



INNOVATION

WEALTH

BUSINESS

ENTERPRISE

PRODUCTIVITY

COMPETITIVENESS

SALES

EXPORT

INVESTMENT

VALUE-ADDED

R&D

Invest Northern Ireland
Building Locally
Competing Globally

Helping businesses to
succeed in global markets



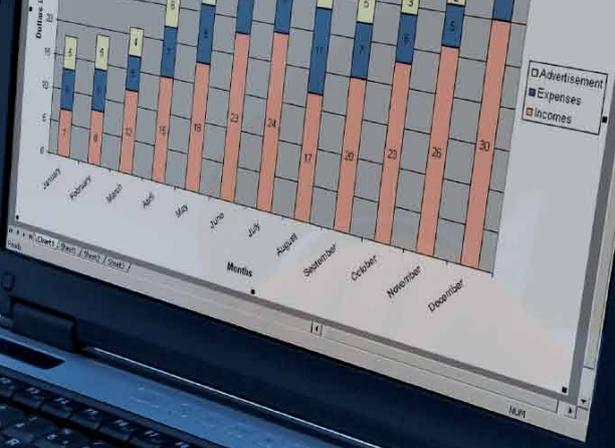
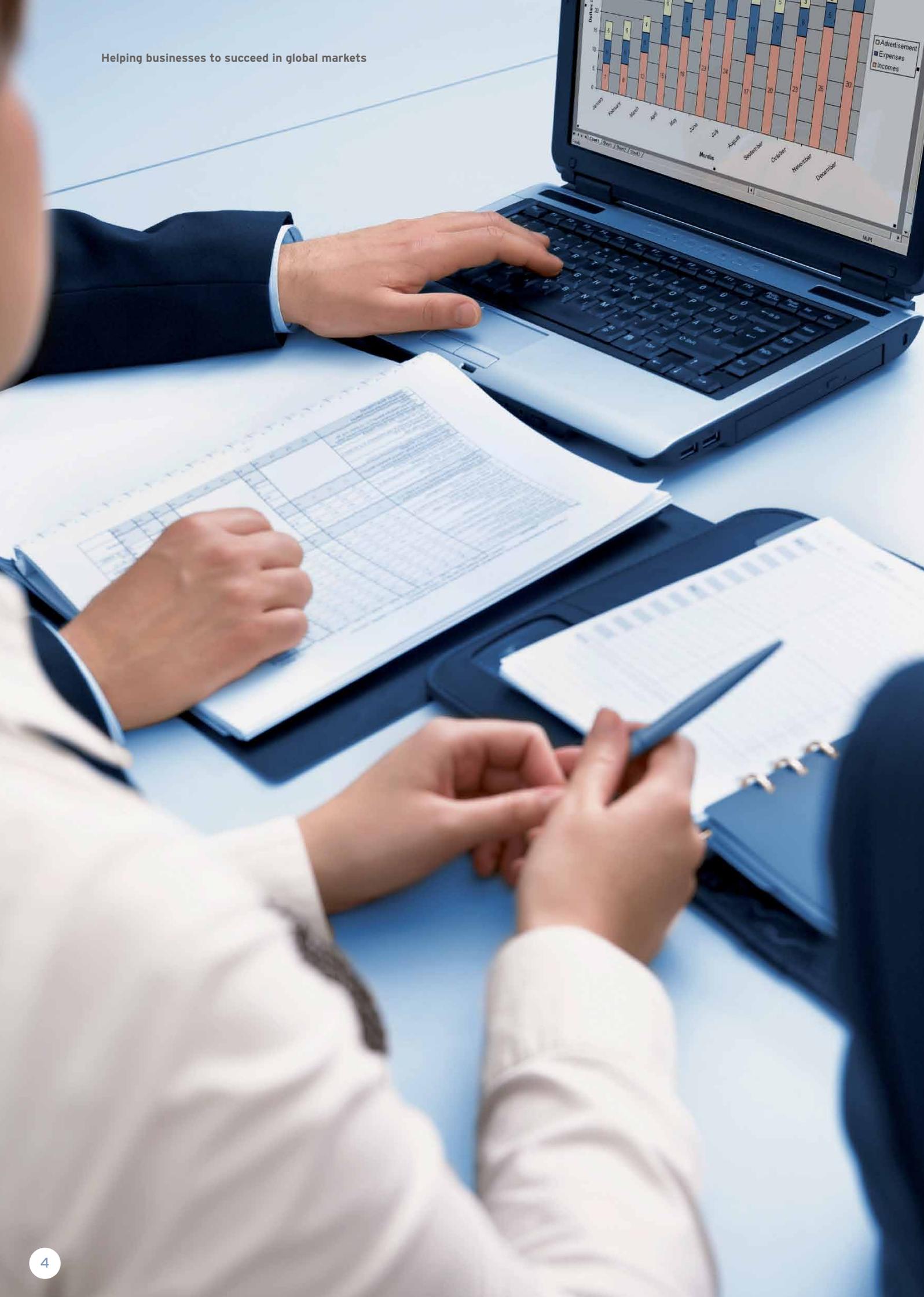
Invest Northern Ireland is
Northern Ireland's economic
development agency.

Our overall goal is to help
create wealth for the benefit
of the whole community.



Helping businesses to succeed in global markets

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How does Invest NI help create wealth?

A strong economy benefits everyone. By supporting businesses to grow and export, we are helping to strengthen the economy and create wealth for all.

What is Invest NI?

We are Northern Ireland's economic development agency, sponsored by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. Our task is to deliver the Government's economic development strategies cost effectively.

Our aim is to strengthen the economy and help it grow by supporting business development, increasing the level of exports, attracting high quality inward investment, and stimulating a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation.

Specifically we want to increase business productivity and boost Northern Ireland's Gross Value Added (GVA) per employee, which is around 20 per cent lower than the UK average. GVA is the contribution each employee makes to the economy, and increasing it will help to generate wealth for the benefit of the whole community.

Invest NI clients account for over 90 per cent of Northern Ireland's exports and 95 per cent of business expenditure on research and development. Our client base therefore represents most of the businesses that can take our economy to a higher level.

Our approach

We're taking a three-strand approach:

1. We're helping our clients, who are all export focused, to get bigger, more profitable and more internationally competitive so that they can pay the higher salaries that create increased wealth.
2. We're targeting inward investment from key high-value sectors such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and financial services; and helping niche manufacturing companies increase their contribution to the economy.
3. We're supporting the commercialisation of leading-edge research and development in specialist fields, which over the long-term will deliver significant yields for the economy.

We are confident that this approach will maximise the impact of our efforts and help Northern Ireland move towards the goal of being a robust, private sector dominated economy.

Outside of these activities we also work with a number of organisations to:

- help build the infrastructure required for successful research and development;
- support the growth of key sectors;
- encourage entrepreneurship; and
- help develop skills.

Northern Ireland's economic prosperity will be dependent upon its success in international markets.





Why become an Invest NI client?

When you become an Invest NI client you get a partner to help you meet all your business challenges; a partner who has the same aim as you - to make your business succeed.

Lightening the load

If you're running a business you'll know that there is never enough time to do everything you need, rarely enough resources to do everything you want, and frequently a lack of expertise in areas that are not your core focus.

As an Invest NI client you'll get access to specialist teams of experts and advisors with many years of commercial, industrial and technical experience, spanning all business disciplines and key sectors. Our teams are your support network. They share an interest in your business, because our success depends on your success.

“Grampian has benefited tremendously from the support and expertise provided by Invest NI programmes. The programmes have enabled us to enhance the skills base of the workforce and develop a continuous improvement culture where opportunities to enhance bottom-line performance are constantly being sought.”

Michael McGlade,
Grampian Country Pork

We're confident that with our support your business will become more profitable, and you will benefit from getting a higher return for your efforts.

How can you become an Invest NI client?

It's simple - your business just has to meet some straightforward criteria.

You will need to demonstrate that now, or over the next three years, your business will have:

- total sales of over £100,000 per year; and
- sales outside Northern Ireland greater than 25 per cent of turnover, or greater than £250,000 a year.

Companies in the tradeable services sector, that is, those that can sell their services internationally, must also:

- have the potential to sustain salaries above the Northern Ireland private sector median; or
- show that they can achieve a minimum gross margin of 20 per cent.

If you think you can satisfy these criteria, call us now on 028 9069 8000.

What happens when you become a client?

When you become an Invest NI client we assign you a Client Executive who is your main point of contact in the agency. This person will work with you in partnership and draw on expertise in Invest NI to deliver the specific support your business needs.



Over 2,500 businesses are currently Invest NI clients. All of them are selling, or have the potential to sell, outside Northern Ireland.



What can we do for you if you qualify as an Invest NI client?

Our clients benefit from a comprehensive analysis of their business and can then access a range of services tailored to their needs.

Our support

We offer a wide range of support covering product and process innovation, capability development, exporting and investment. This support will help you with productivity improvement, management skills, strategic development, technical capability, exporting and much more.

Several of our programmes support research and development activities. Whether you want to carry out R&D on your own or in collaboration with academic researchers, we can help. We can also help you to license technology and undertake joint ventures.

Our approach is to work closely with each growing client to identify the support programmes and services that will best meet their development needs. We begin with a comprehensive business analysis to benchmark your business. This identifies strengths and weaknesses and will help you move forward in a structured way.

By working with you we can help your business apply world-class practice and techniques to achieve sustainable growth in the global marketplace.

Financial assistance

As we work within tight financial constraints we have to focus our financial assistance on projects that have the greatest potential to generate economic growth and prosperity. To be eligible for financial assistance, a project must be viable, show a need for Invest NI support, and generate a positive return to the economy.



Your project will have to meet some of the following criteria:

- have a strategic focus on markets outside Northern Ireland;
- feature innovation by using advanced technologies or strengthened design capabilities;
- result in new, value-added products or services;
- lead to increased employment and greater value-added opportunities;
- create new skills or expertise;
- feature university or research linkages;
- accelerate business growth towards challenging targets; and
- demonstrate that the maximum amount of private sector finance has been raised.



90 per cent of our clients are local small and medium sized businesses.

You can also benefit from the vibrant and self-sustaining venture capital market that Invest NI has helped create in Northern Ireland. Where gaps in private sector supply exist, we provide risk capital and help to create new, commercially driven funds in partnership with the private sector.

This early stage funding support is often needed by small start-up businesses that are exploiting new technology and looking to global markets.

Advisory support

Much of our support is in the form of advice and guidance. We can help you with everything from strategic planning through to technical advice, property advice and in-market support in overseas markets. Our aim is to increase the

capability of companies, as this will increase their productivity, GVA and international competitiveness.

You'll find further details of our programmes on our website, www.investni.com

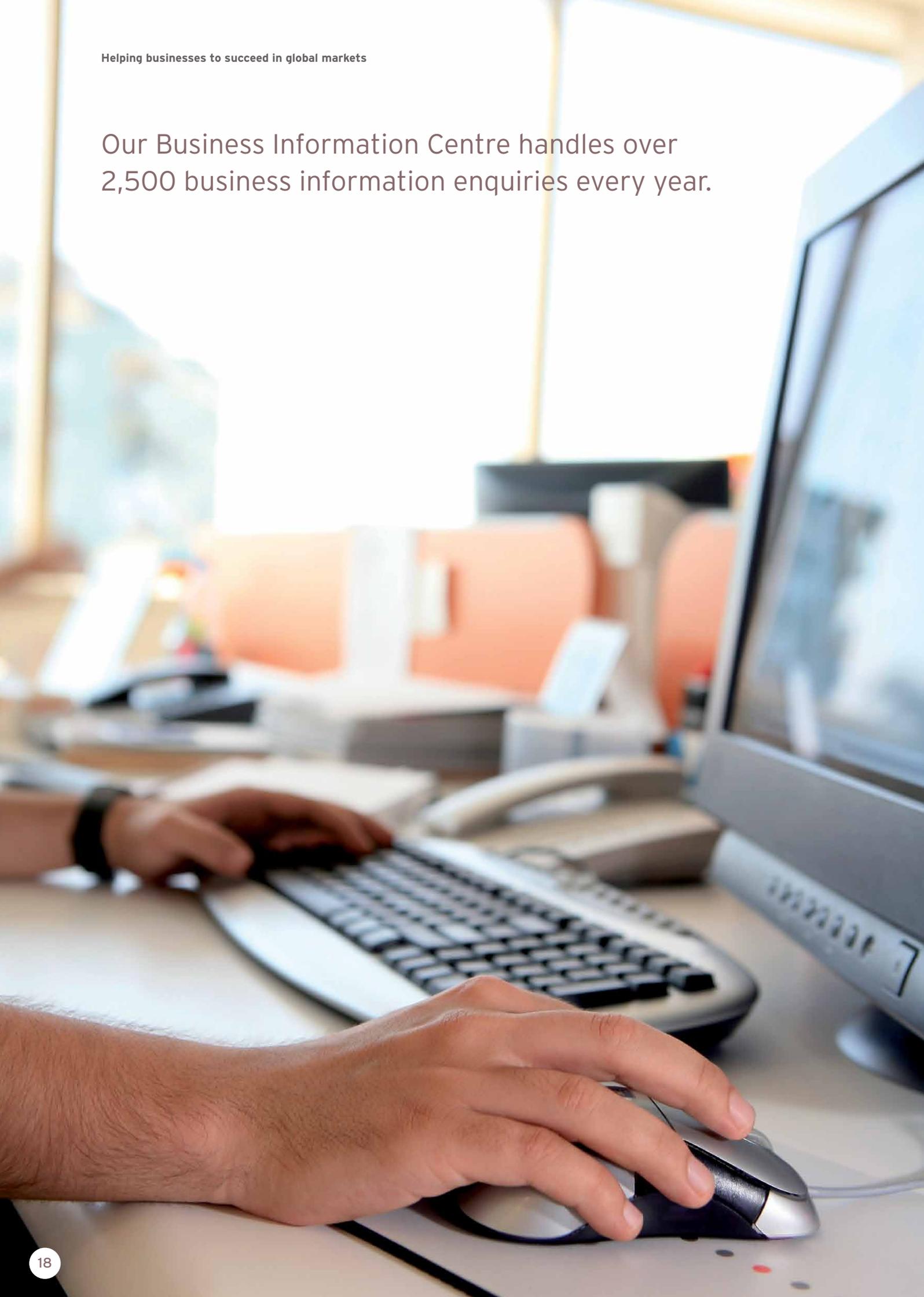
Over 90 per cent of all our offers are for less than £100,000 and are mostly to support local businesses.



What can we do for you if you don't qualify as an Invest NI client?

Many of our support services are also available to businesses that do not currently qualify as Invest NI clients.

Our Business Information Centre handles over 2,500 business information enquiries every year.



What is available?

Even if you are not currently an Invest NI client, you can still benefit from many of our programmes and services. These include export development programmes for both first-time exporters and more experienced exporters, energy and environmental efficiency support, comprehensive business information services and ICT support.

Our website, www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk, provides free access to key information, advice, funding and training. With over 5,000 pages of relevant information, the site is the most comprehensive source of online business information and advice in Northern Ireland.

We also offer access to comprehensive databases, directories, specialised business and global market information and can help you find the specific market information you need to grow your business.



We maintain a state-of-the-art information centre that provides practical and independent advice on a range of ICT, technical, energy and environmental issues. You can contact us for free advice on everything from hardware and software solutions to energy efficient equipment.

“We asked the Business Information Centre for details of distributors in Finland and were delighted with the quality of the information provided. It allowed us to source a dealer and led to an extremely profitable relationship. The distributor also helped us to develop a new product for Europe.”

Jonathan Hanna,
Operations Manager,
McCauley Trailers



What can we do for you if you want to set up a business?

Invest NI supports a wide range of new businesses, but not all start-ups require the same support.

A valuable support tool for new entrepreneurs is our nibusinessinfo.co.uk website. It is a comprehensive source of practical information about all aspects of setting up and running a business and includes in-depth advice on finding finance, sources of support, choosing the right business structure, finding premises, employing people, sales and marketing, IT, finding suppliers, protecting ideas and many other practicalities of being self-employed.

Our support for the wider enterprise network ensures that anyone seeking to set up a business can easily access the advice and support that is right for them.

We tailor our support for new businesses to meet the needs of three different categories.

“Transform taught me about all the elements involved in running a business such as managing cash flow, understanding the legal implications, private fundraising, venture capital and product development. There is no doubt that the programme played a crucial role in getting us to where we are today.”

Shane Meehan,
Media Lightbox

High-potential global start-ups

Invest NI teams with sector-specific knowledge and experience can help you to start and develop your business through support such as the Transform programme. We can also provide finance in the form of grants, loans and Invest NI equity.

High-potential businesses are usually involved in leading-edge technology. They often emerge from university research or result from the intellectual property of their founders. If this is your area of business, we can help you to start and develop your business.

Export-focused start-ups

We have a range of export advisory programmes and financial support that you can access if your new business has significant export potential. Typically this type of business aims initially to exploit near-market opportunities in Great Britain or the Republic of Ireland.

Local-market start-ups

We support businesses that focus on the Northern Ireland market, through a programme that is delivered on our behalf by our enterprise partners. Part of our Go For It initiative, this programme is managed and funded by Invest NI and targets individuals at the pre-start and start-up stage.

Since 2002 we have offered start-up assistance to over 18,800 individuals and local businesses.





Where do we work?

We work locally, with eight offices across Northern Ireland, and we work globally, with 10 offices across the world. So no matter where you are, or where you want to take your business, we can help.

Through our network of regional offices we ensure that businesses across Northern Ireland have access to Invest NI's advice, assistance and support programmes.

Our regional staff work with export-focused businesses at a local level. They provide existing clients or start-up businesses with advice and signposting to our programmes and other support organisations. Regional offices also help our clients to find the best property solutions for their needs.

Our regional offices are located in Belfast, Londonderry, Newry, Ballymena, Coleraine, Craigavon, Omagh and Enniskillen.

Connecting Northern Ireland to the world

Through our network of international offices, we help businesses to create or expand commercial relationships overseas. Our international staff can provide you with direct hands-on, in-market assistance, particularly in the US, Middle East

and the emerging markets of India and China. We can also open doors to influential contacts in the public and private sectors.

The international offices are located in North America, Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. If you are travelling in these countries on business you can use the 'hot desk' facilities in these offices. We also operate two Trade Development Centres in Boston and Dubai to help companies grow in global markets.

Bringing the world to Northern Ireland

Our international offices are also the cornerstone of our inward investment activities.

Inward investment plays a vital role in strengthening the Northern Ireland economy by introducing new skills, technologies and export markets. It also strengthens local supply chains.

In working to attract inward investment, Invest NI builds international recognition for Northern Ireland's unique areas of competitive

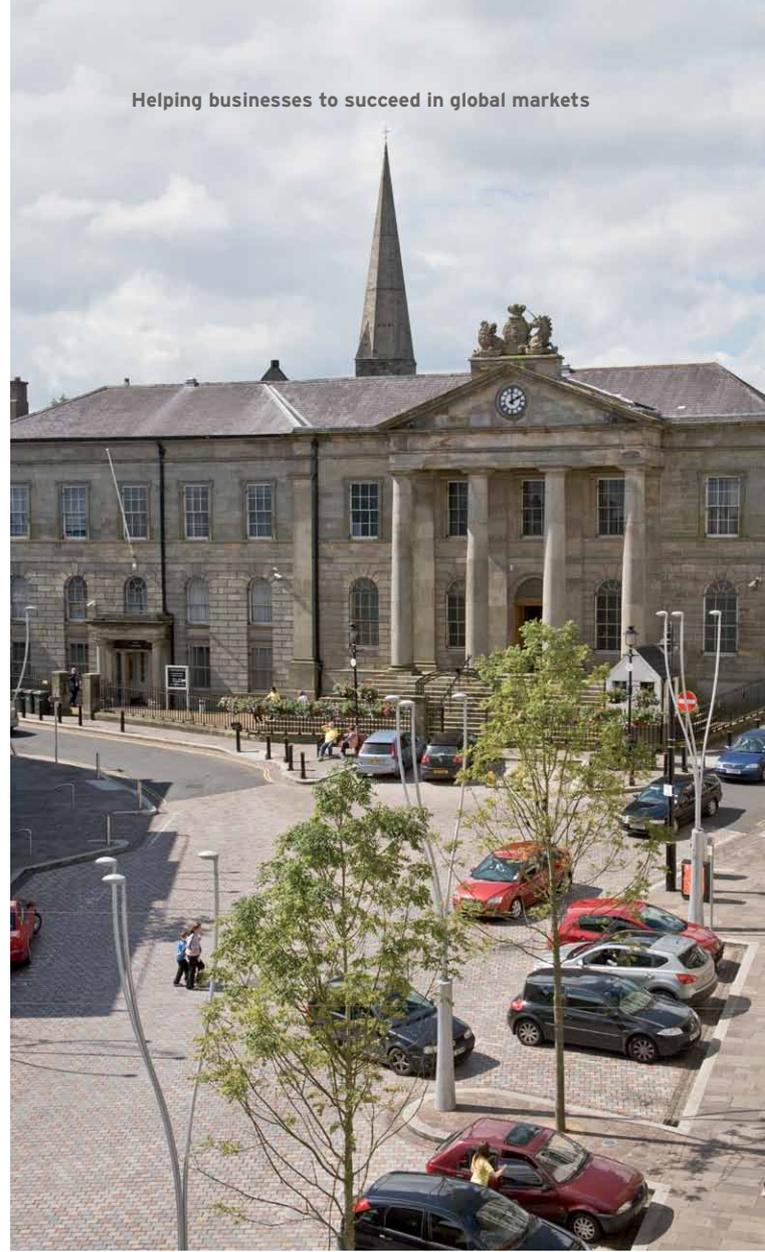


advantage. We focus on financial services, ICT, software development and business services. Particular success has come in marketing Northern Ireland as a near-shore location for investors targeting the European marketplace.

We offer financial incentives to many types of businesses that could locate in Northern Ireland, and work intensively with investors to make the process as easy as possible.

As well as attracting new inward investment, we work with externally-owned businesses currently operating in Northern Ireland to secure follow-on investments.

Helping businesses to succeed in global markets





Our wider role

As well as direct engagement with businesses, we have a wider role to play in building the economy, primarily in the areas of innovation, entrepreneurship and skills development.

Innovation

We believe that innovation is at the root of long-term competitiveness and the success of any economy. That's why we prioritise support for innovation within existing businesses; but we also work to stimulate innovation on a wider basis.

This involves organising events to raise awareness of the need for fresh thinking and creativity within the business community. We also help local universities to commercialise technologies, recognising that there are significant long-term gains to be made by helping to develop intellectual property.

We support and encourage knowledge and skills transfer between universities and business to enable innovative new products and services to be developed. We also support the all-important creation of new businesses from the academic research base.



By co-operating closely with organisations such as Enterprise Ireland and InterTradeIreland, we are stimulating cross-border trade and maximising the potential of businesses across Ireland to work in partnership to innovate successfully.

“BiancaMed decided to locate its R&D centre in Belfast because of the cluster of world class companies in telecommunications and health technology there, and the availability of high calibre researchers and engineers. The opportunity to work

closely with world-renowned research teams in ECIT to develop the technology, and the support from Invest NI were also important factors in attracting the company to Belfast.”

Dr Conor Hanley,
CEO, BiancaMed

Entrepreneurship

To become a private sector led economy Northern Ireland needs a healthy pipeline of new businesses. Part of our work is to encourage people from all sections of society to recognise that starting a business can be exciting and rewarding.

Our activities in this area raise the profile of successful local entrepreneurs and innovative businesses, whom we promote as role models. We work with our enterprise partners to develop initiatives for specific groups such as social entrepreneurs, women and ethnic minorities who are under-represented in Northern Ireland business. These initiatives help such groups to overcome the specific challenges they face in setting up a business.

We are also working with various organisations and government departments to embed entrepreneurship in the education system so that young people get the chance to develop the skills and awareness they need to become the entrepreneurs of the future.

Skills development

To ensure that there is a ready supply of the skills needed by business, we are working in partnership with the Department for Employment and Learning. Our focus is particularly on key sectors such as ICT and financial services, which are priority sectors for our inward investment efforts. A robust skills base in these sectors is essential if Invest NI is to continue to attract high-quality investment and maintain the strength of Northern Ireland's value proposition.



Exporting companies generally demonstrate higher levels of innovation, invest more in training and pay higher wages and salaries.

Contact Us

Our clients can find out more about the full range of Invest NI services by contacting their Client Executive.

All other businesses can find out about the support open to them, or make an enquiry about one of our services, by contacting their nearest regional or international Invest NI office.

For general enquiries about the work of Invest NI please contact:

Head Office
Bedford Square
Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7ES

T : 028 9069 8000
F : 028 9043 6536
E : info@investni.com

For more information, please visit www.investni.com

Regional Offices

Head Office

Bedford Square
Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7ES

T: 028 9069 8000
F: 028 9043 6536
E: info@investni.com



North West

5th Floor
Timber Quay
100-114 Strand Road
Londonderry
BT48 7NR

T: 028 7126 7257
F: 028 9043 6536
E: nwo@investni.com

Southern

Drumalane Mill
The Quays
Newry
BT35 8QS

T: 028 3026 2955
F: 028 3026 5358
E: so@investni.com

Western

Kevlin Buildings
47 Kevlin Avenue
Omagh
BT78 1ER

T: 028 8224 5763
F: 028 9043 6536
E: wo@investni.com

Science

Innovation Centre
Cromore Road
Coleraine
BT52 1ST

T: 028 7028 0055
F: 028 9043 6536
E: nwo@investni.com

Oracle Conference Centre

Southern Regional College
36 Lurgan Road
Portadown
BT63 5BL

T: 028 3839 0140
F: 028 9043 6536
E: so@investni.com

INTEC Centre

36 East Bridge Street
Enniskillen
BT74 7BT

T: 028 6634 3942
F: 028 9043 6536
E: wo@investni.com

North East

Clarence House
86 Mill Street
Ballymena
BT43 5AF

T: 028 2564 9215
F: 028 9043 6536
E: neo@investni.com

Eastern

Bedford Square
Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7ES

T: 028 9069 8000
F: 028 9043 6536
E: eo@investni.com

Worldwide Offices



**Northern Ireland Trade
Development Centre Boston**

545 Boylston Street
Suite 801
Boston
MA 02116
USA

T: 001 617 425 5516

F: 001 617 266 8914

**Northern Ireland Trade
Development Centre Dubai**

Office 117, IBM Building
Dubai Internet City
PO Box 9284
Dubai
United Arab Emirates

T: 00 9714 3914700

F: 00 9714 3916863

Boston

545 Boylston Street
Suite 801
Boston
MA 02116
USA

T: 00 1 617 425 5516

F: 00 1 617 266 8914

Brussels

Park View
180 Chaussée d'Etterbeek
1040
Brussels
Belgium

T: 00 32 2 290 1344

F: 00 32 2 290 1356

Dubai

Office 117, IBM Building
Dubai Internet City
PO Box 9284
Dubai
United Arab Emirates

T: 00 9714 3914700

F: 00 9714 3916863

Dublin

28-32 Upper Pembroke Street
Dublin 2
Ireland

T: 00 353 1 234 2533

Düsseldorf

Kaistrasse 7-9
Medienzentrum
D-40221
Düsseldorf
Germany

T: 00 49 211 302 1280

F: 00 49 211 302 1281

London

Third Floor
Clutha House
10 Storeys Gate
London
SW1P 3AY
United Kingdom

T: 00 44 20 7222 0599

F: 00 44 20 7233 1937

Mumbai

British Deputy High Commission
Naman Chambers
C-32, G-Block
Bandra Kurla Complex
Bandra East
Mumbai 400 051
India

T: 00 91 22 6650 2250

New York

Wall Street Plaza
20th Floor
88 Pine Street
New York
NY 10005
USA

T: 00 1 212 742 9823

F: 00 1 212 742 9829

San Jose

2001 Gateway Place
Suite 745 W
San Jose
CA 95110
USA

T: 00 1 408 441 0546

F: 00 1 408 441 0547

Seoul

1526 World Meridian
60-24 Gasan-dong
Geumcheon-gu
Seoul
South Korea 153-781

T: 00 82 2 3775 0151

Shanghai

Unit 2614, Tower A, No.100
Zunyi Road
Shanghai City Center
Shanghai 200051
China

T: 00 86 21 6270 1200

F: 00 86 21 6270 1263

Taipei

7B09 7th Floor
TWTC Building
No. 5
Section 5
Hsin-Yi Road
Taipei 104
Taiwan

T: 00 886 2 2725 1297

F: 00 886 2 2725 1290

Tokyo

Nakano Sun Plaza 9F
4-1-1 Nakano
Nakano-ku
Tokyo 164-8512
Japan

T: 00 81 3 5345 8355

If you require this brochure in an alternative format (including Braille, disk, audio cassette or in minority languages to meet the needs of those whose first language is not English) then please contact:

Invest NI's Equality Team
T : 028 9069 8273
Textphone : 028 9069 8585
E-mail : equality@investni.com

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