

Special EU Programmes Body

Project Case Study

iFactory

Programme:
INTERREG IVA Programme

Theme:
Enterprise

Funding:
£1,675,258

Lead Partner:
NORIBIC

Website:
[http://www.noribic.com/
business-consultancy-and-
support/ifactory/](http://www.noribic.com/business-consultancy-and-support/ifactory/)

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Geographical area:
Northern Ireland/Border
Region of Ireland.

The iFactory was a 36 month EU funded programme designed to provide bespoke innovation support to SMEs across Northern Ireland and the border counties.

Led by North West Regional College and managed by the Northern Ireland Business and Innovation Centre (NORIBIC), the £1.65 million iFactory programme supported 150 small businesses.

Fifteen partners worked together to deliver the programme including all of Northern Ireland's further education colleges, Letterkenny and Sligo Industries of Technology, NORIBIC and West BIC, and five county enterprise boards in the border counties. Each partner contributed their expertise to the mentoring pool which was accessed by participants in one-to-one sessions and web based information through i-Learning seminars and conferences.

The iFactory offered the following interventions to participating businesses:

- Prioritised innovation action plan and ongoing support and guidance.
- Specialist technical advice and guidance.
- Assistance with a written market research report.
- Optimised learning and revised action plan.
- i-Learning—hearing at first hand from those who have 'done it'.
- Opportunities to hear from and meet leading innovation exponents in a fun and informal manner.

Key Project Outputs:

- **Recruit 140 small businesses onto the programme over a four year period;**
- **Develop 140 innovation action plans through the intervention of Innovation Agents throughout that period;**
- **Assist 100 small businesses to have access to technical mentoring support;**
- **Provide 100 small businesses with market and product research reports;**
- **Assist 30 businesses to access international best practice visits.**

