



# Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014-2020 Citizens Summary 2018

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## Programme Overview

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is the main EU Structural and Investment Fund used to support economic development in countries and regions across Europe. Part of the ERDF funding that Northern Ireland receives is delivered through the Investment for Growth and Jobs (IGJ) Programme.

In Northern Ireland the IGJ Programme supports **Research, Technological Development and Innovation, Enhancing the Competitiveness of SMEs and Supporting the Shift towards a Low Carbon Economy.**

The Programme value is c£465m.

## Performance and Progress in 2018

The Programme aims to increase economic growth in Northern Ireland. Whilst the Programme aims to increase business expenditure on R&D over the period to 2023, the percentage of GVA has remained constant since 2012 at 1.4%. However, more encouraging is the increase in the number of companies actually engaged in R&D activity from a baseline of 495 in 2012 to 900 in 2018. The number of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) classified as high growth companies has also increased from a baseline of 695 in 2013 to 980 in 2018 and employment within micro and small businesses is now at 335,000 against a baseline of 297,000. These statistics show that many of the economic factors that we are monitoring are continuing to increase in line with the original Programme forecasts.

A programme modification introducing measures focused on low carbon activity was completed in December 2017. €23.5m of ERDF funding has been assigned to two DfI projects associated with the Belfast Rapid Transit scheme (the construction of a new Depot and Off-vehicle Ticketing)

The construction of the new energy efficient Depot was completed in August 2018 to accommodate the technological requirements of the hybrid vehicles to be used on the Belfast Rapid Transit routes.

Glider off-vehicle ticketing system was successfully delivered 2018 as part of 'soft launch' following award of contract to main supplier (Parkeon) in August 2016. Off-vehicle ticketing system is fully functioning enabling speedy boarding prior to boarding of Glider services via ability for customers to tap their Smartcard or Concessionary SmartPass at a validator, top-up Smartcard or buy a paper ticket from

the Ticket Vending Machine. Cash, Visa and Mastercard Credit and Debit cards are accepted, including Contactless payment.

The roll out of the BRT halt shelters was successfully completed prior to the launch of the new Glider service in September 2018. The roll out of real time passenger information was also successfully completed by September 2018. Reaction to the new BRT halts is very positive and is contributing to raising public awareness of Belfast Rapid Transit and the Glider brand.

Information on the Belfast Rapid Transit can be accessed through the following link:

- [Belfast Rapid Transport](#)

## Press Releases

Invest NI publishes press releases to promote ERDF funded activity, a selection of which can be accessed through the following links:

- [Kraydel invests in R&D to develop revolutionary smart device](#)
- [Schrader Electronics announces multi-million pound R&D investment](#)
- [Engineering business Camlin to create almost 300 jobs in £28m investment](#)

## Case Studies

The Managing Authority regularly updates the dedicated Programme website, highlighting the benefit that ERDF funding makes in Northern Ireland. Click on the link below to see how the companies featured have used ERDF funding to improve their business:

[Investment for Growth and Jobs Case Studies](#)

### **Liopa Ltd**

Liopa has received an Invest NI Grant for Research and Development, targeted towards a project to develop LipRead, a Visual Speech Recognition (VSR) product. LipRead's primary function will be improving the accuracy of commonly used voice-driven assistants (such as Siri, Cortana or Alexa) and voice activated applications in noisy environments such as vehicles, offices and factories. Other potential uses of lip-reading technology, which will be multi-lingual, include:

- An aid for the hard of hearing via automated subtitling
- Word/phrase search in upload video
- Human-robotic interaction; and
- Preventing authentication fraud (aka Anti-spoofing)

Liopa is led by seasoned entrepreneurs Liam McQuillan and Richard McConnell. Together they have been involved in the creation of several indigenous NI tech start-up companies that have successfully developed software products for the worldwide market and have achieved substantial exit values.

### **Heavenly Tasty Organics**

Invest NI have recently produced a video case study showcasing how a company can benefit from ERDF funding. Company founder Shauna McCarney-Blair, highlights the benefits of ERDF funding and how it has helped their business.

[Design for Business : Heavenly Tasty Organics](#)

## Further Reading

[Annual Implementation Report 2018](#)

Read the full version of the Annual Implementation Report for 2018

[The Northern Ireland ERDF IGJ Programme Citizens Summary 2014-2020](#)

Read a summary of the Programme and its role within Northern Ireland