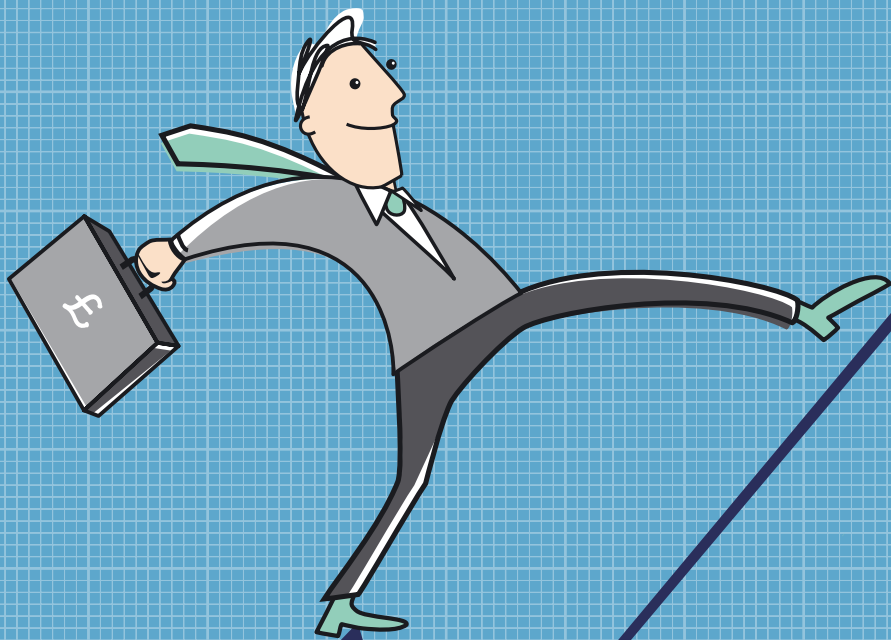


TAKE THE NEXT STEP TO TURN THE DOWNTURN INTO AN UPTURN



Businesses in Northern Ireland continue to face significant challenges in these difficult economic times.

It can be a struggle these days just to keep your business going, with cashflow issues, problems retaining staff and securing new sales. But help is available from Invest Northern Ireland and other organisations. This help could see you through the short to medium term so you can take advantage of the upturn that is coming.

INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND

Employing People

Our £15 million **Short Term Aid Scheme** can provide you with financial assistance to keep key staff while you plan, and if necessary, restructure for the future, so you are ready to take advantage of the upturn. An eligible business will get a grant for salaries to maintain key skills within its workforce. The Short Term Aid Scheme runs until 31 December 2010. You can find more details on how it works from the Invest NI Regional Office Network. Details are also available at www.investni.com/stas

We run a regular series of **Best Practice Clubs** throughout Northern Ireland to keep business people up to date with information on the 'hot topics' affecting businesses today. They also provide opportunities to discuss problems and solutions with other businesses and Invest NI representatives.

You can find details of the Best Practice Clubs on our events planner or contact:

T: 028 9069 8100
E: bisinfo@investni.com

On our website www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk you will find in depth information on employment issues.

Employing people
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/employingpeople

End employment correctly
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/redundancy

Legal responsibilities when recruiting
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/recruiting

Skills and training
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/skills

Assess your leadership style
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/leadershipskills

Finding New Customers

We can help you take steps to increase your sales. Our Trade Division runs a range of activities that give guidance on identifying and exploiting new sales opportunities in export markets.

If you need advice to get started you can access the **Export Advisory Service** or **GB Market Research Service**. These provide specialists to work with you on a one-to-one basis. These specialists have practical export skills and can work with you to prepare an export action plan.

If you want to do some desk research our **Business Information Centre** can:

- research your markets;
- identify new customers or suppliers;
- get you basic guidance on setting up licensing, distributorship and other agreements; and
- find out about European legislation and tender opportunities via our European Information Centre.

During the year we run a series of subsidised **Export Skills & Core Export Knowledge Workshops** designed to address the key issues in selecting, developing and managing your entry to export markets.

If you are ready you can attend **Trade Exhibitions** which give companies the opportunity to market their products individually while benefiting from a group presence at major trade fairs and exhibitions. Or you may want to exhibit independently at an approved trade show outside Northern Ireland, if it's your first time you can get support from our **Solex Programme**.

Our **Trade Missions** provide a cost-effective way of visiting overseas markets in Europe, the Americas, Middle and Far East. Companies can meet customers and potential business partners or carry out market research and network with other mission members.

To find out more you can visit www.investni.com/export or contact T: 028 9023 9090

On our website www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk you will find further practical advice.

Exporting: the basics
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/exporting

Get involved in local business networks
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/networks

Discover your most valuable customers
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/valuable

Market entry, selling and promotion
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/markets

Increase your market share
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/marketshare

Trading with the United States
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/USA

Reducing Costs

This is particularly important at this time as every pound saved adds a pound to the bottom line. Whether your source of energy is oil, electricity or gas, it represents an ongoing cost to your business as does the technology you use in your day-to-day dealings.

Our **Carbon Trust Programme** is a portfolio of services that helps businesses to become or remain energy efficient. The initial survey is free and further consultation is part-funded. The services are delivered by independent energy consultants and energy and technical audits may include up to 10 days' free consultancy.

You can also save money by reducing waste. **Envirowise** is a free advisory initiative aimed at helping businesses improve their environmental performance and save cash.

If you are interested in sharing and gaining knowledge on a wide range of energy-related technologies, you can take part in the **Energy Research & Technology Transfer Groups**. These are groups of businesses, academics and entrepreneurs who meet regularly. Companies have the opportunity to present new ideas, products and services to the group with a view to collaborative working.

To ensure you are making the most cost-effective and best use of your technology you can access expert help at the **eSolutions Demonstration Centre** in Bedford Square. You will receive practical and independent support relating to ICT. The Centre provides access to technology including, internet protocol (IP) telephony, e-security systems, video-conferencing, portable computing, and wireless communications.

Contact Invest NI at 028 9023 9090 for an appointment.

On our website www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk you will find further help.

Environment and efficiency
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/environment

Save money by going green
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/gogreen

Reduce, reuse, recycle
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/niwasteworks

Your waste options
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/wasteoptions

Developing New Products

Times may be tough but developing a new product or service or enhancing a current one can give a business new impetus and see it well prepared for the upturn.

Our **Innovation Voucher Scheme** offers vouchers worth £4,000 to allow you to access skills and expertise from knowledge providers (universities, colleges, publicly funded research centres). Whether you are developing a product or service or looking for a solution to a problem, the scheme allows you to focus on running your business while the knowledge provider creates an innovative solution for your business issue. Full details are at www.innovationvouchers.com

Our **Design Advice Service** will guide companies through a range of services specially designed to assist you with your design issues. This is a free half-day, one-to-one session. You can view more detail at www.investni.com/design

To successfully export products to the European Union a product needs a CE mark. We can take you through the process of meeting the essential safety requirements of the relevant European directives with the **CE Marking Programme**.

You can view more detail at www.investni.com/tau

If you have an idea or invention, you can get patent search, patentability opinion and patent filing through our **Business Innovation Link**.
<http://bil.webbelief.com/About.aspx>

Managing Your Cash

Cash is the lifeblood of your business. If you haven't considered cash management an important issue, then you are probably undermining your business's short-term stability and its long-term survival. It is imperative that you, the business owner, be able to prepare a statement of cash flow.

On our website www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk you will find help with this.

Budgeting and business planning
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/budgeting

Cashflow management: the basics
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/cashflow

Debt recovery
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/debt

Beat the credit crunch
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/creditcrunch

Real help for business now
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/realhelp

Real help with finance now
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/realhelpfinance

VAT, excise and duty
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/customs

Paying HMRC
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/payinghmrc

Self assessment
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/selfassessment

Taxes, returns and payroll
www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/taxes

In Northern Ireland there are a number of investors who are willing to back investor-ready businesses with cash. You may want to investigate any potential funding that may be available. Here are some links.

NISPO Fund
www.nispofunds.com

Clarendon Fund Managers
www.clarendon-fm.co.uk

Crescent Capital
www.crescentcapital.co.uk

OTHER POTENTIAL SUPPORT

Enterprise Finance Guarantee

The current economic conditions have caused UK banks to revise their lending criteria and their approach to credit risk. In order to facilitate the expansion of small and medium enterprises in these challenging economic times, £1.3 billion in Government supported bank loans (of up to £1 million per company on repayment terms of up to 10 years) has been made available.

These guaranteed loans can be used:

- to support new borrowings;
- to refinance existing loans;
- to convert existing overdraft facilities to term loans in order to release capacity; and
- to meet working capital requirements.

The Guarantee is part of the Government's Solutions for Business Portfolio and is available to businesses throughout the UK through approved lenders.

Contact the Department of Business Innovation and Skills for more information about the Guarantee.
www.berr.gov.uk

Enterprise Northern Ireland

Loan Fund

The biggest single issue affecting the establishment and growth of a small business is how to access capital to fund the set up and development of the business. Every business needs at some point to secure an injection of outside capital either to fund its set-up costs or to finance the expansion of the business.

The Enterprise Northern Ireland Loan Fund was established to make funding more accessible to those starting or operating a small business, whilst also providing advice on financial management and business related issues.

For more information:
www.enterpriseni.com

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Details of a wide range of support is available at

www.detini.gov.uk/cgi-bin/downdoc?id=4701

Useful Websites

www.investni.com

www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk

www.nidirect.gov.uk

www.berr.gov.uk

www.dardni.gov.uk

www.delni.gov.uk

