

Resource to support food businesses with reformulation

The FSA in Northern Ireland aims to support small and medium-sized food businesses across all sectors of the food industry to reduce the calorie, sugar, saturated fat and salt content of the food they produce, sell or serve. This resource outlines sources of funding and technical support available to food businesses in Northern Ireland to help them on their reformulation journey.

CAFRE

Businesses can avail of CAFRE’s facilities on site including sensory booths, or a representative from CAFRE can visit business sites to assist with factory or process design for example, which may be useful to businesses who are planning to upscale production. CAFRE can also signpost businesses and offer support on project plans which may be helpful to businesses in applying for a particular funding stream. Food businesses can also make use of the Invest NI pop-up library which visits the Loughry campus once a month. Here, businesses can access market research and databases to identify new business opportunities.

Programme	Description	Funding/Support	More information
Bespoke short training courses	CAFRE offers a wide range of bespoke and accredited short training courses at various levels for those working within the agri-food industry. Practical courses aim to develop the skills of operatives, while technical and business management courses are targeted at managers to improve enterprise efficiency, business management and product quality.	Support	CAFRE Training Courses: Food
Scone Reformulation Technical Guidance	The FSA, in partnership with CAFRE, has created guidance to help businesses produce healthier scones lower in calories, saturated fat, sugar and salt. The guidance contains recipes and tips businesses can use to make their own unique scones that meet the Government guidelines for calories, sugar and salt, as well as providing novel ideas on how to make smaller-sized scones appealing to consumers.	Support	Scone Reformulation Technical Guidance Scone Reformulation Technical Guidance Summary
Cheesecake Reformulation Technical Guidance	The FSA, in partnership with CAFRE, has created guidance to help businesses produce cheesecake lower in calories, sugar, saturated fat and salt. The guidance also provides innovative ideas on how to make smaller-sized portions of cheesecake appealing to consumers. To support businesses to use the advice contained in the technical guidance, recipe resources containing the ingredients and preparation instructions for a range of fruit, chocolate and luxury cheesecake were also developed.	Support	Cheesecake Reformulation Technical Guidance Fruit Cheesecake Recipes Chocolate Cheesecake Recipes Luxury Cheesecake Recipes

Invest NI

Invest NI provide technical advice, guidance and financial support to help businesses grow, export and remain competitive through the use of innovation.

Programme	Description	Funding/Support	More information
Selective Financial Assistance	Provides funding towards growth projects to make them happen faster, or to the scale and scope envisaged. Open to both SME's and large companies.	Funding	Invest NI clients should speak to their Invest NI client executive for more information.
Growth Accelerator Programme	The programme offers two distinct but interrelated forms of support: A Development Grant and a Key Worker Salary Grant. With a Development Grant, SME's are able to receive up to £40,000 to undertake export marketing activities and up to £25,000 towards the costs of specialist consultancy. A Key Worker Salary Grant provides SMEs with up to £25,000 in grant support towards the salary cost of a 'key' worker post for a one-year period.	Funding/Support	Invest NI clients should speak to their Invest NI client executive for more information.
Skills Development Support	Financial support for training activities to develop the skill set within the business. One branch of support is 'Skills for Growth for SMEs'. Grant support is variable up to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs. Must be an Invest NI customer to avail of this support.	Funding	Support for business - skills development
Innovation Vouchers	A £5,000 Innovation Voucher allows businesses or potential entrepreneurs to get expertise from a public sector knowledge provider, such as a University or College (NI and ROI) for an innovation project. This may include the creation or improvement of products, services, business models or processes.	Funding	Innovation Vouchers information
Project Definition	Financial support towards the cost of planning and defining a R&D project. Project definition helps to reduce project risks and identify costs and potential benefits.	Funding	Support for research and development made clear
Research and Development Grant	<p>Funding available to businesses who are new to R&D or have some experience of R&D.</p> <p>New to R&D - if a business has not previously carried out any R&D but has an idea for a new product or process that could help the business, they can access funding to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate or plan the idea • Make and test a prototype • Experiment and refine the design • Handle intellectual property costs <p>Follow on R&D - for businesses that have some experience of R&D, they can access funding to help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping, defining and planning an R&D project • Product or process development or improvements • Linking to a college or university to collaborate on strategically important projects. <p>Must be an Invest NI customer to avail of this funding.</p>	Funding	Grant for R&D Invest Northern Ireland (investni.com)
Graduate to Export Programme	Gives businesses the opportunity to employ a highly skilled and motivated graduate for 18 months, with 50% of the costs provided by Invest NI. The graduate will be employed to deliver a market research or market entry project for the business that targets a specific overseas market.	Support	Drive forward your export growth with our new Graduate to Export programme. Invest Northern Ireland (investni.com)

Programme	Description	Funding/Support	More information
Technical Development Incentive	Designed to encourage companies to engage in the innovation activities of product development and process improvement. It provides SMEs with funding towards the cost of technical service providers such as test houses or product development consultants. Must be an Invest NI client to avail of this funding.	Funding	Technical Development Support Invest NI clients should speak to their Invest NI client executive for more information.
Digital Catapult Northern Ireland	Digital Catapult works with a range of organisations, including start-ups and scale-ups, established businesses and research and academia to discover new ways of solving industry challenges, increase productivity and open up new markets by adopting digital technologies.	Support	About - Digital Catapult Digital Catapult (digicatapult.org.uk) Apply - Digital Catapult Digital Catapult (digicatapult.org.uk)

Local Councils

Business advisors in local councils offer tailored mentoring, support and guidance to help you achieve your business goals.

Programme	Description	Funding/Support	More information
Go Succeed	Go Succeed supports entrepreneurs, new starts and existing businesses in Northern Ireland by offering easily accessible advice and support at every stage of the growth journey. The service encourages and supports new and existing business owners to bring new and improved products and services to market.	Support	Go Succeed For further information, call 0800 027 0639

Department for the Economy

The Department for the Economy offer a range of skills development programmes which are tailored to small and medium sized businesses in Northern Ireland.

Programme	Description	Funding/Support	More information
Innovation Accreditation Programme	The programme aims to highlight the importance of innovation for business growth and create more awareness of the value of innovation, as well as demonstrating how to innovate. The NI Innovation Certification Scheme recognises any business that is on the innovation journey, awarding them a bronze, silver, gold or platinum level certificate relating to their current innovation maturity.	Support	-
Assured Skills Programme	The programme is open to new inward investors looking to locate their business in Northern Ireland or existing companies that are wishing to expand. Assured Skills provides the necessary support to deliver a skilled workforce through the delivery of pre-employment, training programmes. The Assured Skills Programme is fully funded by the Department for the Economy.	Funding/Support	Economy Northern Ireland: Assured Skills Programme Contact your Invest NI Client Executive in the first instance. The Client Executive will be able to advise if Assured Skills is relevant to your business needs and they will contact the Assured Skills team accordingly. If a business does not have an Invest NI Client Executive, they can e-mail assuredskills@economy-ni.gov.uk directly.

Programme	Description	Funding/Support	More information
Agri-Food Manufacturing Sectoral Partnership	The partnership ensures apprentices receive high quality training that provides them with the skills for a career in the agri-food manufacturing industry. In turn, employers get employees who are trained for the future.	Support	For further information, please contact: sectoralpartnerships@economy-ni.gov.uk
InnovateUs	The focus of the programme is to enable small businesses, with fewer than 50 employees, to acquire the skills necessary to engage in innovation activities. Businesses can avail of up to 60 hours of mentoring support from a college expert to work on a project aimed at developing a new or modified product, process or service in a wide range of sectors. By gaining these skills, small businesses can then exploit innovative opportunities or undertake additional forms of innovation, which will contribute to growth and development.	Support	InnovateUs Contact your local further education college for more information: Belfast Metropolitan College Northern Regional College North West Regional College South Eastern Regional College Southern Regional College South West College
Skills Focus	The aim of Skills Focus is to provide tailored skills provision to small to medium sized enterprises with less than 250 employees to help meet business needs and increase the skill levels of the existing workforce to level 2 and above qualifications	Support	Skills Focus Contact your local further education college for more information: Belfast Metropolitan College Northern Regional College North West Regional College South Eastern Regional College Southern Regional College South West College
Small Business Research Initiative	The initiative helps government departments connect with innovative businesses to solve the tough challenges facing the public sector. It generates new business opportunities for companies, provides small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) a route to market for their ideas and bridges the seed funding gap experienced by many early stage companies.	Support	SBRI - the Small Business Research Initiative Department for the Economy (economy-ni.gov.uk)

Inter-Trade Ireland

Inter-Trade Ireland helps small businesses in Ireland and Northern Ireland explore new cross-border markets and develop new products, processes and services.

Programme	Description	Funding/Support	More information
Innovation Boost	Supporting cross-border business on the island of Ireland through developing and embedding innovation. Innovation Boost helps to fund a high calibre science, engineering or technology graduate and partners you with a third level institution with specific expertise. Funding available: 18 month support package worth up to £56,000 typically in the area of new product/service development or a 12 month support project worth £39,000 typically in the area of process improvement.	Funding/Support	InnovationBoost Email: itiboost@intertradeireland.com

HMRC

Small or medium-sized enterprises may be able to avail of Corporation Tax relief for costs on research and development (R&D).

Programme	Description	Funding/Support	More information
R&D Tax Relief	<p>Small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) R&D tax relief allows companies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deduct an extra 86% of their qualifying costs from their yearly profit, as well as the normal 100% deduction, to make a total 186% deduction. claim a tax credit if the company is loss-making, worth up to 10% of the surrenderable loss. <p>To get R&D relief, the business has to explain how a project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> looked for an advance in science and technology had to overcome uncertainty, tried to overcome this uncertainty could not be easily worked out by a professional in the field. 	-	Claiming Research and Development tax reliefs

Innovate UK

Innovate UK help businesses access the expertise and equipment they need for innovation, build the partnerships that will help them grow faster and fund innovation work through grants or loans.

Programme	Description	Funding/Support	More information
Smart Grants	Grants are available to businesses who have an idea for a completely new product, service or process or a brand-new use or an unprecedented use for an existing product, service or process that takes it above and beyond what's currently available. It is an open competition and a highly competitive process. Projects of 6 to 18 months must have total eligible project costs between £100,000 and £500,000. 19 to 24 month projects must have total eligible project costs between £100,000 and £1 million.	Funding	Apply for Innovation Funding (gov.uk) Closes 23 October 2024
Innovation Loans Future Economy Competition: Round 17	This competition offers loans to help businesses overcome barriers to their innovations becoming a successful, commercial reality. Loans are available to businesses who have an idea for a completely new product, service or process or an innovative use of an existing product, service or process. The project must focus on at least one of the following themes: Net Zero, health and wellbeing or next generation digital technologies. It is an open competition and a highly competitive process. Micro, small or medium sized enterprises can apply for a loan of between £100,000 and £2 million to fund a project.	Funding	Innovation Loans Future Economy Competition Closes 30 October 2024
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships	A graduate is employed to facilitate knowledge transfer between an academic institution and a business to deliver a strategic project which can last between 12 and 36 months. This gives a business access to academic expertise and resources that they may not have in-house. A KTP is part-funded by a grant and businesses will need to fund the remaining cost of the project.	Support	UK Research and Innovation: Knowledge Transfer Partnership Guidance

Programme	Description	Funding/Support	More information
Innovate UK Business Growth	Invest NI hosts Innovate UK Business Growth in Northern Ireland. The agency provides small and medium sized innovative businesses with bespoke support to source funding and finance, build their capacity for innovation to grow and scale and access new business markets.	Support	Innovate UK Business Growth