



**R&D**

**Step into the Matrix – NI to be one of world's successful high-tech economies**  
09.10.2008

A progressive action plan codenamed MATRIX has been put together with the aim of propelling Northern Ireland into the position of being one of the world's most successful high-tech economies.

The plan's recommendations are the result of the largest collaborative work of high-tech industry leaders and academic experts ever assembled in Northern Ireland.

MATRIX, which has brought together more than 80 of the biggest names in local business including Bombardier Aerospace, Randox, DuPont, Almac and Moy Park, among many others, said its proposals would exploit the region's strong science and technology base, and kick-start an exciting new era of enterprise and innovation.

"The contribution made to this process by local companies is overwhelming," said Damien McDonnell, chairman of MATRIX.

"Their unprecedented involvement has made these recommendations directly relevant to the needs of the business community. They put industry in the driving seat."

The MATRIX plans include a recommendation to set up industry-led communities engaging business, academia and government and directly aimed at capturing emerging market opportunities.

Crucially, MATRIX believes that by establishing these new industry-led 'communities', targeted research and business insight will allow companies in Northern Ireland to effectively utilise their skills and ideas for maximum commercial gain.

"We are proposing here a set of key steps towards a cultural shift that could lead to the creation of a world-class, knowledge-based economy," McDonnell said. "Innovation communities are central to this goal. The way we work together has to change. The way business collaborates with academia has to change. If approved, these communities will facilitate that change."

"Northern Ireland is brimming with ideas, talent and skills. What we now need is the muscle of business and academia to take these recommendations forward, and the foresight of Government to facilitate them. It's time for all of us to put our foot on the accelerator and move on to the next phase."

MATRIX identified five key areas to make the region's technology and innovation buoyant – ICT, advanced engineering (transport), agri-food, advanced materials and life and health sciences. Each sector was represented by a separate HORIZON panel of industry experts.

The plan also recommends that industry-led communities create roadmaps which demonstrate and create specific goals for all members – thereby driving effective knowledge and technology exchange among partners.

It includes a recommendation for a world-class intellectual property (IP) infrastructure to be set up to enable companies to better exploit opportunities quickly and easily.

A flexible and responsive skills system has also been called for, which will lead Europe in its ability to meet changing demands and reflects the specific requirements of industry.

The plan also requires that the regulatory regime is transformed to allow Northern Ireland to take and manage a higher level of risk.

"This report comes at an exciting time of change in Northern Ireland and offers the opportunity for both large and small companies to work together to tap into and develop the talent and science skills that will lead to maximum economic gain," Gavin Campbell, director, Design Engineering and Technology Development, pointed out.

"The contribution from companies from all sectors across Northern Ireland is unprecedented. Bombardier believes that this collaborative effort involving industry, Government and academia must continue to ensure the future success of Northern Ireland's economy."

By John Kennedy

Pictured with key members of MATRIX – the NI Science Industry Panel – are chair, Damien McDonnell, who is presenting its findings to Ailene Foster MLA, Northern Ireland's Minister for the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment



**Also in this section**

Science and technology spending by Govt to increase 3pc in 2009  
Games guru is in 'stealth mode' on new project  
€500k investment in life sciences firm will be catalyst for global growth

Less drive time 

IT • Communications • Support 

**Most Popular**

4G revolution begins as Nokia Siemens steps towards Long Term Evolution  
Storm warning: the next generation of mobile is here  
siliconrepublic.com recognised as 'Best Technology Website'  
New digital camera tech: blink and you won't miss it  
Owner of blogging giant WordPress buys FotDaddy



**Career related news**

Strategic IT outsourcing 'key to surviving economic malaise'  
19.06.2008 ICT managers in Irish firms need to collaborate with the technology industry... [more...](#)  
50 High-level jobs for Dublin in

**FREE PBX**  
**AND UP TO**  
**50%**  
**SAVINGS**  
**ON YOUR**  
**BUSINESS**  
**CALL**  
**CHARGES\***

\*Terms and conditions apply. See [www.mogul.ie/business](http://www.mogul.ie/business) for details.