

The background of the page is a solid grey color. Scattered across the left and bottom-left areas are numerous white circles of various sizes, creating a decorative pattern.

annual  
**report**  
2008 2009



easing the  
**pressure**



## challenging times ahead

**Arlene Foster MLA**  
Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Enterprise Northern Ireland (ENI) and the Local Enterprise Agencies (LEAs) have made a significant contribution to the development of Northern Ireland's small business base. They also represent a considerable asset to the local economy, in terms of both physical infrastructure and the capability of its workforce.

However, as we look forward, it is evident that the current global downturn is impacting significantly on Northern Ireland and may continue to influence our economic prospects for the foreseeable future.

The world economy is slowing to its lowest level for six decades and Northern Ireland is facing the same challenges as many other economies around the world.

While it would be tempting for us all to concentrate solely on the "here-and-now", it is important that we keep focused on the medium to longer term priorities. As Enterprise Minister, I am committed to ensuring that the right policies and programmes are in place to deliver on the objectives of the Programme for Government and to ensuring that

businesses here, are best-placed to take advantage of the recovery, when it arises.

My Executive colleagues and I are determined to do whatever we can to help achieve this and ease the pressures being felt by local organisations across Northern Ireland. We will continue to work together to provide practical support and guidance to the private sector.

Enterprise Northern Ireland has not escaped the current economic challenges and is also facing many of the same pressures as local businesses. These include operating in a competitive environment, delivering quality products to clients in a consistent and efficient manner and managing the structural changes in the marketplace with the Review of Public Administration (RPA),

The passing of increased economic responsibilities to local councils will bring new challenges and opportunities. It is therefore important that these are well thought through and appropriate changes planned.

It is entirely appropriate that in the current economic climate and in the run-up to RPA you have initiated a review to ensure that the LEAs are well placed to serve the changing needs of local economies. I applaud your initiative and have asked Invest NI to keep me informed of progress with this important piece of work.

I recently launched the Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) which ENI is delivering on behalf of Invest NI. The 'Go For It' and 'Growth' elements offer an enhanced range of support for entrepreneurs that will be available throughout the local enterprise agency network.

I am confident that the EDP will be a success and contribute to the creation of many new small business start ups and lead to successful growth businesses.

I congratulate ENI, its member LEAs and the contribution made by over 300 voluntary directors on the combined achievements and contribution to our local economy to date, and wish it every success for the coming year.



## chairman's introduction

**Ken Nelson**

Chairman, Enterprise Northern Ireland

This report covers a period of remarkable change in Northern Ireland. We have seen the re-establishment of the political institutions with the Executive making economic development the top priority in its Programme for Government. Also the decision to restructure local Government into eleven new "super councils." Alongside has been a global economic downturn of historic proportions.

The Local Enterprise Agency (LEA) members of Enterprise NI worked very effectively on a best value basis delivering community based economic development and acting as catalysts within the micro/small business sectors and the wider social economy.

With over 200 dedicated professional staff, 300 voluntary directors, two million square feet of managed workspace/business incubation facilities and forty points of presence, LEAs provide a high quality "one stop package " of premises, business advice, training, mentoring/coaching, loan finance and trade development support.

The report period covers the appointment of Gordon Gough as our Chief Executive succeeding Ann McGregor

who has become Chief Executive of the NI Chamber of Commerce.

On behalf of directors and members, I record our appreciation to Ann for the superb job she did as our first CEO. She laid an excellent foundation for Gordon to build upon.

During his first months, Gordon worked energetically, engaging our principal stakeholders and successfully focussing on the key priorities (three 'Ps') identified by members: Programmes, Policy and Promotion.

Working closely with the board of directors and members, Gordon led the tender process to secure the £20 million 'Go for It' and 'Growth' Programmes as well as the Social Entrepreneurship programme.

We recruited three independent non-executive directors onto the board to enhance corporate governance and risk management, and their contribution has been invaluable.

We provided significant input into economic development policy through regular submissions and networking with Ministers, MLAs, Assembly Committees, civil servants, local authorities and the media.

Over the year we advanced strong and productive partnerships with Local Authorities, Invest NI, DETI, DEL, DSD, DARD, Regional Colleges, InterTrade Ireland, County Enterprise Boards, Prince's Trust, Advantage and international economic development organisations.

This report demonstrates that Enterprise NI and member LEAs have a unique capability to provide delivery solutions for local and central Government, giving unequalled access to clients.

The secret of our success? People and partnerships: LEA directors and staff, the Enterprise NI directors and staff team, our clients, delivery partners and funders.

That is why we will continue to deliver through the ups and downs of economic cycles. My sincere thanks to everyone involved with Enterprise NI.



**strong**  
productive partnerships



**local**  
**economic development**



## a word from the chief executive

**Gordon Gough**  
CEO, Enterprise Northern Ireland

**Enterprise Northern Ireland, the network of Local Enterprise Agencies (LEAs), has come a long way since its formation in 2000. The state of health of the local economy back then was characterised by anaemic growth and a lack of new business "blood cells." There was also a shortage of FDI "blood transfusions" and fewer public-spending crutches! Sounds familiar?**

The difference now is that under the banner of Enterprise Northern Ireland, LEAs are able to contribute more effectively to local economic development. Turn the pages of this report and you can see just how effectively LEAs are contributing to the development of the Northern Ireland economy. In partnership with Invest NI, DEL, SEUPB and

others, Enterprise Northern Ireland members are providing a high quality, value added continuum of support to Northern Ireland's small business community.

There is no doubt challenging times lie ahead in the economy. In 2007 the UK's national debt was 36% of GDP; by 2011 its projected to be 56%! It is not all gloom and doom however. The large public sector suggests that Northern Ireland will be affected less by the current recession than other regions in the UK. Also, certain parts of the local economy will be assisted by the weak value of sterling.

We are happy to report that the Enterprise Northern Ireland loan fund for small businesses has never been more popular as small business owners seek to inject some short-term capital into their businesses.

As a membership organisation our performance is closely aligned to the performance of our members. I am constantly looking at ways to improve the services we offer to our members through lobbying, communications, business development and joint purchasing initiatives. There is no doubt that although the current economic recession is having an impact on confidence, LEAs are continuing to provide a range of relevant and much needed services to small businesses.

The Review of Public Administration provides the single biggest strategic issue for us. It also provides opportunities to work with other key economic development stakeholders to ensure that small business interventions are delivered in a cost effective and co-ordinated way.

Yes, we have come a long way since 2000. LEAs are now taking actions that will shape policy, locally and nationally. More and more the LEA network is being recognised as the obvious route for delivering Government's enterprise support programmes.

In these pages we tell the story of Enterprise NI over the last twelve months. It is compelling and I commend its contents to you.

# building capacity rebuilding confidence

**Our Exploring Enterprise programme concentrates on rebuilding confidence and regenerating people's personal career ambitions. The programme focuses on the needs of people who have recently lost their jobs and those who have been out of work for the longer term.**

Through this programme, we are supporting and developing opportunities for people to enter employment and, once in work, to keep their job and achieve ongoing progress in the workplace. Our focus includes those people who have a disability; those who are lone parents; also older people seeking work; young adults who are neither at a school or college, in employment or in a training scheme; women who are seeking employment and those people that have low level or no qualifications.

We have established a series of targets:

- We will deliver 128 programmes, with our objective that 960 people will enter employment.
- Each of our 960 participants will gain full qualifications at VRQ level 2 of Business Enterprise (CCEA).
- Through personal development plans, 3,200 people will achieve demonstrable essential skills that will help increase their prospects of employment and promotion.
- Through our training, 1,920 people will receive additional qualifications.
- We will provide follow-up mentoring to each of the 1,920 people who completed Pre-Start Training. Furthermore, we will support approximately half this number of people to help them achieve the Level II Certificate of Business Enterprise. This is a key target of achievement.
- We will encourage approximately half of those who took part in the programme to enrol on the Small Business Support Programme to enable them to move from there into self-employment within two years.

## Case Study: Exploring Enterprise in Larne

The Larne Enterprise Development Company (LEDCOM) who deliver our Exploring Enterprise programme in Larne and Carrickfergus, were delighted with the level of interest they received in the Exploring Enterprise programme, attracting a steady stream of enquiries.

Twenty-four people from Larne and Carrickfergus, were entered for CCEA assessment, with the majority referred by the local Jobs and Benefits Office.

Mel Smyth, has two children and lives in Larne. He was made redundant before Christmas:

"I have really enjoyed the training which has motivated me in my search for a job. Learning about self-employment has given me good insights into how small businesses operate."

For further information on the Exploring Enterprise programme please call **028 7776 3555** or email: [shirelle.mcdaid@enterpriseni.com](mailto:shirelle.mcdaid@enterpriseni.com) or [pauline.kirk@enterpriseni.com](mailto:pauline.kirk@enterpriseni.com) or contact your Local Enterprise Agency.



The Exploring Enterprise Programme is an initiative developed by Enterprise Northern Ireland and is supported by the European Social Fund, the Department for Employment and Learning, Enterprise Northern Ireland and the Local Enterprise Agencies, under Priority 1 of the Northern Ireland ESF Programme 2007-2013 for the period 1 April 2008 - 31 March 2011.



A woman with short brown hair, wearing a yellow cardigan over a floral top, is looking down at a laptop. She is in a candy store, with shelves of various candies in the background. The text "rebuilding confidence" is overlaid on the image.

rebuilding  
**confidence**

# going for it starting a business

**'Go For It' is now a well-established and highly visible Start a Business programme through which we provide advice and training to anyone considering those tentative first steps. Over the last year, our network of forty business advice centres was a focal point for the majority of our business start-up work. Each centre is located in the LEA network and is designed to provide a user friendly and accessible 'Point of Presence'.**

During the last year there was a considerable level of success:

- We received a total of 8,573 enquiries across the network of centres.
- We delivered 6,060 initial business advice sessions to entrepreneurs and would-be business starts.
- We trained 3,213 people in the skills and knowledge required to set up their own business.
- As a direct result of our work, 2,300 business start-ups were established.

## Karacha!

Adam Ewart was still a university student when he hit upon the idea of setting up an online shop for music products and instruments. The music shop now has large premises in Bangor and sells merchandise worldwide. "You really don't know what you don't know when you come into a training programme such as this and therefore it is invaluable . . . the fact that they are still there to call into or phone up with a query is very important during those first shaky months and years."



Endorsed within the wider Go-For-It campaign and underlying objectives of the Accelerating Entrepreneurship strategy (AES) owned by DETI and managed Invest Northern Ireland. Funding for this intervention is from DETI in collaboration with ERDF and is managed by Invest Northern Ireland.

## Case Study: Tree of Knowledge Branching Out for Further Success

Ben Best is a young entrepreneur from Portrush. Ben established Tree of Knowledge with the support of Causeway Enterprise Agency. Tree of Knowledge is a unique pod-based learning resource that helps children and adults share knowledge and become more enterprising in their education and personal development.

So far, Ben's business has already made a significant impact on the Northern Ireland market and he aims to expand further by exploiting export opportunities in the Republic of Ireland.

To date, Ben has worked with nearly 7,000 pupils helping them achieve their true potential and fulfil their dreams. His aim is to help schools, pupils and businesses boost and develop their self-esteem by having fun and laughter at school or at work. So far it appears to be working: "The training and business advice really gave me the confidence to believe in myself and the potential success of the company."

Jayne Taggart, Chief Executive of Causeway Enterprise Agency is delighted that Tree of Knowledge is an excellent showcase for the Start a Business Programme:

"As a result of Ben participating in the programme, CEA was able to assist in leveraging additional support for his new company through referring him to Invest NI's Growth Accelerator Programme. We have every confidence that the company will continue to strengthen its sales and position within the marketplace and ultimately fulfil its vision for empowering young people and adults to extend their thinking and to take responsibility for their own learning."

For further information on the Business Start-Up Programme XX.

self  
belief



# building all-island connections for small businesses

**For us, encouraging and nurturing small businesses to expand their horizons is critically important in helping them grow and expand.**

Together with our colleagues in County Enterprise Boards in the Republic of Ireland we work for the benefit of the small business sector to build and develop all island connections. As a direct result, we helped small businesses secure over £25 million in additional cross-border sales. The two main initiatives to help with this work are MicroTrade and Tradelinks.

Together, we organized a series of cross-border activities:

- ITnT Trade Show, Vienna, February 2008 - fourteen businesses attended sales meetings at the Show, having already participated in a one-day seminar in Dublin on selling to central and eastern Europe.
- Getting IT Right, Meath, March 2008 - fifty businesses attended meetings with Public sector IT buyers from both sides of the border.
- Creative Industries, Dundalk, April 2008 - twenty-two businesses attended two-day sales and marketing training for the creative industries sector.

## Case Study: IT for All Ireland

Paddy Rooney of ShareMyPC, based in Banbridge District Enterprise Ltd, used MicroTrade to assist him in targeting the All-Island market:

“Around sixty per cent of our Republic of Ireland market is due to the customers who contacted me directly or indirectly through MicroTrade”. Paddy also travelled to the ITnT trade Show in Vienna. “I felt the combination of prearranged meetings and traditional exhibition offered a good mix of opportunities.”

- Food and Beverage PowerHouse, Limerick, May 2008 - forty-five businesses attended seminars and meetings
- Creative Media event, Dublin, May 2008 - twenty-one businesses attended meetings with commissioning editors from five television stations.
- License to Export, Mullingar, October 2008 - forty businesses attended a series of seminars examining exporting options for micro-enterprises.
- Build Ireland Greener, Meath, November 2008 - over fifty businesses attended meetings with large-scale construction firms and sustainable energy companies.

In addition we offered a number of measures of benefit to individual businesses:

- Twenty Northern Ireland businesses each received funding of up to £1,000 in Market Entry Grants to target the Republic of Ireland.
- Ten Northern Ireland businesses partnered with companies across the border to enable access to £5,000 Link-Up Grants. Each could then assist the other in developing sales in their respective jurisdiction.
- With colleagues across the border, we trained 446 owner/managers in new management techniques; 1,619 businesses were involved in networking activities and 780 new jobs were created.

For further information on MicroTrade and Tradelinks contact:

XXXXXXXXXXXX

**microTRADE**  
Building All-Island Connections for Small Businesses

MicroTrade is a partnership initiative between InterTradelreland, Enterprise Northern Ireland and the County & City Enterprise Boards.

people:skills:jobs:



Department for  
Employment  
and Learning  
[www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)



**expanding  
horizons**

conor

# entrepreneurial solutions to social problems

**Social entrepreneurs have been described as people who bring innovative business solutions to the most pressing issues and problems affecting society. For us, they represent a key segment of our work.**

Our Social Entrepreneurship programme was established to address market failure issues and inefficiencies in social economy business start-ups, specifically their access to business support. Core to our work in this programme is promoting sustainable models of finance, and providing capability support to help establish and develop businesses, especially those with the potential to grow.

Over the year there were a number of key outputs :

- 113 start-up businesses were established with a combined turnover of approximately £5 million.
- In the most disadvantaged areas in Northern Ireland, 210 jobs were created.
- Through the programme, eleven per cent of businesses were pulled through to Invest NI mainstream support.

For further information on the Social Entrepreneurship programme contact:  
XXXXXXXXXXXX



**EU Programme  
for Peace and Reconciliation**

Provided by Invest Northern Ireland, funded by the European Union through its Peace and Reconciliation Programme.

## Case Study: Recycling a Sustainable Business

80/20 Recycling is one of our Social Entrepreneurship programme success stories. The Newry-based enterprise uses locally sourced 100% reclaimed timber to supply small builders and DIY enthusiasts with raw materials, and manufactures and sells new products made from the reclaimed wood. 80/20 Recycling also recycles good-quality furniture and clothes and indeed anything else that can be given a second life.

By providing volunteering and trainee placements for adults with learning or physical disabilities and for the long term unemployed, 80/20 Recycling adds a unique and innovative option to the spectrum of provision for adults with disability or mental health issues.

This unique idea originated with a proactive group of adults with learning disabilities at the Laurels day centre in Newry who were supported by the social enterprise team at Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency.

Through the Social Entrepreneurship Programme, 80/20 Recycling leveraged start-up funding of £160,000 from DSD Neighbourhood Renewal and the Health and Social Care Trust.

As a result, 80/20 Recycling recruited its first staff and opened the doors of its 4,500 sq ft premises at the WIN Business Park in Newry. Trainees and volunteers are now in place, products are being manufactured and sold, and Reduce - Reuse - Recycle has a new champion.

# addressing inefficiencies



# dealing with the economic downturn

**Over the last year, local entrepreneurs have been faced with the most difficult and challenging economic climate in recent times. That in turn has presented us with some unique challenges. We have not been found wanting.**

With our partners we led the way in helping small businesses to deal with issues arising from the economic downturn. The biggest single issue affecting small business owners has been the ability to access capital to fund the start-up and development of the business.

## Case Study: Credit Crunch Seminars

Across the small business sector there has been understandable worry about the ongoing credit crunch. To provide practical and helpful advice, we organised a series of Credit Crunch seminars in ten Local Enterprise Agency areas, in conjunction with Invest NI.

The level of response highlighted the value of these seminars. Five hundred businesses attended and 175 business advisers and accountants provided one-to-one recession proofing advice.

Speaking at the Banbridge seminar, Arlene Foster, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment said:

"Today's event offers clear, practical advice on what businesses can do on a day-to-day basis, to help them continue to trade in these challenging times. We must ensure that our local companies come out of this recession stronger and in pole position for when the global and national economies begin to strengthen."

The Enterprise Northern Ireland Loan Fund can be accessed in each Local Council area through each local contact point.

Beating the credit crunch has not been easy but we are confident that the measures that we initiated and the advice that we provided was of real help to the small business community.

Over the year we were pleased to be able to offer the following assistance:

- We handled over 350 enquiries from entrepreneurs and owners concerned about the economic situation and its effect on their business.
- We distributed over 100 loans to help people in business manage the situation.
- In total we loaned in the region of £1 million to small businesses.

For further information on the Loan Fund programme contact: XXXXXXXXXXXXX



Invest  
Northern  
Ireland

Building Locally  
Competing Globally

A partnership of funders (Enterprise Northern Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland, The International Fund for Ireland and The European Union)





accessible  
**funding**

# essential properties for business success

One of the most important strands of our work is to provide suitable premises for entrepreneurs in the crucial set-up phase and early years of their business. It is a critical success factor for us to ensure that business start-ups have equality of access to business premises at an affordable cost, particularly during start up. Currently LEAs provide a base for over 2,000 businesses across Northern Ireland.

At a glance, the combined portfolio that we offer comprises:

- Over 2,000 small business units
- This provides two million square feet of workspace
- Over 5,000 people were employed in tenant businesses
- Our premises are located across Northern Ireland offering widespread coverage

For further information on the Property programme contact:  
XXXXXXXXXXXX



## Case Study: City East - Next Generation Local Enterprise Agency Business Units



East Belfast's new £3 million business centre, City East is typical of the next generation of Local Enterprise Agency business units that we now seek to provide. This is the latest in a series of high technology units that are now available throughout the local enterprise agency network.

City East offers 20,000 square feet of office space in the shadow of the shipyard and within five minutes of Belfast city centre. It has been specifically designed to cater for small businesses with integrated services, on site support and access to meeting and conference facilities.

We firmly believe that the creation of fifty-eight new high specification workspace units in East Belfast will have a regenerating impact in the area, potentially leading to the creation of ninety jobs, as well as encouraging local entrepreneurship.

The project was made possible by funding from EU Peace and Reconciliation monies provided through the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment and by the International Fund for Ireland.



a wide range of commercial  
**accommodation**

# facing the future: new programmes to boost entrepreneurship

**With the announcement of two new Invest NI programmes, Arlene Foster, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment gave entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland a very welcome injection of encouragement.**

The announcement had the twofold objectives of increasing entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland and helping established businesses grow. They will be delivered by the Local Enterprise Agency network until 2011.

The programmes began on 1 April 2009 and comprise two main elements: the Go For It programme, targeting people who are considering starting a business; and the Growth programme, aimed at established companies that have the ability and potential to expand through exports. Both are designed to provide encouragement and guidance to help the local small business sector, which is the lifeblood of the Northern Ireland economy.

Through the Go For It programme we will build the skills of would-be entrepreneurs, and help them to develop strategic

business plans and commercialise their ideas. Once they are established we will ensure that they have access to continued mentoring support.

The Growth Programme will allow us to provide existing businesses that have high growth potential with tailored guidance in marketing, negotiation skills, networking, online sales and financial management. These competencies will increase their ability to export.

We are specifically focusing on under-represented groups, including women, ethnic minorities and people in disadvantaged areas, to ensure wide-ranging access to our programme.

For further information: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



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stimulating  
**entrepreneurial**  
culture





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