

Innovation Benchmark Survey

A. Background Information

A1. What is the main product or service produced by your company? *Refer to Industrial Classification sheet and after confirming with respondent write most appropriate code:*

A2. Where is the Headquarters of your company? *Code one of the following.*

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Northern Ireland | 1 |
| Scotland | 2 |
| Republic of Ireland | 3 |
| England or Wales | 4 |
| Other EU | 5 |
| North America | 6 |
| Japan | 7 |
| Other country | 8 |

ALL THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS I am going to ask you RELATE ONLY TO OPERATIONS IN (NI/RoI/Scotland)

Firstly, I shall ask you some background questions relating to your operations in Northern Ireland

A3. In which year did this business commence operations?

A4. How many are currently FTE employed by the company in (NI/RoI/Scotland)?

A5. Is the company a family-owned business? *Defined as 50+% ownership with the family*

Yes No

If YES, how many generations has the family held control of this firm:

First generation First/second Second Second/third Third or more

A6. What % of your sales from operations in (NI/RoI/Scotland) are sold in the following markets: *(Please check that answers sum to 100%)*

Northern Ireland%
Scotland%
Republic of Ireland%
England or Wales%
Other EU%
North America%
Japan%
Other country%

If the respondent has a problem breaking down sales, then concentrate on a NI, Scotland, RoI and 'rest' split

A7. (a) In the next 3-5 years what single most important factor would you say will provide the competitive edge of your business here in (NI/RoI/Scotland)? Will it be:

Read options and tick 1 box.

- Your product design
- Your process technology
- Your cost effectiveness
- Your marketing
- Your financial management
- Other (please specify)

B. New Products and Services

B1. Have you introduced any new products/services produced in (NI/RoI/Scotland) in the last 3 years?
 Yes No *(If NO go to C1)*

B2. How many new products/services have there been?
If unsure best guess answer will do

B3. How many of them were designed or developed mainly in (NI/RoI/Scotland) ?.....

B4. Approximately, what percentage of your current (NI/RoI/Scotland) sales/turnover is accounted for by these new products/services introduced in the last 3 years?.....

B5. Considering the most important new product(s)/services(s) introduced in the last 3 years, I am going to read out a list of possible factors which may have influenced your design and development process. Please tell me which factors had the most influence. *(Circle all that are mentioned)*

- Production staff at the establishment crucial **1**
- R&D department crucial **2**
- Technical inputs from customers crucial **3**
- Cooperation with customers crucial **4**
- Company staff located outside (NI/RoI/Scotland) crucial **5**
- Local consultant advice crucial **6**
- Consultant advice from outside (NI/RoI/Scotland) crucial **7**
- Financial resources crucial **8**
- Market testing/evaluation crucial **9**

B6. Without the need for any fundamental, major changes in its design or specification how many years have your current most important product(s)/service(s) been available to customers?
.....years

B7. How modern is your current most important product(s)/service(s) when compared to your competitors?
(Circle one answer)

- Very up-to-date **1** Up to 1 year behind **2** 1-3 years behind **3**
- More than 3 years behind **4** Don't know **5**

B8. I am going to read out some statements; could you tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
We are committed to making our existing products and services obsolete by introducing new ones	1	2	3	4	5
We regularly compare our products and services with those of our competitors	1	2	3	4	5
Our products/services have a high level of technology built into them	1	2	3	4	5
Our products and services use better technology than our competitors	1	2	3	4	5

C. Involvement in Innovation Activities

Moving on now to looking at your involvement in innovation related activities in *(NI/RoI/Scotland)* where innovation related activities is defined as **committing resources to** developing new products, processes or services and/or significantly improving existing products, processes or services, or developing new niches for the firm.

C1. Is your business engaged in innovation related activities in *(NI/RoI/Scotland)*?

Yes No **IF NO GO TO E1**

C2. For how many years has your business been involved in innovation related activities in *(NI/RoI/Scotland)*?years

C3. Have innovation related activities undertaken in *(NI/RoI/Scotland)* resulted in any **major** product or process innovations introduced into your *(NI/RoI/Scotland)* plants in the last 3 years? *Check back to B1 and ensure consistent. If answer is 'yes to new products in B1' but 'no' on product innovation in this question check to confirm that no significant local resources were involved in producing 'new products in B1'.*

Product innovation Yes No
 Process innovation Yes No

(Approx.) How many product innovations in the last 3 years?

(Approx.) How many process innovations in the last 3 years?

C5. How many of these have been patented? Product Process

C6. Could you tell me if any of the following are very important source(s) of knowledge and information (K&I) for your innovation related activities?
Tick as many as apply and tick main reason.

	Tick ALL that apply	Tick MAIN reason only
K&I from within the establishment (e.g. design, production, operational)		
K&I from within the enterprise (e.g. parent company)		
K&I from other local company/companies		
K&I from other company/companies located in (UK/RoI)		
K&I from other foreign company/companies		
K&I from Suppliers of equipment, materials etc.		
K&I from Customers		
K&I from Consultants		
K&I from Universities/Government research organisations		
K&I from Private research institutes		
K&I from Other public sector bodies e.g. Invest NI/Scottish Enterprise/Enterprise Ireland		
K&I from Trade associations/ Trade fairs		
K&I from Regulatory bodies e.g. Health & Safety, Environmental Standards		
<i>Other K&I</i>		

D. Reasons and Attitudes regarding innovation related activities

Moving on now to looking at your reasons for undertaking innovation related activities in (NI/RoI/Scotland):

- D1. A.** Does your business carry out innovation related activities in order to? *(Read out list)*
B. What is the main reason? *(Read out answers from column A that were ticked and choose 1)*

	A	B
	Tick ALL that apply	Tick MAIN reason only
a. to Develop new products		
b. to Improve existing products		
c. to Adapt existing products to meet market demands		
d. to Replace existing products		
e. to Reduce production costs		
f. to Increase speed of production		
g. <i>Other (please specify)</i>		

Turning now to your attitudes towards undertaking innovation related activities in (NI/RoI/Scotland):

- D2.** Which of the following statements **BEST** describes the importance of innovation related activities to your business? *Circle one letter*
- a. innovativeness has always been vital to our business
 - b. innovativeness is becoming increasingly important to our business

- c. innovativeness is important but not essential to our business
- d. innovativeness is not important to our business

D3. Which if the following statements best describes your business plans for innovation?

- a. We expect to increase our involvement in innovation related activities
- b. We expect to maintain our current level of involvement in innovation related activities
- c. We expect to decrease our level of involvement in innovation related activities
- d. We expect to cease our involvement in innovation related activities

GO TO section G

E. Previous/Future Involvement in Innovation Related Activities

E1. Has your business been engaged in innovation related activities in *(NI/RoI/Scotland)* at any time in the last 5 years?

Yes No

E3. Do you expect your business to engage in innovation related activities at any time in the next 3 years?
Yes – definite plans exist GOTO E4

Yes – but no definite plans
Possibly
No

} GOTO F1

E4. What are your reasons for planning to undertake innovation related activities within the next 3 years?
Are they*(Read out list and tick as many as apply)*

a. to Develop new products	
b. to Improve existing products	
c. to Adapt existing products to meet market demands	
d. to Replace existing products	
e. to Reduce production costs	
f. to Increase speed of production	
g. because Senior management regard innovation related activities as a strategic priority for the future	
h. Other <i>(please state)</i>	

F. Reasons for Not Undertaking Innovation Related Activities

Moving on now to looking at your reasons for not undertaking innovation related activities in *(NI/RoI/Scotland)*.

F1. For each statement that I read out please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The nature of our product or production process does not require or justify expenditure on innovation related activities	1	2	3	4	5
It is a corporate decision not to invest in innovation related activities in <i>(NI/RoI/Scotland)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
External economic/market conditions associated with risk and uncertainty prevent us from undertaking innovation related activities	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of access to finance (including government aid) restricts our ability to undertake innovation related activities	1	2	3	4	5
There is limited competition in the market for our products (i.e. our product is highly price sensitive), so we do not engage in innovation related activities	1	2	3	4	5
We are unable to engage in innovation related activities due to a lack of appropriate skills within the business	1	2	3	4	5
There is too long a time lag between undertaking innovation related activities and generating financial returns	1	2	3	4	5
It makes more sense to wait and copy the innovations of competitors than undertake these activities ourselves	1	2	3	4	5
Senior management do not regard innovation related activities as a strategic priority	1	2	3	4	5
We are unable to develop links with external bodies/organisations that would stimulate innovation related activities	1	2	3	4	5

F2. Which of the following factors is most likely to encourage your business to undertake innovation related activities in *(NI/RoI/Scotland)* in the future? *(Read out list and tick most important)*

	Most important
a. An improvement in the financial performance of the business	
b. The recruitment of staff with appropriate skills	
c. A change in management attitudes to innovation related activities	
d. A greater demand for innovative products	
e. Stronger competition in the market	
f. Less price sensitivity for products	
g. Technological developments in the industry	
h. A change in corporate policy regarding <i>(NI/RoI/Scotland)</i> operations	
i. Improved government incentives for innovation related activities (e.g. grants)	
j. The nature of our business means that innovation related activities would never be considered	
k. <i>Other (please state)</i>	

Business and management factors relating to innovation effectiveness

G. Lifecycle

For each statement that I read out please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The main problems of the business are obtaining customers and delivering the product or service.	1	2	3	4	5
The Company has now developed with sufficient customers and satisfies them sufficiently with its products or services.	1	2	3	4	5
The decision facing owners at this stage is whether to expand or to keep the company stable and profitable, providing a base for alternative owner activities.	1	2	3	4	5
The key problems facing the company are how to grow rapidly and how to finance the growth.	1	2	3	4	5
The challenges are to consolidate and control the financial gains brought on by rapid growth and to retain the advantages of small size, including flexibility.	1	2	3	4	5

H. Strategic focus

For each statement that I read out please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The company has a narrow range of products and markets.	1	2	3	4	5
The company continually searches for new market opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
The company watch their competitors closely for new ideas, and then rapidly adopt those which appear to be the most promising.	1	2	3	4	5
The organisation seldom makes adjustments of any sort until forced to do so by environmental pressures.	1	2	3	4	5

I. Leadership

Moving on now to looking at the leadership style for supporting innovation related activities in *(NI/RoI/Scotland)*. For each statement that I read out please tell me if you (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) neither agree nor disagree, (d) disagree or (e) strongly disagree. *Please circle one answer for each statement.*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The senior management team makes a point of "being seen" around the organisation	1	2	3	4	5
Management fosters creative thinking and innovation in the company	1	2	3	4	5
Our top managers like to try new ways of doing things	1	2	3	4	5
Management spend adequate time planning change	1	2	3	4	5
If the company is performing well, change is still a priority	1	2	3	4	5
The organization is working to a clear business plan	1	2	3	4	5
Management encourages everyone in the organization to come up with new ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
The management team take time to think constructively/creatively about the future	1	2	3	4	5

J. Culture

Moving on now to looking at the culture within the organisation for supporting innovation related activities in *(NI/RoI/Scotland)*.

For each statement that I read out please tell me if you (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) neither agree nor disagree, (d) disagree or (e) strongly disagree.

Please circle one answer for each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There is a strong team spirit at all levels of the organisation	1	2	3	4	5
The culture in this organization promotes change	1	2	3	4	5
Two way communication happens at all levels of the organisation	1	2	3	4	5
There is a clear organisational structure which everyone understands	1	2	3	4	5
There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
The structure of the organization facilitates change	1	2	3	4	5
The organization is not bureaucratic	1	2	3	4	5
There is a feeling of openness in this organization	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, employees have access to all the resources needed to get the job done	1	2	3	4	5
Employees are involved in setting and agreeing performance targets	1	2	3	4	5
Everyone in the company has a good grasp off how the organization is performing	1	2	3	4	5
Employees get useful feedback about their work	1	2	3	4	5

K. Business Improvement Methods

Moving on now to looking at the business improvement methods within the organisation for supporting innovation related activities in *(NI/RoI/Scotland)*.

K1 Please indicate which of the following business improvement methods are used within your organisation to drive innovation activities:

	present	If present, greater than 2 years?
Total Quality Management (TQM)		
Continuous Improvement		
European Business Excellence Model		
Balanced Scorecards		
Total Preventative Maintenance (TPM)		
Investors in People (IiP)		
ISO 9001		
ISI14001		
Others – please list:		

K2 In relation to the method(s) used for each statement that I read out please tell me if you (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) neither agree nor disagree, (d) disagree or (e) strongly disagree.

Please circle one answer for each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The organisation has a formal/informal total quality – continuous improvement programme	1	2	3	4	5
Responsibilities for the TQ/CI programme are clearly defined	1	2	3	4	5
The TQ/CI programme has clear goals, objectives and measures of success	1	2	3	4	5
Successful TQ/CI problem solving teams are spread throughout the organisation	1	2	3	4	5
The programme is adequately resourced	1	2	3	4	5
There is a clearly defined reward and recognition scheme for TQ/CI activity	1	2	3	4	5
Greater than 50% of the workforce are involved in TQ/CI	1	2	3	4	5
The TQ/CI programme is used to improve processes	1	2	3	4	5
A number of quality improvements have been achieved from the programme	1	2	3	4	5

L. Internal and External Knowledge processes

L1. Knowledge Incorporation

I will now read out a set of statements that will help us understand how your organisation incorporates or uses knowledge and information internally.

For each statement that I read out please tell me if you (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) neither agree nor disagree, (d) disagree or (e) strongly disagree. *Please circle one answer for each statement.*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Everyone is in possession of the information/ knowledge necessary to do their job	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge that employees hold in their heads (i.e. tacit knowledge) is managed and captured effectively	1	2	3	4	5
Efforts are made to share information/knowledge across the organization	1	2	3	4	5
Lessons learned from daily experiences and projects are captured and disseminated	1	2	3	4	5
New information/knowledge is effectively incorporated within the processes and routines within the organization	1	2	3	4	5
Active management of information/knowledge produces a range of business benefits	1	2	3	4	5

L2. Knowledge Acquisition

I will now read out a set of statements that will help us understand how your plant identifies and employs information/knowledge developed elsewhere. *Please circle one answer for each statement.*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
We conduct frequent market research so that we are aware of customer needs	1	2	3	4	5
Licensing is a method we often use to obtain information/knowledge or technology	1	2	3	4	5
We have developed new products/services and/or processes in collaboration with other firms	1	2	3	4	5
We are well aware of the information/knowledge and technologies being developed by our competitors	1	2	3	4	5
We have become an information/knowledge or technology supplier to other firms in the sector	1	2	3	4	5
We usually go to outside private sector bodies (e.g. consultants) to find out about fresh opportunities for introducing new products/services	1	2	3	4	5
We usually go to outside public sector bodies (e.g. universities) to find out about fresh opportunities for introducing new products/services	1	2	3	4	5

M. Linkages

I will now read out a set of statements that will help us understand how your networks with other organisations in *NI/RoI/Scotland*:

For each statement that I read out please tell me if you (a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) neither agree nor disagree, (d) disagree or (e) strongly disagree.

Please circle one answer for each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Sufficient resources are allocated to support network activities with other organisations and collaborators	1	2	3	4	5
The organisation uses a range of activities and mechanisms to initiate new relationships with other organisations	1	2	3	4	5
Information is freely exchanged across other organisational partners in networks	1	2	3	4	5
Network activities are systematically linked to organisation plans	1	2	3	4	5
Where appropriate the company adapts its activities to fit with the needs of specific networks	1	2	3	4	5
Relationships between employees and those of other organisations in networks are carefully managed.	1	2	3	4	5
The company has performance measures to measure the effectiveness of networks with other organisations	1	2	3	4	5
Company employees receive sufficient training in network relationship management	1	2	3	4	5

N. Background on your operations

N1. Based on the following bands, what was your sales turnover in (*NI/RoI/Scotland*) during the most recent period for which you have data? *Code one of the following:*

<250k 250-500k 500-999k 1000-1999k 2000-2999k 3000-3999k >4000k

N2. Over the last three years would you say that the level of competition you face from your rivals has:

Increased significantly Increased Same Decreased Decreased significantly

N3. Compared to your rivals, how would you rate your overall performance in the last year?

Significantly better Better Same Worse Significantly worse

O. Next stage of project

O1. As well as carrying out this survey in (*NI/RoI/Scotland*), a number of companies are being invited to take part in a series of workshops and in-house support to help in the development of their innovative capacity and capability, aimed ultimately at improving their competitiveness through the commercialisation of new ideas, products, services and processes on a cross border and cross regional basis. Would you be willing to allow your contact details (linked to the answers to this survey) to go forward to the project team to indicate your interest in being involved in this further stage in the project?

Yes No

O2. Would you like to receive a copy of the overall anonymised results from this survey? If so, this implies you give consent for your contact details to go forward to the project team (although these will not be linked to your responses to this survey).

Yes No

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THIS SURVEY