

NW Cross Border Construction Cluster

Lead Council: Magherafelt District Council

Timeframe: April 2011 – March 2014

Grant Requested: £297,889 stg

Project Summary

The proposed project will establish a **Type 3 - Regional Business Cluster** for the construction sector in the NW Cross Border Group area. During the programme at least 80 members will sign up to become members of the new regional business cluster. Support agencies such as NW IFHE, NORIBIC, the five local councils, WestBiC and enterprise agencies will also be invited to contribute as associate members of the new cluster.

The members recruited will include: construction firms, architects, engineers, manufacturers of construction products, roofing, insulation and ventilation contractors etc.

In Phase I - The NW Cross Border Construction Cluster will facilitate and encourage members to get involved in the following activities: -

Information Sharing to scan for new business opportunities, find new suppliers and effectively engage with support agencies

Cost Reduction through group purchasing, marketing or equipment sharing

Generate sales from new markets particularly in GB

Increase innovation to develop new products and solutions to comply with new building regulations planned for 2016 to reduce CO₂ emissions from new buildings.

In Phase II – The NW Cross Border Construction Cluster will facilitate and encourage 16 project teams of 3 – 5 members to research and explore practical business opportunities in GB or the development of new products and service solutions to meet the new building regulations planned for 2016. It is expected that at least 6 of these teams will progress to formally establish **Type 1 – Business Networks**

The programme will act like a funnel and designed to engage with as many businesses as possible initially. Throughout the programme the number of active participants self select based on their enthusiasm and commitment to the programme:

Attendance at launch and workshops(5 events x 30 businesses)	= 150 businesses
Commit and register as Network members	= 60 businesses
Participate in project teams to research business opportunity (16 teams x 4 members)	= 60 businesses
Complete viable business plan (8 teams x 4 members)	= 32 businesses
Successful establishment of 6 Type 1 Business Networks	= 16 businesses

Project Aims

- To establish a new Regional Business Cluster for the Construction sector, which will help members to increase market share and access to UK market and increase investment in innovation and product development.
- Explore opportunities to help member businesses to become more competitive by developing new cross border business relationships.

Project Objectives

Objective 1: Establish a Type 3 Regional Business Cluster : -

- 150 construction businesses from all across the NW region will express an interest in the programme and attend the launch event or one of the workshops within the first 6 months of the programme.
- At least 60 businesses from across the border region will make an application to join the new Regional Business Cluster within the first 24 months of the programme
- Attendance at formal cluster meetings held every two months will consistently exceed 70% of members
- Cluster members are capable of securing sales in GB

Objective 2: Members build new cross border business relationships

- 10 member businesses set up new cross border supplier contracts to improve competitiveness
- 8 member businesses co-operate on developing business leads.
- 8 members co-operate in specific marketing initiatives

Objective 3: Members secure sales in GB

- 40 member businesses secure new contracts in GB

Objective 4: Members increase investment in innovation and product / service development

- At least 15 Member businesses make a significant investment in innovation and product development
- At least 10 members make use of Innovation Vouchers

Aim 5: Establish 4 formal Type 1 Business Networks

- At least 16 project teams provided with facilitation support
- At least 8 Project teams develop a new business idea which qualify for the development of a business plan.

At least 4 Type 1 Business Networks established to deliver an innovative new product or an export business opportunity in GB.