance of Ulster University's Belfast campus expansion

A track record of success

In 2016/17, Northern Ireland welcomed 22 new investors, bringing the total to 87 over the past five years.

The region has already enjoyed huge success in attracting investors from sectors including financial services, technology, legal services and business services. Indeed, one in 11 people in Northern Ireland is employed in the knowledge economy. The region is the leading destination globally for US cyber security development projects and is home to the UK's national innovation and knowledge centre for cyber security, CSIT (Centre for Secure IT), based at Queen's University Belfast.

Northern Ireland is also one of the eight designated UK centres of excellence for financial services. These centres of excellence, coupled with a young, talented and highly educated workforce, have resulted in a cluster of international companies including Citi, the Allstate Corporation and Liberty Mutual, all choosing to locate operations in Northern Ireland, with many making repeated investments.

Belfast is also the number one destination city globally for fintech development projects. This is no surprise given Northern Ireland has the highest percentage of qualified IT professionals in the UK and Ireland with more than 70 per cent holding a degree level qualification – well ahead of the rest of the UK and Republic of Ireland.

This has led to the region emerging as a legal tech centre with the UK's first Legal Innovation Centre recently opening at Ulster University.

Global legal firms and companies are conducting cutting-edge work. For example, Allen & Overy's global IT hub is located in Belfast and Baker McKenzie's Global Merger Analysis Platform – a new antitrust and merger data control tool – is delivered from Belfast and used by the firm's team of anti-trust and competition lawyers worldwide.

Axiom's Belfast Centre of Excellence leverages the company's IRIS™ technology to deliver commercial, derivatives and regulatory projects for Fortune 500 clients, while Herbert Smith Freehills' tech-enabled Belfast operation is the central pillar in the firm's global alternative legal services offering.

Northern Ireland also has a vibrant advanced manufacturing and engineering sector. The region has a depth of expertise across several sectors including aerospace, automotive, materials handling and life and health sciences. International companies operating in the region include Bombardier, Caterpillar, Linamar, Seagate, Sensata, Terex and Terumo.

80%
of new investors reinvest.
This includes Citi, Allen & Overy, Bombardier, Fujitsu, Allstate and Seagate.

'We considered a number of location options. Northern Ireland stood out for the great calibre of the available people, combined with cost competitiveness and geographical convenience.'

Graeme Johnston, Partner, Herbert Smith Freehills

A world-class education system

'Our experience in Northern Ireland far exceeded our expectations. We came here originally for the cost savings. We find ourselves staying for the people and the talent that's available.'

Tom Hall, VP International Technology & Operations, Allstate



Queen's University Belfast



Ulster University, Belfast

Northern Ireland's education system is considered one of the best in Europe and consistently outperforms all other UK regions at GCSE and A-level qualifications (high school leaving equivalent).

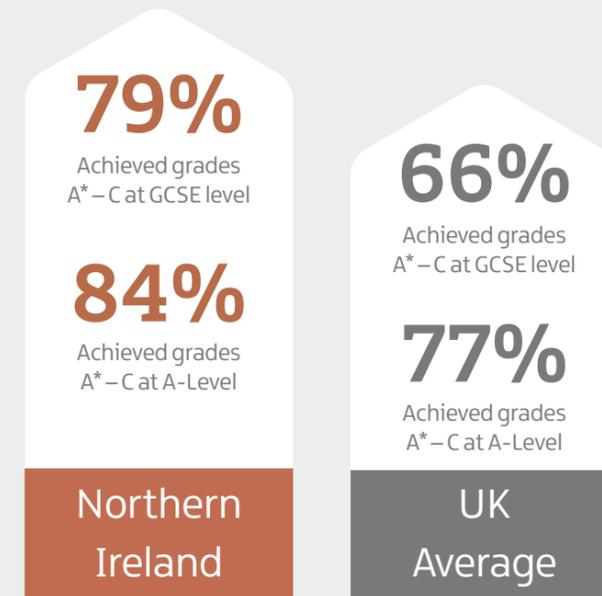
Its two world-ranked universities, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, have close links to industry, ensuring that education is aligned with business needs. Queen's University Belfast is around 170 years old and is a member of the prestigious Russell Group of 24 leading UK research-intensive universities. It currently has plans to invest £223 million in its capital programme.

With four campuses, Ulster University caters for nearly 27,000 students. This includes one of the largest provisions in computing in the UK and Ireland. The university is currently investing £250 million in a new state-of-the-art city centre campus in Belfast.

Both universities are highly regarded as research institutes and are focused on the commercial exploitation of research and development. They have been key drivers in the development of the region's technology and knowledge industries.

Northern Ireland also has a network of regional colleges providing professional and technical programmes. The largest, Belfast Metropolitan College, has around 37,000 students enrolled and has invested over £60 million in its state-of-the-art campuses.

Top performing region in the UK for GCSE and A-Level



- 45,000 students at Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University
- Queen's ranked in the top 1% of universities worldwide
- Ulster University is in the top 150 new universities in the world
- More than 70% of university research is world leading or internationally excellent
- 8,500 people graduate annually with business-related degrees
- A third of the working age population is educated to NVQ Level 4 or above

World-leading innovation

Northern Ireland has a rich heritage of innovation which continues today in the fields of financial services technology, mobile telecoms, cyber security, digital imaging and remote sensors.



William Thomson, later Lord Kelvin, the father of modern science, was from Northern Ireland. He is best remembered for laying the first transatlantic telegraph cable.



10% of the global FX market flows through Belfast every day (\$500 billion).



10% of all cholesterol tests worldwide are made by Randox in Northern Ireland.



Over 30% of the world's airline seats are made in Northern Ireland.



Harry Ferguson from Northern Ireland patented the technology that led to the modern tractor.



The portable defibrillator was designed in Northern Ireland by Professor Frank Pantridge.



25% of all computer read/write heads are made by Seagate Technology in Derry-Londonderry in the UK's largest nanotechnology site.



Dr James Drumm, creator of the rechargeable battery, was from Northern Ireland.



Sir James Martin from Northern Ireland invented the aeroplane ejector seat. To date it has saved in excess of 7,900 pilots.



30% of the famous London red buses are manufactured in Ballymena, County Antrim by local company Wright Group, including the New Routemaster for London.



40% of the world's mobile crushing and screening equipment is made in Northern Ireland.

Peace Bridge, Derry~Londonderry



We discover planets

Cameras designed and manufactured by Andor Technology, an Oxford Instruments company in Belfast, were used by a team of UK, Swiss and French astronomers in the discovery of two new Jupiter-sized planets.



A thriving tourism and leisure sector

Northern Ireland is not only a great place to do business, it's also a great place to visit. Tourists come from all over the world for the unique experience offered by the region.



Over 100 cruise ships and superyachts will visit Belfast in 2017.



With an abundance of world-class courses, Northern Ireland is a focus for golf for both the amateur and professional player.



The epic fantasy television series Game of Thrones® filmed in Northern Ireland has attracted many fans to visit the real locations.

Visitor numbers continue to rise with total visitor numbers up to 4.6 million in the year to September 2016. Visitors to Northern Ireland have also been staying longer and spending more. International tourists are drawn to the Causeway Coastal Route and the world famous Giant's Causeway, as well as visiting the locations made famous by HBO's epic fantasy television series Game of Thrones® which has largely been filmed in Northern Ireland since its pilot in 2010.

Recently voted as the World's Leading Tourist Attraction, Titanic Belfast is the world's largest Titanic visitor experience and is located on the very spot where the famous ship was designed and launched by Harland and Wolff. Since opening in April 2012, more than 3.5 million visitors from over 145 countries have visited the attraction.

This renaissance has given further confidence to investors leading to a total of 27 hotel development schemes entering the pipeline in Belfast alone in the last 12 months with over 3,800 rooms either on-site, planning granted, planning submitted or in pre-planning. These, and other development opportunities in this sector will contribute to Northern Ireland's ambition to double the size of the tourism sector by 2020 and create a £1 billion industry.



A great place to live

Northern Ireland is a great place to live. The region is hugely welcoming and offers an enviable lifestyle.

Its compact size means that the sea, the mountains or its beautiful lakelands are all within easy reach of its vibrant capital Belfast and historic second city Derry-Londonderry. For outdoor spirits it boasts world-class golf courses, superb angling and scenic countryside trails; for culture seekers a wealth of historic buildings, theatres, museums and a dynamic music scene.

Research shows that people in Northern Ireland are the happiest in the UK, and it's easy to see why.

Low crime rate

Stunning scenery

Historical landmarks

Great schools

World-class healthcare

Fabulous beaches

Great golf courses





'We were looking for a location that not only provided skilled software engineers, but also the right business climate to enable us to get our operation up and running quickly. With such a strong IT sector, Northern Ireland was able to offer that.'

Mike Barrett, CEO, Unosquare
