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Moderator questions in Bold, Respondents in Regular text.

KEY: Unable to decipher = (inaudible + timecode), **Phonetic spelling** (ph) + timecode), **Missed word** = (mw + timecode), **Talking over each other** = (talking over each other + timecode).

Moderator: Good morning everyone and welcome to the Introduction to Innovate UK Business Funding and Support. In today's webinar I'm going to give a little bit of an overview in terms of the innovation support that's available in Northern Ireland. We'll then move on to Paul Malcomson, who is the Innovate UK Northern Ireland Manager, who will give an overview of Innovate UK. Then we'll move on to Barbara Orr, who's the Ecosystem Senior Innovation and Growth Specialist, and she will inform you about Innovate UK business growth and the support available here. We'll round up with a Q&A session, which will be hosted by Lisa Braniff, who is the Manager for Innovation Funding Advice for businesses in Northern Ireland. In terms of the webinar, you can enter questions as we go along, in terms of in the chat area and we'll deal with those in the Q&A session. In terms of Invest Northern Ireland, our remit is to grow the economy. In terms of growing the economy, we can't do that without businesses, we need businesses to be competitive, we need them to be global in their focus and their operations, and we need to help them continue to beat the competitors, have a USP, have a niche offering that makes them different, makes them unique. And that's why we work with Northern Ireland businesses in the area of innovation and R&D. In terms of ensuring that you remain competitive, that you develop USPs, you maintain good productivity and introduce new productivity, you need to focus on innovation and R&D. And there is a lot of support available, we talk about Invest Northern Ireland's innovation escalator, which details all the support that's available in these areas. It can look confusing, it can be daunting to know where to begin, but what I would say to you is there's help there to help you determine what is the right solution for you, what is the right support for you. And in Invest Northern Ireland that's what we want to help you do, we want you to make the right choice in terms of which support to access, when to access it and we also want to help you be successful in securing that support. In terms of Invest Northern Ireland, I mentioned we're the Northern Ireland economic development agency, but Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency.

So, we need to work with them in order to maximise the opportunities for Northern Ireland businesses, ensure that we do identify the right support for a business at the right time. And you'll see as well as the escalator detailing the Invest NI offerings, you'll see at the bottom we've also got a banner which shows other funding opportunities. We keep abreast of those opportunities, we keep abreast of the offers and support that are available for Northern Ireland businesses at any time. And we can help direct you to the right support and we can also help you with your application that you're making to maximise the potential of your success. We don't only focus on Invest NI offerings, we want to get the right offering from all that's available for your business at any particular time. I would encourage you to ensure that you do keep abreast of the offerings, engage with those that help you in terms of developing your business to understand what is out there. We

are very keen to maximise Northern Ireland's success rate globally and we can't do that in Invest NI by ourselves, we need to tap in and we need to work with partners, and Innovate UK are a very important partner in that aspect. We can help provide support to develop applications for competitions run by Innovate UK through our project definition, but Lisa also heads up a team where they can help identify the relevant funding opportunity for you and also critique any applications that are being developed. You'll hear more about that as we go along but you'll also hear more about Invest NI's support for businesses at the follow-up webinar, which is being run on 13th November. Without further ado, I'm going to hand over to Paul Malcomson now, who will give you a bit more insight into Innovate UK and the support that is available. I hope you enjoy the seminar.

M: Thank you, Vicky, and to Invest Northern Ireland for affording Innovate UK this platform today to inform you about Innovate UK and the products and services we provide. As Vicky mentioned, I am Paul Malcomson, Innovate UK's Manager for Northern Ireland. As also mentioned by Vicky, Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency, working to drive economic growth and productivity through empowering UK businesses to leverage innovation for sustainable success. We are at the heart of the UK's innovation ecosystem, inspiring, involving and investing in the innovators of today and tomorrow and work with businesses at each stage of their innovation pathway, from concept through commercialisation, scale-up and growth. Fundamentally, we drive productivity and economic growth by supporting businesses to develop and realise the potential of new ideas, including those from the UK's world-class research base. Working with Innovate UK boosts private sector spend and follow-on private investment for the businesses that we support. Now, we don't work in isolation but with a wide range of partners across the UK innovation ecosystem to design and manage programmes that deliver government priorities, address industry challenges and turn sense into value-added reality. Our approach to innovation can be summarised by what we call The Cube, the what, how and where. In the domains axis, we focus on achieving prosperity in the race to net zero, ensuring healthy lives and economic growth, through our life sciences, food and agriculture and leveraging digital and technology for sustainable productivity and economic growth. With regards to place, we will work with partners to support regional development, to drive sustainable growth across the UK. We have a world-class portfolio of products and services which are constantly evolving to meet the needs of business, business research opportunities and communities.

I will now explore our products and services portfolio in more detail and how they apply to businesses at all stages. We work with spin-outs, formed as offshoots of existing organisations and when universities or research institutions start new companies. We offer support to commercialise innovations, patents or technologies being developed and make connections with research expertise to bring groundbreaking innovations to market. We help innovative start-ups and entrepreneurs to develop their unique product or services and bring it to market, providing support to mitigate risk, validate business models, secure initial funding and gain early customer traction. We encourage innovation and iteration to help start-ups achieve product market fit. We support scaling businesses-, business to develop market reach, operational capacity and revenue generation. We offer advice to increase productivity and expand their customer base by connecting to sector expertise and proven business models. We grow-, we support innovators in seeking additional funding and optimising processes for growth. With regards to growth, we support innovative businesses focused on accelerating market penetration, revenue and profitability. We offer

expert advice and support to deepen market presence, enter new markets and enhance competitive positioning. We support growing companies to use innovation, to create sustainable expansion, productivity and customer satisfaction. To put this all into context, we ran over 315 grant funding competitions in 2023, '24 and for every £1 of funding-, results in £4.50 of value to the economy. From a Northern Ireland context, between 2018/19 to '22/'23, Innovate UK has invested £94 million in innovation projects in Northern Ireland. £58 million was awarded to businesses and, of that, £36 was awarded to SMEs. £35 million has been invested through academic research and public sector organisations, in-, including the Catapult Centres for supporting business innovation and strengthening the relationship between industry and academia. This is particularly important for SMEs, who are less likely to have the research capability in-house and need external research organisations to help progress new ideas to commercialisation.

Data shows a lower number of applications than we would expect from Northern Ireland to Innovate UK competitions, but Northern Ireland has a good success rate. There are numerous examples of Northern Ireland business success across our products and services portfolio. And, to name a few, such as Aflo Analytics, Movetru, Enzai Technologies, and Marturion Electronics Ltd (ph 10.49). Now, this is a very small snapshot of what-, of-, and you can see all past and current award holders in Innovate UK's transparency data. If you Google 'Innovate UK-funded projects since 2004' this will give you a flavour of the types of projects we support. Ah, now we'll just go into a deeper dive into the Innovate UK system. Innovate UK business growth provides bespoke support and expertise to support businesses that are ready to grow, scale and enter new markets. Following me, as mentioned, my colleague Barbara will provide more detail on the role of business growth. Innovate Business Connect connect ideas, people and communities and drive positive change through innovation. Their diverse connections span business, government, funders, research and the third-sector. They provide business support, funding advice and connection through partner organisations. I would like to particularly highlight the success of Innovate UK's Knowledge Transfer Partnership programme in Northern Ireland as this is where you'll likely engage with my Business Connect colleagues in Northern Ireland. KTPs are a unique collaboration between academia and business that deliver industry-leading innovation, creating new products and services that will-, that will improve productivity and profit. Northern Ireland is and has been one of the UK's strongest performing regions for the KTP scheme, with approximately 450 projects completed since 1984 and approximately 40 projects currently live. Queen's University has had more national awards for its KTP partnerships than any other UK knowledge base, with 23 to date. Our portfolio is largely SME-centred and we are the only region in the UK with an active further education sector supporting this scheme. We are now going to show a short KTP video case study.

M: My name's Joe McGinnis and I run Braidwater Group. We build social and private housing, we deliver the total product, from acquiring the site, doing the design right through to delivery.

M: My name's Karl Ennis, I'm the Research and Development Software Engineer for Braidwater. I became aware of the Knowledge Transfer partnership programme through my college, I was studying in the North West Regional College at the time. So, the KPT programme is a partnership between the education institute and a business, where the company have identified maybe an issue in their industry.

The associate does all of the work and the research, and all of the development, but you're, you've got the backing of your academic supervisors and it's allowing you to act as the middleman to bring that knowledge from the college across into the industry.

M: The specific problem we wanted to address was the digitisation of our processes, the key driver was finding ways to add efficiency within a very, very complicated business.

M: My name is Cathal Ferry, I'm the Manager of the industry 4.0 Centre at the North West Regional College. The Company Director, Joe, approached us with an issue specific to the construction industry we thought we could resolve through the KTP programme. So, the platform that was developed helped the company streamline a lot of its manual, paper-based processes, it included technologies like drone technologies and automated a lot of manual processes. We provided day-to-day support to Karl and we embedded our expertise and our knowledge within Karl and then within the company, so that they could achieve their aims in the development of the platform that they ultimately created as part of the project. This platform is really innovative and unique in the construction sector, it's something that just doesn't exist, so the company has managed to overcome a lot of its challenges and it gives the company a licence to grow and foster innovation.

M: Knowledge Transfer Partnership was the right programme for us because of the people involved, everybody that dealt with from the college side of things made the process very easy. We were concerned about the amount of time and effort versus what we will achieve from the programme, but through giving us examples of what they'd done with other companies and carefully guiding us through the different steps we, we were able to understand that it was something for us. If we hadn't followed the path of the Knowledge Transfer Partnership we would have been more traditional in our approach but in the modern world, considering how fast it moves, we believed that we had to keep up or try and be ahead of that curve.

M: I would highly recommend the Knowledge Transfer Partnership to businesses in Northern Ireland because it helps them explore and realise any ambitions they have. Whether that's a new process or a new service or a new product they're thinking of developing, this programme allows them to explore that and, and actually deliver a tangible product at the end.

M: I'd highly recommend it. I've secured myself into a career. We've formed a really strong partnership with the college because the company has seen the benefits from it. There's so much that has come from it. I couldn't do anything except recommend it.

Moderator: A fantastic good news story, one of many, illustrating the benefits of the KTP programme and it neatly encapsulates how Innovate UK is benefitting businesses right across Northern Ireland. I would particularly like to flag Innovate UK's Catapult Network. The catapults are a network of world-leading technology and innovation centres established by Innovate UK.

Catapults provide businesses with access to their expertise and facilities, enabling them to test, demonstrate and improve their ideas. They foster collaborations between industry, government, research organisations, academia and many more. Place is a particular priority for Innovate UK and is core to all our activities. We are a place-aware organisation. Thinking about how to drive stronger local impacts and target regional strengths across a wider range of our activities there is a need to develop the evidence based around what works in different places and how R&D and non-R&D interventions can support levelling up in different parts of the UK. Innovate UK has a presence right across the UK. It is just not me based in Northern Ireland. We have Business Growth, Business Connect, Catapult, Domain and Products and Services colleagues based here. Now this-, these are some examples of our place-based programmes but I would particularly like to flag our Launchpad programme. Launchpads support the government's objective to establish world-leading, globally interconnected innovation clusters, catalysing increased employment, economic growth and product within UK regions. There is a £7.5 million Northern Ireland life launchpad focusing on its life and health sciences cluster. To date there has been two funding competitions within this launchpad with more planned soon.

So, how do you find out about our various competitions and apply? As any business in the UK can apply for Innovate UK support our funding opportunities are normally via competitions. As mentioned earlier, we literally run hundreds of competitions per annum. To navigate our interventions and be aware of live competitions I suggest you sign up for Innovate UK's newsletters and regularly visit either Business Connect's funding page or the Innovation Funding Service website. Here are a selection of our funding opportunities and you can see they cover R&D right through from fundamental research to experimental development. Not all funding options are open at any one time, so it is best to regularly check our websites for the latest opportunities. There is also the Innovation Hub which is all-, which is a resource to search for current support mechanisms that best suit your business and need. Invest Northern Ireland will also flag competitions and you should connect with Innovate UK on LinkedIn. This was a snapshot of Innovate UK and hopefully it gives you a flavour of the assistance we can provide. Again, I would urge you to attend the webinar planned for 13th November where my colleague, Stephen McComb, will give a masterclass on writing a grant application to Innovate UK. Thank you very much for taking the-, your time today to attend this webinar and I will now hand over to my colleague, Barbara.

Moderator: Good morning. Good morning. Thank you, Paul, for handing over. Thanks to Dr. Vicky Kell and the team in Invest NI for the opportunity to present this morning. I am part of the Northern Ireland Innovate UK Business Growth team, supporting Northern Ireland companies to scale and grow. The Innovate UK system can be split into two areas of funding-, two areas, funding and support. Funding or financial support consists of grants, loans, investor partnerships and procurement of innovation, as Paul has been discussing. Whilst Innovate UK is most commonly known for funding we also have many other support mechanisms for SMEs, including areas such as talent and skills, global, infrastructure and growth and scaling support which is delivered by the Innovate UK Business Growth service. So, who are we? We-, Innovate UK Business Growth delivers support throughout the UK to innovate-, innovation-focused businesses. We have over 400 experienced innovation and growth specialists working on the ground throughout the UK focusing

on innovation strategy, funding and finance, international markets and partnerships, including the Enterprise Europe Network. So, who do we work with? We will work with innovation-focused and, and new-to-market offerings, regardless of whether they are funded by Innovate UK or otherwise. Established UK registered SMEs with up to 250 employees. Typically we will support later stage start-ups with 20% combined growth through to scaling businesses with over 50% growth year-on-year. Most importantly, they must-, management must be committed to business growth. So, how do we work with you? Our approach is to come alongside your business as a trusted partner, providing tailored support to the individual business needs, including supporting strategic direction and long-term innovation growth.

Through our wraparound support we focus on facilitating access to valuable opportunities and resources that are part of the Innovate UK system, the local ecosystem in Northern Ireland, throughout the UK and internationally. So, just breaking into the different areas through our innovation strategy we support businesses to manage their innovation effectively, commercialise and scale more rapidly, access the right resources at the right time within the innovation ecosystem. We have a number of interventions, including our peer-to-peer network for innovation-focused businesses with over £1 million turnover which is a confidential forum that meets once a month to address their business growth priorities and challenges. With access to our RTOs and catapults that Paul mentioned, through a funded programme to support development and validation of innovation. Given access to technical expertise and, and sectoral knowledge. Typically projects can include market analysis, cost modelling, business case support and industry relevant R&D. Our Design for Growth programme provides bespoke one-to-one coaching to accelerate business growth through design thinking, access to our peer-to-peer workshops and our online Design for Growth hub featuring resource toolkits and discussion forums. And our BSI scheme provides free access to over 110,000 British, EU and international standards and live online training that-, on, on the benefit and use and participation in standards suitable for your business.

I wanted to take a moment just to discuss our NPSA Secure Innovation. This has been developed by the National Protective Security Authority and National Cyber Security Centre in collaboration with industry. It's a subsidised review worth £3,000 with a contribution of £500 to look at the business's current protective security practices. And businesses are provided with a high, high quality guidance and advice that's been vetted which helps emerging technology companies to develop a protective security strategy complimenting their objectives to give you-, which will also help to better attract investors and customers. To access this you can engage with the business growth team here in Northern Ireland or if you already are please speak to your innovation and growth specialist. Through our funding and finance strategy we are here to help businesses to identify their funding needs and understand capital options to perform effective financial planning analysis ensuring that they have a financial strategy that maximises the growth potential. This allows our businesses to increase knowledge and understanding of the-, of the right funding available to make better decisions, to allocate resources and manage risk. Through this process if we find that a business needs investment we have an intensive Invest-Ability training and support. And we also run sector-focused pitch panels throughout the year where businesses get the

opportunity to pitch to live investors and gain valuable feedback whenever they're taken forward to investment rounds.

We're currently running a programme in Northern Ireland here. It's our first Invest-Ability intensive training and that'll be running 'til the end of December but we will be also running a DeepTech pitch panel on 5th February in-, here in Invest NI on-, and the closing date for that is 11th December and if you want to find out more about how to apply it will provide details at the end of the presentation. Through our international markets and partnerships we provide support to our businesses to increase knowledge of international market opportunities, reduce risk of exploring markets-, global markets and accelerate global growth and scaling. If you're interested-, we also have a range of support initiatives including the Enterprise Europe Network through which you can access this through ourselves. Support to our-, to develop global innovation partnerships through the likes of our global business innovation programmes. And access to focused events. We also support accessing Eureka and Horizon Pump Priming via our Horizon Europe Pump Priming initiative. I just wanted to mention that if you are interested in finding out more about that, Invest NI are hosting an event in Lisburn on 24th October on Horizon and clustering and if you want to find out more about how to register please ask in the Q&A but details can be provided. Just to give you a feel of what global business innovation programmes that are on at the moment that are open to apply for, we have an agri-tech running in Australia. The-, this will close on 27th October. We have a smart manufacturing in Taiwan. The, the applications for this close on 3rd November. And we also have a global business innovation programme on antimicrobial resistance which closes on 11th November.

These typically are week-long visits which involve sector-focused with industry specialists coming alongside, getting opportunities to look at ways in which you can collaborate and look at areas such as regulatory compliance and, and ways in which that you can work on those target markets. I've included a link on the slide which will provide further details on, on these various initiatives that are there at the moment on future global innovation business-, global business innovation programmes are also available on that site. We also run a Scaleup Programme for scaling companies. Through our Scaleup Programme we support ambitious, innovative companies to scale and grow. Typically they are looking at projections of 50% year-on-year growth. This is a fully funded programme supporting businesses over a period of twelve months to work on key areas that are blocking the business from scaling. The businesses are supported by a team of Scaleup directors. We have 40 of them across the UK. They're typically CEOs and have come out of industry and we've been working with businesses in this area over the last two to three years. And just to give you a feel we-, a feel of the success, we typically see-, for every pound that is spent in this programme we see eleven pounds returned to the UK economy. I just wanted to finish up by giving you a taste of the experience of one of our businesses, Movetru. So, if you could play the video for me please that would be great. Thank you.

F: I am Naomi McGregor, the founder and CEO, CTO of Movetru. Movetru is a wearable device for injury

mitigation and performance improvements across athletes. Movetru was established during my Masters in product design engineering at Queen's University in Belfast and then I decided to go full time in July 2020 into product development. We were first introduced to Innovate UK EDGE during our Innovate UK Women in Innovation award. From this we were able to receive support and guidance across a variety of areas within the business, especially across financial and then business improvements. So, in terms of the support that we receive from Innovate UK EDGE it included looking at pitches, reviewing it, getting us investor ready and also support through financial planning, so that we were able to go to investors with understanding milestones that would be delivered during the course of our next investment. The Women in Innovation award allowed us access to a group of innovative women across the UK that we wouldn't have necessarily crossed paths with. And it's been so beneficial and also allowed us to get to our first working end-to-end prototype which meant we were able to demonstrate it to across athletes, to physiotherapists and to potential investors and then also get us ready for the next step in our Innovate UK journey and apply for our Innovate UK Smart grant. So, we decided to apply for the Innovate UK Smart grant because on paper it just looked exactly like what we needed and allowed us to start our sports innovation laboratory in Belfast city centre to conduct athlete trials, specifically in ACL research. It allowed us to grow from a team of two people to a team of seven people. And the Innovate UK Smart Grant allowed us to do this. For any business that feels like they have a gap in terms of their area for pitch decks or financial support, I would really recommend them checking out Innovate UK EDGE. Because their monitoring can really accelerate that area within the business.

Moderator: Thank you so much for, for listening to me today. I've included our contact details. So, my name's Barbara Orr. My email address is here and my contact details. And also the details for my colleague Paul Clancy. Thank you and I'll just hand over to Lisa.

Moderator: Good morning everyone. My name's Lisa Braniff, I'm manager of Invest NI Innovation Funding Advisory Service which offers support for business for accessing those funding streams external to Northern Ireland. So, we will shortly begin the Q&A session. So, can I encourage you please to input any questions you may have into the Q&A function? So, thank you very much. I think we'll now begin the Q&A session. So, if we want to advise the other panellists to, to turn on their cameras. Okay, so the first question I think is-, it's to you, Vicky. and the question is, 'Can you get funding from both Invest NI and Innovate UK at the same time?'

F: The answer is yes you can but not for the same project. So, what you need to have is a different project that you're working with. And if you have you can apply to the other organisation while you're actually delivering on your first project. So, yes you can, you can access both but not for the same project.

Moderator: Okay. That's great thank you very much Vicky The next question Paul is for you. It's a question, 'Can you provide some further details about the NI launch pad and the opportunities there?'

M: Yes, thank you Lisa. Yes, the, the Launchpad programme has-, was-, has been launched by Innovate

UK specifically to focus on cluster of growth. So, the-, there was an expression of interest from Northern Ireland with regards to the Launchpad programme on the life and health science sector. And that expression of interest then was built up into a Launchpad programme for, for Northern Ireland focusing on life and health science. So, there is a funding pot of 7.5 million pounds. As I mentioned earlier there has been two funding rounds to date and they have been successful from our perspective. And there is a further funding round basically sitting on the blocks ready to go in the near future. So, I would suggest that if anybody is interested in the Northern Ireland life and health science launchpad to keep an eye on our innovation funding service over the next few weeks. We also have a, a cluster management organisation role with Health Innovation Research Alliance Northern Ireland. And they are tasked to help coordinate and build up the Northern Ireland life and health science cluster.

Moderator: That's great Paul excellent to hear that there's opportunities coming soon. The next question again Paul is probably targeted at-, for, for you. And the question is, 'Is there a scoring framework for Innovate UK applications? Or is the scoring based on judge's individual thoughts and experiences?'

M: Yes, well the applications we receive go through a rigorous assessment and appraisal process. And you will see an innovation funding service the areas within the application that are scored. And there is a-, there would be guidelines for the assessors as to how they should score.

Moderator: That's great. Thank you, Paul. Barbara, there's a question here in relation to Innovate UK business growth, 'How do you go about engaging with the support for-, from Innovate UK business growth?'

F: I provided details on our-, in our slides, but they can contact us. We'd be more than happy to have a chat with them about what their-, what their innovation business needs are in terms of how we can support them. So, if they send us through an email, either to myself or to my colleague Paul Clancy. Also, they can send an email through to-, they can also access our online enquiry line at the moment. Which is on the Innovate UK EDGE website at the moment. Which is our old address. Sorry, IUKBG.UKRI.GOV.UK. So, they can also access through there as well.

Moderator: Okay. So the message is, just get in touch, you'll reach out, have a chat and assess how Innovate UK Business Growth Fund can support the businesses.

F: Pretty much. Thank you.

Moderator: Okay, so I'll invite you audience if you've any final questions to please add them to-, to the chat. Vicky you have mentioned at the start of the webinar that there's a range of supports available through Invest NI's innovation escalator. Can you give us a, a little bit more information

about where to find out more about that support and how to access it for the NI companies?

F: Yes, absolutely Lisa. The escalator has a range of support that goes right the way from companies who are taking their first steps in the innovation arena, into others who are more mature in terms of their approach to innovation and are bringing the innovation activities more in-house. So, in terms of the escalator, we start off with innovation vouchers where companies can apply for a voucher to work with a knowledge provider to help them in terms of developing a concept or develop a prototype. And then we move into technical advisory unit which can give help in terms of certifications, regulatory requirements and also process improvements. Then we move into the realms of RND where it's probably more in-house in relation to the capabilities that are required in order to deliver that. And then we move up into collaborative RND and into the opportunities that come from City and Growth Deals. But at the same time, we will signpost to any other appropriate support that comes through from, from any other organisation including Innovate UK. The easiest way to get access is if, if you have a client executive, please contact your client executive. And they will ensure that you're, you're put in contact with the right person. Alternatively, there's the business support helpline that I would encourage anybody to phone. The business support team will then raise an enquiry and make sure that a response is given to you. So, the 0800 number that's on our website. If you contact the business support team they will ensure you get a response.

Moderator: Thank you very much, Vicky. So, it's a very clear message, reach out, talk to us, we're all working together as a partnership, we want businesses to get the right support to help-, help them to grow. And we'll ensure that we do our best to support you on, on that journey. So, I'm just checking for any further questions. And I think that may be the end of the questions for this morning. So I'd like to thank again all the panellists. Dr Vicky Kell who's the director of research and development and innovation at Invest NI. And actually, I will-, I'll pause before I complete the thank yous (ph 40.47) because I, I see that there is a-, another question that's come in for the panellists. And again it's-, I think probably for you Paul to answer. And the question is, 'It's mentioned that there's a relatively low number of Innovate UK applications for Northern Ireland. Do you know why this is the case?'

M: Well, I think that there are maybe several reasons for that. Possibly lack of awareness would be one of them. And the other reason is that Northern Ireland is lucky to have Invest Northern Ireland right on its doorstep to assist on that innovation journey as well. So, actually I think it's a combination of both.

Moderator: Okay. That's great Paul. Well, hopefully, the webinar today will help to address some of that awareness barrier. And we'll have-, and also we have the fact that as Vicky said when you speak to Invest NI we'll ensure that you're aware of all the opportunities available. The same for Barbara and Innovate UK Business Growth and yourself Paul. There's a question in I suppose to-, probably for Vicky to answer. It says, 'Do you have to speak to a client executive for Innovate UK?' And that might be in relation to-, it could be in relation to an Invest NI client executive or the question could be asking is there an Innovate UK client executive. So, maybe Vicky if you take from the Invest NI side and Barbara if you'd like to take it from the Innovate UK side.

F: What we would encourage is that you do include your client executive if you have one. We work very much in partnership with businesses and it's an ongoing relationship. So, we are very keen to help you in any way we can in terms of the support that you need and the journey that you are on. So, if you're going to talk to Innovate UK it's not vital that you tell your client executive but I would encourage it. Because then that gives us a more rounded view of your business, what you're trying to achieve, where you're, you're looking to get support. And also we can help in terms of your engagement with Innovate NI, sorry, with Innovate UK. So, we would really really appeal to you to do engage with Invest NI if you are contacting Innovate UK.

Moderator: Thank you, Vicky. And, and Barbara would you like to pick up? Does Innovate UK have a client executive? Or what's the mode for engagement there?

F: So, mode for engagement, we have a team of innovation and growth specialists as well as myself as a senior innovation and growth specialist. and my colleague Paul Clancy. So, we work closely with businesses in the areas that we were talking about this morning. So, we would encourage them to get in contact with us through the contact details through our emails. We, we do work closely with the-, with the team in Invest NI and we do collaborate. So, if you are talking to your client exec we do come on board and we can meet jointly as well. It is-, we are very much about what's best for, for your business where-, to give you the support where you need it, when you need it. So, so, yes, so I would encourage you to get in touch. We typically will meet with clients. We discuss need. We look at different funding opportunities there whether it's through the Innovate UK ecosystem if that's the right thing. Or if it's perhaps better to work with your client, means that I can work with the RND team maybe on an RND grants for instance. So, so, yes, we'd be more than happy to chat with you and work with you.

M: Lisa, just maybe just more of a general point there. If anybody is interested in applying to Innovate UK support and they want to make other, you know, with connections you will see an Innovation funding service links usually within each computation (ph 44.45) through Business Connects if you need to maybe potentially talk to a collaborator. Or our support at IUK.UK.RI.ORG. If you have specific questions with regards to the computations. And I think it's even related to the previous question that, you know, I think one of the reasons, again, that Northern Ireland don't apply or Northern Ireland businesses don't potentially apply for Innovate UK support is potentially lack of confidence. And I would urge potential applications to look at our transparency data because, you know, that will give you an indication as to the type of project we have supported in the past and you are likely to be as good as if not better than some of those previously funded projects.

Moderator: Okay. That's great Paul. Thank you very much for those comments. I think there's one final question in the chat and it's relating to Invest NI. So, Vicky could you tell us how do you go about getting a, a client executive from Invest NI?

F: Okay. So, there are criteria that you have to meet in relation to the type of business that you have. So,

it's manufacturing and tradable services. And also in terms of, of the criteria, it revolves around the turnover that you have. And also the amount of export sales that you potentially can secure. We currently have a criteria that revolves around three years. That is being reviewed. So, it's going to be looking at the potential to export to a certain amount by five years. So, that will be on the website whenever that is finalised. But certainly, look on the website, look at the criteria, determine whether or not that is criteria that you can meet. I would encourage you then to phone the 0800 number. Contact the business support team and they will ensure that you're contacted by the relevant area. Whether it's regional office or whether it's sector teams dependent on the scale of operation that you have. But we will ensure that we come back to you and talk you through the potential of you being an Invest NI client. Which I would encourage you to do if you meet the criteria. Because there is a wealth of support that is available to you and we want to, to help all companies that we can. So, I would look on the website, look at the criteria, determine if that's something you can meet. If so-, or even if you're not sure, phone the business support team, the 0880 number and they will ensure that someone comes back and talks you through the process.

Moderator: That's fantastic. Thank you very much, Vicky. And I think that is the end of the questions that we've received from the audience this morning. So, again, thank you, Vicky. Paul Malcolmson Innovate UK manager for Northern Ireland thank you very much for joining us on the call and giving us that overview of Innovate UK. And to Barbara Orr, the senior ecosystem and innovation specialist for Innovate UK Business Growth, thank you for the valuable information and for providing your contact details for businesses to reach out to you if they want to discuss further the opportunities available. Please do join us on our next webinar on the 13th of November, for that deep dive into the Innovate UK application process. And also the support that's available from Invest NI to help you with that. So, thank you very much, everybody. Thanks for joining us on the call and goodbye.

F: Thank you, bye.