

Case Study

These cover every aspect of setting up and running a business, from the earliest days of developing a business idea to the legal issues involved in selling.

nibusinessinfo.co.uk brings together information from over 40 government departments, such as Revenue & Customs and the Health & Safety Executive, which have developed tools and information to help businesses comply with regulations and run their businesses as efficiently as possible.

The information on the site is tailored for the Northern Ireland business community and includes specific area profiles of the different regions within Northern Ireland, a database of local companies to help users find partners or suppliers, and a local property database.

The site's extensive range of interactive tools gives businesses the opportunity to increase the efficiency of their business, stay up to date with government regulations and ensure they are not missing out on any available support.

Business accommodation

Providing businesses with appropriate high quality accommodation is essential to supporting economic growth. Invest NI's Property Solutions Unit helps local client companies to find the right accommodation for their business needs whether at start-up stage or expanding. It also helps international companies that are planning to locate in Northern Ireland to find suitable premises.

Invest NI provides access to a comprehensive database of office, industrial and commercial property in Northern Ireland as well as providing property searches, property market intelligence and property advice.

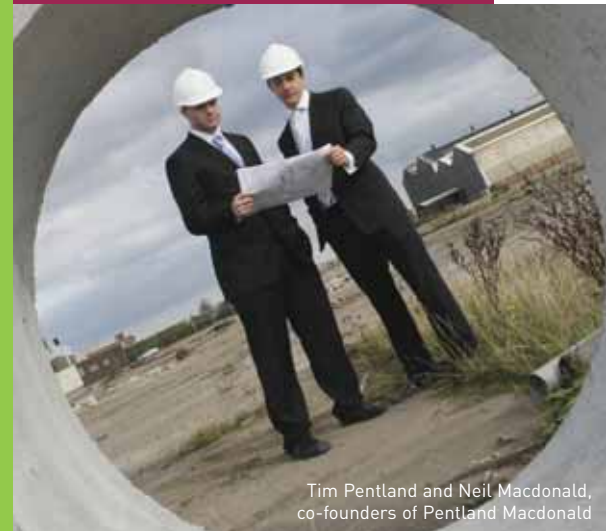
Business properties can be sourced via the agency's property portfolio or from private sector developments. Invest NI holds a database on both options and can offer a single, co-ordinated source for all types of property requirements.

Invest NI currently owns 43 industrial estates and business parks together with 19 buildings located across Northern Ireland. In the Belfast area we own eight industrial estates and business parks and eight buildings. From this building stock two units are vacant and space is available to offer in a further two sub-divided units.

Centres of excellence

Invest NI's research and technological development Centres of Excellence programme supports the establishment of research and development centres to stimulate industrially-exploitable and commercially-focused research. To date 18 centres of excellence have been created through this programme. They include four centres in Queen's University covering nanotechnology; aircraft technology; electronics, communications and information technology and environmental tools.

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Tim Pentland and Neil Macdonald,
co-founders of Pentland Macdonald

Pentland Macdonald

Pentland Macdonald is the only locally-owned specialist contaminated land consultancy in Northern Ireland. It was set up two years ago by Tim Pentland and Neil MacDonald. It now employs eight and operates from new high-spec premises in Hollywood, outside Belfast.

Despite being highly qualified in their own areas Tim and Neil realised that running a business was going to throw up many new challenges.

"When you actually start running a business you no longer have the luxury of just concentrating on your 'job', you have to manage the finances, market the company and so on," says Tim.

Before they set up their business Tim and Neil did Invest NI's Start a Business programme. "Initiatives such as the Start a Business programme, which give an overview of key business areas, are invaluable for new entrepreneurs," says Neil.