

The Company

Wilson's Country Ltd is a family-owned business based in Carn Industrial Estate in Craigavon. Since starting the business on the family farm in the 1980s, Angus Wilson has grown it to now employ approx 100 staff at a new six-acre production facility. The company is one of the premier potato pre-packers and potato peeling processors in Ireland and holds key accounts with many of the leading food retailers and food service providers across the country. The branded Wilson's Country range is well known and the company also offers various own label ranges, exemplifying the trust placed in it.

The Challenge

Wilson's Country Ltd uses large volumes of mains water to process potatoes each week. In addition the bulk of this water, which is used for washing and peeling, is currently treated and discharged to sewer. The company identified that the costs associated with the procurement of mains water, along with the associated costs of treatment and disposal, were significant for the business. Therefore it was keen to determine a method of reducing mains water use, improve water efficiency and bring down costs.

The Solution

The company contacted Invest NI to seek technical assistance to progress investigations. It hoped to source and supplement its existing water supplies from groundwater abstraction, treat this water, then following processing, collect and treat any effluent produced and feed treated water back into the washing cycle for re-use.

Following discussions with Invest NI Technical Advisors a project proposal was developed and through the Project Management Framework a consultant was engaged to help the company take the project forward. Feasibility investigations were carried out to determine availability and suitability of groundwater and to determine and make recommendations on suitable options for wash-water treatment, recovery and recycling. Associated plant and infrastructure design was also part of the project brief together with an assessment of capital and operating costs, potential savings and payback periods. As a result of the project Wilson's Country Ltd has now installed an on-site borewell system to supplement the use of mains water. Recommended options for recovery and re-use of wash-water are also being taken forward by the company.



The Benefits

The installation of the new borewell system is effectively reducing the mains water usage by 26,000m³/year. Allowing for running costs, this represents a cost saving to the company of approx £30,000 per annum, in the reduced cost of supply. Against a project investment of £81,500 this represents a payback period of just over 30 months.

In addition the wash-water recovery project is estimated to yield further savings of £103,000 per annum against a capital investment of £254,500 representing a payback period of just under 2.5 years.

“Managing a business you understand day to day can be a challenge but when it comes to the hydrogeology of the Lough Neagh basin and m³ per hour of water, I was going out of my depth! Working through this project with the Invest NI team provided me independent knowledge and welcome financial support to have the confidence to proceed with project implementation. The plant installation and implementation was straight forward and smooth because thorough research had been conducted with the support of Invest NI before embarking on a live project – a key success factor to our project”

**Lewis Cunningham, Managing Director,
Wilson’s Country Limited.**

The Support - Invest NI Project

Management Framework

Up to five free days of consultancy support is available for eligible companies to help implement resource efficiency projects to reduce the cost of energy, water and waste.

This support may include for example:

- Developing business cases for individual projects
- Providing project management skills for particular projects
- Defining equipment and/or process specifications
- Identifying suppliers of goods and services

To find out more about this and other Invest NI resource efficiency support or to speak to an Invest NI Technical Advisor contact the Sustainable Development Team on T: 02890 698868 E: sustainabledev@investni.com

