

GREBE

Generating Renewable Energy
Business Enterprise



Business Supports Catalogue for Renewable Energy Enterprises in Northern Ireland November 2017



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The GREBE Project

What is GREBE?

GREBE (Generating Renewable Energy Business Enterprise) is a €1.77m, 3-year (2015-2018) transnational project to support the renewable energy sector. It is co-funded by the EU's Northern Periphery & Arctic (NPA) Programme. It focuses on the challenges of peripheral and arctic regions as places for doing business, and helps develop renewable energy business opportunities in areas with extreme conditions.

The project partnership includes the eight partners from six countries, Western Development Commission (Ireland), Action Renewables (Northern Ireland), Fermanagh & Omagh District Council (Northern Ireland), Environmental Research Institute (Scotland), LUKE (Finland), Karelia University of Applied Sciences (Finland), Narvik Science Park (Norway) and Innovation Iceland (Iceland).

Why is GREBE happening?

Renewable Energy entrepreneurs working in the NPA area face challenges including a lack of critical mass, dispersed settlements, poor accessibility, vulnerability to climate change effects and limited networking opportunities.

GREBE will equip SMEs and start-ups with the skills and confidence to overcome these challenges and use place based natural assets for RE to best sustainable effect. The renewable energy sector contributes to sustainable regional and rural development and has potential for growth.

What does GREBE do?

GREBE supports renewable energy start-ups and SMEs:

- To grow their business, to provide local jobs, and meet energy demands of local communities.
- By supporting diversification of the technological capacity of SMEs and start-ups so that they can exploit the natural conditions of their locations.
- By providing RE tailored expert guidance and mentoring to give SMEs and start-ups the knowledge and expertise to grow and expand their businesses.
- By providing a platform for transnational sharing of knowledge to demonstrate the full potential of the RE sector by showcasing innovations on RE technology and strengthening accessibility to expertise and business support available locally and in other NPA regions.
- To connect with other renewable energy businesses to develop new opportunities locally, regionally and transnationally through the Virtual Energy Ideas Hub.
- By conducting research on the processes operating in the sector to improve understanding of the sector's needs and make the case for public policy to support the sector.

For more information, visit our website:

<http://grebeproject.eu/>

Follow our Blog:

<https://greberenewableenergyblog.wordpress.com/>

Like us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/GREBEProject/>

Follow us on Twitter:

https://twitter.com/GREBE_NPA

The GREBE Business Supports Catalogue

This GREBE Business Supports Catalogue has been developed following a review of Renewable Energy business support funding mechanisms and funding options available to support the development of renewable businesses in the NPA region.

It provides information on the funding mechanisms currently available in the partner regions (Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Norway and Scotland). The information will be useful to both funding agencies (e.g. business support agencies and municipalities) and to SMEs giving details of funding options available in their regions.

The main focus is on public body support for renewable businesses but both private sector and social investment options have been included where appropriate. The supports included are for SMEs and Micro businesses but also include options for those SMEs expected to grow rapidly (e.g. High Potential Start Ups).

The business support funding mechanisms considered vary from standard 'hard' business support options (e.g. loans and venture capital) to softer supports (e.g. innovation schemes, business partner search supports etc.)

The catalogue is organised by GREBE partner region in the following order:

- Finland
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Northern Ireland
- Norway
- Scotland

A short introduction on the methods and types of supports in each partner region is provided. Information for each partner region is then organised under the following categories:

- Financial Support (grants, loans, equity investment)
- Taxation or welfare supports or concessions for businesses
- Soft supports e.g. mentoring, training, specialist advice, networks
- Research and Development Supports
- Social and Community supports (focused on not for profit)
- Other- e.g. Incubation space or office space etc.

Within each of these categories there is considerable variation in the ways different funding options are implemented and these differences will impact on the success of schemes. We hope that by using this catalogue those who seeking funding and support for renewable businesses will have a clear portfolio of options which are available to them.

In the future the information in this catalogue will be used to create a web based tool allowing users to search for available funding options and to consider different types of funding available in each region. This will be available at the GREBE project website <http://grebeproject.eu/> in August 2016. This catalogue is one of the deliverables of the GREBE Project.

Deliverable: 3.2.1

A PDF catalogue of funding options available to renewable businesses in partner regions (this will be made available on the GREBE website)

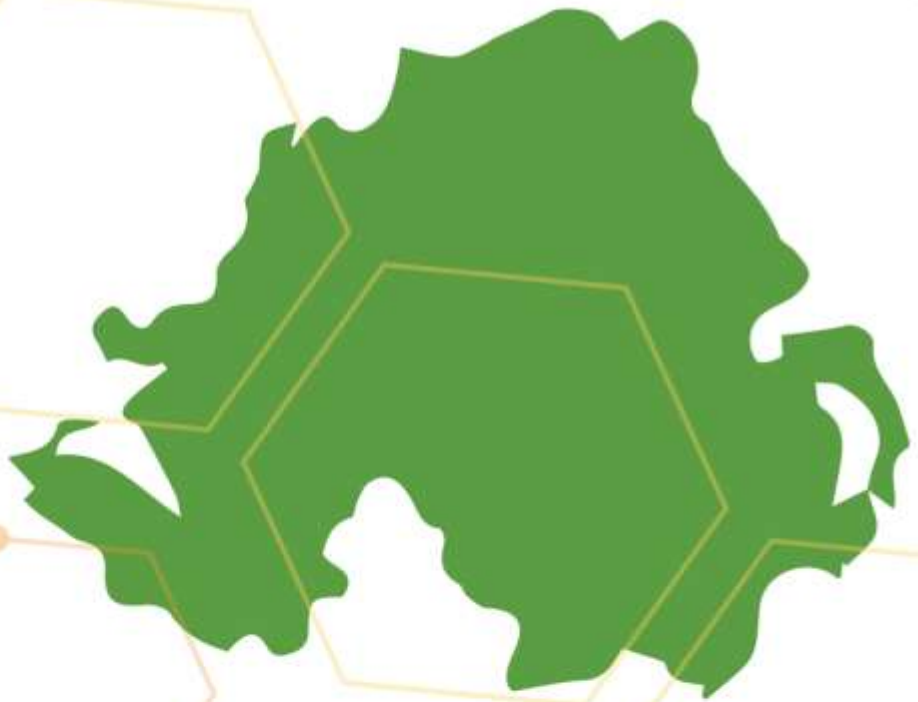
GREBE

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Business Enterprise

www.grebeproject.eu



Northern Ireland



Northern Periphery and
Arctic Programme
2014-2020



Northern Ireland

What kind of agencies offer support to SMEs?

In Northern Ireland there are 2 main agencies which offer support to SME's

Invest NI Invest will support many types of business, however they are very interested in businesses linked to improving the environment. Created a suite of six funds totalling more than £170 million to help SMEs with high growth potential, to forge ahead.

The start-up financial support is generally limited to businesses that intend to sell outside Northern Ireland.

Innovation Vouchers offers up to £5000 to purchase specialist knowledge from one of 39 respected universities, colleges and research organisations throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This knowledge can help you to expand, improve or create new products, services and processes.

Is there one agency which is the first place for businesses to go?

Invest NI is the main agency in Northern Ireland, for all sizes of business to achieve the support that they require to help grow their business. Invest NI specialise in a wide range of businesses and will give you support in the following areas: develop strategy, improve skills, operate more efficiency, locate funding and new markets.

Invest NI advertise across all of Northern Ireland via social media, newspapers, posters and also hold seminars to encourage businesses to get involved. With their publicity and advertisement they can be easily contacted and will arrange to meet with you to discuss your business development within 2-3 weeks.

<https://www.investni.com/>

Are business supports restricted to certain types of business, or enhanced for certain types of SMEs (e.g. only available for manufacturing or for exporters)?

Invest NI support aerospace and defence, business services, construction, creative industries, financial services, food and drink, ICT and electronics, legal services, life and health sciences, materials handling, renewables and energy, security and tourism. There are a limited number of areas in which they have no real level of support e.g. retail – although they will support online selling.

Are there special supports for RE businesses?

Representatives of renewables in NI give advice on renewable energy sector. Provides the companies it represents with knowledge and advice on marine and wind renewable energy projects/ideas. It has well developed sub groups which are capable of dealing with any of these areas:

- Planning & environment
- Markets
- Grid
- Marine energy

Techstart work to help companies win customers, make key hires, and develop strategies and tactics to achieve the fastest possible growth in the value of the company.

Seek to be trusted peers and partners to help entrepreneurs realise their vision with experienced and timely support. With their backing, founders can focus on customer development and validating their business model.

<http://www.techstartni.com/>

Business supports available in Northern Ireland are described in more detail in the coming pages under the following themes:

- Financial Support (grants, loans, equity investment)
- Taxation, welfare supports and concessions for businesses
- Soft supports e.g. mentoring, training, specialist advice, networks
- Research and Development supports
- Social and Community supports (focused on non-profit)
- Other- e.g. Incubation space or office space

Financial Support (grants, loans, equity investment)

Invest NI

Link to support information on website

<https://www.investni.com/>

Type of Finance Support

- Grant aid
- Mentoring support
- Staff subsidies
- Overseas trade support

Description of the support

Invest NI approach to supporting businesses is based on three key elements:

- Providing information and advice, directly and through a range of information services.
- Providing support to people wanting to set up their own business and helping new and existing businesses grow and move into new markets.
- Providing tailored support to businesses that can make the greatest contribution to increasing productivity, innovation and export growth in Northern Ireland.

Because their resources are limited they primarily support those businesses that can make the biggest contribution to the economy.

Criteria typically used to determine whether a business can become an Invest NI client includes: Turnover exceeding £250K annually with over 25% being classed as export sales.

If a business based in Northern Ireland can show that it intends to sell outside Northern Ireland, is actively pursuing growth plans and will contribute to increasing productivity and innovation in Northern Ireland, you could become an Account Managed customer with Invest NI.

Detailed financial plans for three to five years will be needed to become an Invest NI Client along with full current accounts.

Once classed as an Invest NI Client you have access to a number of supports including;

- Access to wide range of expertise particular in export trade, IT, Innovation and sustainability.
- Grant Aid for staffing (specific roles including sales and IT roles)
- Grant Aid for ecommerce websites and online sales – typically 75%

- Grant Aid to travelling to Trade Shows and meeting with export customers
- Branding and Design programmes
- Innovation support from Intellectual Property and patents and product development
- Mentoring programmes in the area of sales, finances etc.
- Research and development teams and associate grant aid
- Market research with a full business research library located through Business Information Services

Agency Responsible for Support

Range of Invest NI offices across Northern Ireland with a number of Client Executives dealing with businesses and specialist staff based primarily in Belfast.

Maximum and minimum funding available

A suite of six funds totalling more than £170 million to help SMEs with high growth potential, like yours, to forge ahead.

Funding typically is set at 75% of the needed cost dependant on the area of support.

Is this Specific to Renewable Energy businesses?

No, Invest NI will support all types of business. However they are very interested in businesses linked to improving the environment.

Is this a local, regional or national support?

The start-up financial support is generally limited to businesses that intend to sell outside Northern Ireland.

Other useful/relevant information

Their Invest Growth Proof of Concept Fund provides grants to individuals, start-up businesses, micro enterprises and small or medium sized businesses to help them fully develop and test their ideas.

Invest NI also have a Proof of Concept programme that offers funding to local universities and research organisations to help researchers take their ideas out of the lab and into the market.

Intertrade Ireland

Link to support information on website

www.intertradeireland.com

Type of Finance Support

- Grant Aid
- Mentoring support
- Staff subsidies

Description of the support

InterTrade Ireland helps SME's across the island of Ireland by offering practical cross border business funding, intelligence and contacts.

They offer support to businesses new to cross border trade with New to Accelerate Vouchers offering support up to value of £10,000.

Go to Tender Programme: Tendering and procurement training and one to one mentoring for businesses who want to expand through tendering particularly on a cross border level.

Meet the Buyer event: Free event to allow businesses to meet with key buyers from the public sector.

Sales development support: Staff subsidies and graduate programmes for companies who want to develop and grow cross border sales. Acumen programme: Offering 50% of sales person salary to a maximum of £15k grant.

Elevate programme offering consultancy support up to the value of £5k specific to growing cross border trade

Innovation in business support for businesses completing cross border trading. Graduate support for developing new product and innovative processes – maximum aid £44,250. Various other supports available if business is eligible.

Agency Responsible for Support

InterTrade Ireland – NI office based in Newry

Maximum and minimum funding available

High calibre businesses will only be accepted. Various levels of funding – as detailed above.

Is this Specific to Renewable Energy businesses?

No. InterTrade Ireland will support all types of business that are interested in expanding cross border trading.

Is this a local, regional or national support?

Any business located on the Island of Ireland who wants to begin or grow cross border trading.

Soft supports e.g. mentoring, training, specialist advice, networks

Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group

Link to support information on website

<http://www.ni-rig.org/>

Type of Support

Representatives of renewables in NI, giving advice on renewable energies

Description of the support

Provides the companies it represents with knowledge and advice on marine and wind renewable energy projects/ ideas. It has well developed sub groups which are capable of dealing any of these areas:

- Planning & environment
- Markets
- Grid
- Marine energy

Agency Responsible for Support

Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group <http://www.ni-rig.org/>

Maximum and minimum funding available

n/a

Is this Specific to Renewable Energy businesses?

No, any business looking advice and support in terms of renewable energies can become a member and seek advice.

Is this a local, regional or national support?

Regional support, covering all of NI and businesses interested in investment to NI.

Carbon Trust

Link to support information on website

<http://www.carbontrust.com/home/>

Type of Support

Carbon Zero Northern Ireland provides technology development and innovation support to Industry and will deliver an extensive array of training courses focused on developing a skilled workforce in renewable energy in Northern Ireland.

The courses will cover the areas of:

- Renewable energy awareness for homes and business
- Renewable energy technologies including Wind, Solar, Biomass and Hydro
- Waste management
- Responsible sourcing of materials
- Sustainable construction

Current R&D under the Carbon Zero NI programme will position Northern Ireland as an international player in the sustainable development and clean energy sectors

Description of the support

The Carbon Zero NI programme is a sector wide initiative by the Further Education sector under the leadership of the South West College in Northern Ireland. This programme is supported by the Department of Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland through the Innovation Fund, Employer Support Programme.

Courses developed under the Carbon Zero NI programme will address the ever increasing need for skills and knowledge in the area of clean energy development in Northern Ireland.

For more information on the courses offered by each Further Education College under the Carbon Zero NI Programme click on any of the College logos below:

- Belfast Met
- Northwest Regional College
- South West College
- Southern Regional College

Agency Responsible for Support

Department of Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland through the Innovation Fund, Employer Support Programme.

Maximum and minimum funding available

N/A – Courses available

Is this Specific to Renewable Energy businesses?

Yes on all types of Renewable Energy

Is this a local, regional or national support?

Local Regional Northern Ireland

Other useful/relevant information

Research

The technical research will focus on three key areas of growth in Northern Ireland:

- Wind Energy
- Energy from Waste
- Clean Energy Storage

These technologies have been identified as areas that require immediate support in relation to dedicated research and development as they are evolving rapidly at both a local and international level.

CAFRE – College of Agriculture, Food & Rural Development

Link to support information on website

<http://www.cafre.ac.uk/>

Type of Support

CAFRE offers a range of support services to ensure your time at College is both educational and enjoyable. At all campuses the support of students is a priority for College staff.

Description of the support

College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise is a public tertiary level land-based college offering training in agriculture, food technology, horticulture, equine and agri-business operating at three sites in Northern Ireland.

Agency Responsible for Support

CAFRE – College of Agriculture, Food & Rural Development

<http://www.cafre.ac.uk/>

Is this Specific to Renewable Energy businesses?

No this training is based on all types related to agriculture and environmental however

Is this a local, regional or national support?

Local Regional – Northern Ireland

Research and Development Supports

Invest NI Innovation Vouchers

Link to support information on website

<http://www.investni.com/support-for-business/funding-for-business/funding-for-innovation-and-research-and-development.html>

Type of R&D Support

An Innovation Voucher offers you £5000 to purchase specialist knowledge from one of 39 respected universities, colleges and research organisations throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This knowledge can help you to expand, improve or create new products, services and processes.

Description of the support

If yours is a small or medium-sized business you can apply for an innovation voucher to purchase specialist knowledge. This will help you to develop solutions to business issues, or improve or create products, services and processes that will help your business compete more effectively.

Typical projects we support include:

- Ideas for new or improved products, processes and services
- Product and service testing
- Access to information and expertise on new materials
- Tapping into research and scientific research

Agency Responsible for Support

Invest NI

<https://www.investni.com/>

Enterprise Ireland

<http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/>

Maximum and minimum funding available

£5000

Is this Specific to Renewable Energy businesses?

No all business

Is this a local, regional or national support?

This is based for all of Ireland, North & South

Other useful/relevant information

The Innovation Voucher Scheme, run by Invest NI and Enterprise Ireland, is designed to help you tap into specialist knowledge to develop forward-thinking solutions or ideas to expand, improve or create new products, services and processes. You do not need to be an Invest NI or Enterprise Ireland client company to apply.

Tech Start Up

Link to support information on website

TechStartNI <http://www.techstartni.com/>

Type of R&D Support

As a team, we work tirelessly to help our companies win customers, make key hires, and develop strategies and tactics to achieve the fastest possible growth in the value of the company.

Description of the support

We seek to be trusted peers and partners to help entrepreneurs realise their vision with experienced and timely support. With our backing, founders can focus on customer development and validating their business model.

Agency Responsible for Support

TechStartNI <http://www.techstartni.com/>

Maximum and minimum funding available

"Concept" grant (of up to £10k) and a "Concept Plus" grant (of up to £25k).

Is this Specific to Renewable Energy businesses?

No this is based on all types of Technologies

Is this a local, regional or national support?

Regional Based (Northern Ireland)

Other useful/relevant information

In a competitive basis this fund seeks to support entrepreneurs with grants directed towards exploring the viability and commercial potential of an innovative concept.

Social and Community supports (focused on not for profit)**Action Renewables****Link to support information on website**

<http://actionrenewables.co.uk/>

Type of Social Enterprise/Community Enterprise Support

Not for profit organisation

Description of the support

Action Renewables support commercial renewable energy development, develop and support European Projects, offer quality assurance to the renewable energy industry (Micro-generation Certification Scheme MCS) and provide advice and information to Government.

Agency Responsible for Support

Action Renewables <http://actionrenewables.co.uk/>

Maximum and minimum funding available

N/A

Is this Specific to Renewable Energy businesses?

As an organisation we deliver a wide range of services and activities which include supporting commercial renewable energy development, developing and supporting European Projects, offering quality assurance to the renewable energy industry and providing advice and information to Government. In addition to our current list of services we are also happy to undertake bespoke services for our clients.

Is this a local, regional or national support?

Action Renewables is a regional based organisation which is located in Northern Ireland however it has carried out work across the UK.



GREBE

Generating Renewable Energy Business Enterprise

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Visit
www.grebeproject.eu

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Project Partners

GREBE will be operated by eight partner organisations across six regions:



About GREBE

GREBE is a €1.77m, 3-year (2015-2018) transnational project to support the renewable energy sector. It is co-funded by the EU's Northern Periphery & Arctic (NPA) Programme. It will focus on the challenges of peripheral and arctic regions as places for doing business, and help develop renewable energy business opportunities provided by extreme conditions.

