



**Business Activity**

**Statistics Bulletin**

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# Facts & Figures from the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) – Edition Seven

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Facts & Figures from the  
Inter Departmental Business  
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Seven

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# Executive Summary

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

The Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) contains information on all businesses in the United Kingdom which are VAT registered or operating a PAYE scheme. The register is comprised of approximately 2.1 million UK businesses, Northern Ireland accounts for just over 3% of the UK total.

### VAT and PAYE Businesses in Northern Ireland

At January 2005, the IDBR estimated there to be 67,405 businesses in Northern Ireland which were either VAT registered or operating a PAYE scheme. This represents an increase of 4.0% since January 2004 when the total number of VAT and PAYE businesses was estimated to be 64,815. Similar to previous years, figures from the IDBR show Northern Ireland to be a small business economy with micro businesses (those businesses with less than 10 employees) accounting for approximately 88% of the Northern Ireland total. Of the 59,480 businesses classified as micro businesses, 33,685 (56.6%) such businesses employ at least 1 person.

### Private and Public Sector Businesses

Of the 67,405 NI businesses on the register in January 2005, 67,150 (99.6%) were within the private sector. The public sector accounts for a very small proportion (0.4%) of the total number of businesses in Northern Ireland but estimates from the 2003 Census of Employment show that such businesses account for approximately a third (31.7%) of employee jobs in Northern Ireland.

### Legal Status of Businesses

The majority (52.94%) of businesses in Northern Ireland are registered as “Sole Proprietor”, this is a much higher proportion than England (26.09%), Scotland (32.07%) or Wales (33.39%). The high level of companies registered as “Sole Proprietor” in Northern Ireland is reflected in the high self employment rates reported in Northern Ireland. Outside Northern Ireland, the majority of businesses

are legally registered as a “Company”, England reports the highest proportion at 55.53%, Scotland is 41.28%, Wales is 37.15% whilst NI is considerably less with around 22.77% of businesses registered as a “Company”.

### VAT Registered Enterprises

Examining only those businesses that were registered for VAT purposes (ie. those who had a turnover that exceeded the VAT threshold of £58,000) in 2004, there were an estimated 53,830 such businesses in Northern Ireland, this represents a slight increase on the previous year of 0.1% compared to a 0.7% decline for the UK as a whole.

The largest actual increase over the year in the number of VAT registered businesses, has occurred within the Property and Business Services sector which has increased by 5.7% or 370 VAT registered businesses.

Belfast District Council accounts for the largest proportion (11.2%) of VAT registered businesses in Northern Ireland.

### VAT Registration and De-Registration : Rates and Survival

Statistics from DTI’s Small Business Service showed that, during 2003, there were 29 registrations for every 10,000 people aged 16 or over in Northern Ireland. This represents an increase on 2002 when the rate of registration was 27. On the downside, VAT de-registrations increased from 24 in 2002 to 30 in 2003.

Northern Ireland has a much higher rate of survival than the rest of the UK with, on average, 73.3% of NI businesses surviving for at least three years, this compares to a UK average of 65.2%.

### Foreign Owned Businesses Operating in Northern Ireland in 2004

In 2004, there were approximately 687 Foreign owned businesses operating in Northern Ireland. The Republic of Ireland owned the majority (37.4%) of such businesses and the Wholesale and Retail industry accounted for the highest proportion (30.6%) of foreign owned businesses.

# VAT and PAYE Businesses in Northern Ireland

## 2

In January 2005, the IDBR estimated there to be 67,405 businesses that were either VAT registered or operating a PAYE scheme, this represents a 4% increase over the year and a 3.8% increase over the period 2001 to 2005. Table 1 states the number of VAT registered and PAYE businesses at January of each year since 2001 whilst table 2 provides a breakdown of the structure, in relation to employment size at January 2005.

**Number of VAT & PAYE Businesses in NI, 2001 to 2005**  
Table 1

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of Businesses	64,950	65,995	64,230	64,815	67,405

Table 2 and figure 1 clearly demonstrate that Northern Ireland is a small business economy with micro businesses (those businesses with less than 10 employees) accounting for the majority (88.3%) of the Northern Ireland total.

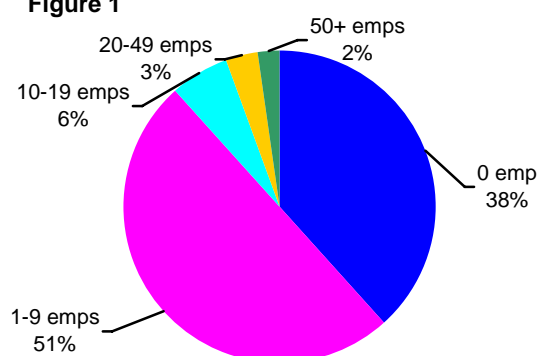
**Number of VAT & PAYE Businesses in NI by Employee Sizeband, January 2005**  
Table 2

Employee Sizeband	0*	1-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-199	200-249	250+	All
Number of Businesses	25,795	33,685	4,100	2,320	790	365	65	285	67,405
% of all Businesses 2005	38.3%	50.0%	6.1%	3.4%	1.2%	0.5%	0.1%	0.4%	100%
% of all Businesses 2004	38.1%	50.3%	5.9%	3.5%	1.1%	0.6%	0.1%	0.4%	100%

\*This sizeband includes sole proprietors and partnerships, holding companies and those companies that are not yet trading, for example, if a factory is under construction. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 and thus may not add to totals.

There has been little change over the year in the profile of businesses in terms of size, with the largest difference limited to a 0.2 percentage point change in the number of businesses employing between 10 and 19 persons. Similarly, over the period 2001 to 2005, changes in the structure have been minimal, for example, the proportion of businesses employing fewer than 10 persons was 88.3% in January 2005 compared to 89.01% in 2001.

**VAT & PAYE Businesses by Employee Sizeband, January 2005**  
Figure 1



### Comparison of Private and Public Sector Businesses

Of the 67,405 businesses on the register in January 2005, 67,150 (99.6%) were within the private sector. The public sector accounts for a very small proportion of the total number of businesses in Northern Ireland but estimates from the 2003 Census of Employment<sup>1</sup>, show that such businesses account for approximately a third (31.7%) of employee jobs in Northern Ireland.

Tables 3 and 4 provide details of the composition of the public and private sector in terms of employee sizeband. Micro businesses dominate the private sector, accounting for 88.5% of all private sector businesses, in contrast, the public sector is dominated by large businesses employing 250 or more persons, almost two-fifths (37.2%) of public sector businesses fall within this category.

Medium sized enterprises (those employing between 50 and 249 persons) are mostly found within the private sector which accounts for 94.7% of all Northern Ireland medium sized businesses.

<sup>1</sup> The Census of Employment covers employee jobs only, it excludes: agriculture, the self employed, HM armed forces, private domestic servants, homeworkers and jobskills trainees without a contract of employment.

## Number of VAT & PAYE Private Sector Businesses in NI by Employee Sizeband, January 2005

Table 3

Employee Sizeband	0+	1-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-199	200-249	250+	All
Number of Private Businesses	25,795	33,670	4,080	2,265	755	345	55	190	67,150
% of all Private Businesses	38.4%	50.1%	6.1%	3.4%	1.1%	0.5%	0.1%	0.3%	100%
Private as % of all Businesses	100%	100%	99.5%	97.6%	95.6%	94.5%	84.6%	66.7%	99.6%

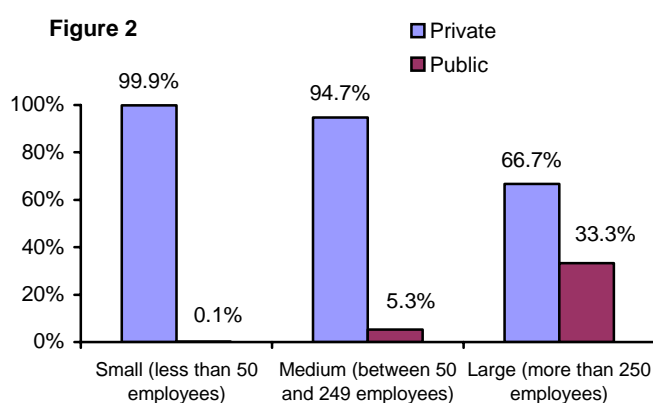
\*This sizeband includes sole proprietors and partnerships, holding companies and those companies that are not yet trading, for example, if a factory is under construction. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 and thus may not add to totals.

## Number of VAT & PAYE Public Sector Businesses in NI by Employee Sizeband, January 2005

Table 4

Employee Sizeband	0+	1-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-199	200-249	250+	All
Number of Public Businesses	0	15	25	55	35	20	10	95	255
% of all Public Businesses	0%	5.9%	9.8%	21.6%	13.7%	7.8%	3.9%	37.2%	100%
Public as % of all Businesses	0%	0%	0.6%	2.4%	4.4%	5.5%	15.4%	33.3%	0.4%

\*This sizeband includes sole proprietors and partnerships, holding companies and those companies that are not yet trading, for example, if a factory is under construction. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 and thus may not add to totals.



## Legal Status of Businesses

Table 5 shows there has been little change over the year in the distribution of businesses in terms of legal status. The only notable difference is between those

businesses registered as “Company” and those registered as “Sole Proprietor”, the proportion of businesses registered as a “Company” has risen by almost 2 percentage points from 21.0% in 2004 to 22.8% in 2005, whilst the proportion of businesses registered as “Sole Proprietor” has fallen by approximately 1.5 percentage points, from 54.2% in 2004 to 52.9% in 2005.

Northern Ireland has a much higher proportion of “Sole Proprietor” (52.9%), than England (26.1%), Scotland (32.1%) or Wales (33.4%).

Outside Northern Ireland, the majority of businesses are legally registered as a “Company”, England reports the highest proportion at 55.5% compared to Scotland (41.3%), Wales (37.2%) and Northern Ireland which has a considerably smaller proportion (22.8%) of “companies”. Tables 5 and 6 provide further information on the structure of Northern Ireland and GB businesses according to legal status.

## Number of VAT & PAYE Businesses in NI by Legal Status, January 2004 and January 2005

Table 5

Legal Status	Number of Businesses 2004 (% of total)	Number of Businesses 2005 (% of total)	% change over the year
1. Company	13,595 (21.0%)	15,350 (22.8%)	12.9%
2. Sole Proprietor	35,155 (54.2%)	35,685 (52.9%)	1.5%
3. Partnership	12,865 (19.8%)	13,135 (19.5%)	2.1%
4. Public Corporation	15 (0.02%)	20 (0.03%)	33.3%
5. Central Government	120 (0.2%)	125 (0.2%)	4.2%
6. Local Authority	115 (0.2%)	110 (0.2%)	-4.3%
7. Non profit making organisation	2,950 (4.6%)	2,980 (4.4%)	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,815</b>	<b>67,405</b>	<b>4.0%</b>

## Proportion of VAT & PAYE Businesses by Country and Legal Status, January 2005

Table 6

Legal Status	NI %	England %	Scotland %	Wales %
1. Company	22.77%	55.5%	41.3%	37.2%
2. Sole Proprietor	52.9%	26.1%	32.1%	33.4%
3. Partnership	19.5%	15.2%	21.7%	25.7%
4. Public Corporation	0.03%	0.01%	0.01%	0.02%
5. Central Government	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
6. Local Authority	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
7. Non profit making organisation	4.4%	3.0%	4.8%	3.5%

# VAT Registered Enterprises<sup>2</sup>

## 3

In 2004, the IDBR estimated there to be around 53,830 businesses which were registered for VAT. In 2004, businesses were legally obliged to register for VAT once their turnover reached a threshold of £58,000 this compared to a £56,000 threshold in 2003. The number of VAT registered businesses has increased by approximately 0.1% over the year from 53,770 in 2003 to 53,830 such businesses in 2004, this compares to a 0.7% decline in the number of businesses registered for VAT in the UK. Table 7 provides information on the number of businesses registered for VAT by broad industry group for 2004 compared to 2003.

**VAT Registered Enterprises in Northern Ireland by Broad Industry Group, 2003 to 2004**

**Table 7**

SIC 2003	2003		2004		% change over the year
	Businesses	% of total	Businesses	% of total	
Agriculture	16,800	31.2%	16,615	30.9%	-1.1%
Production	3,965	7.4%	3,910	7.3%	-1.4%
Construction	7,630	14.2%	7,645	14.2%	0.2%
Motor Trades	2,250	4.2%	2,250	4.2%	0%
Wholesale	3,175	5.9%	3,150	5.9%	-0.8%
Retail	6,105	11.4%	5,960	11.1%	-2.4%
Hotels & Catering	2,945	5.5%	2,985	5.5%	1.4%
Transport	1,955	3.6%	1,985	3.7%	1.5%
Post & Telecommunications	215	0.4%	230	0.4%	7.0%
Finance	125	0.2%	120	0.2%	-4.0%
Property & Business Services	6,475	12.0%	6,845	12.7%	5.7%
Education	145	0.3%	140	0.3%	-3.5%
Health	260	0.5%	260	0.5%	0%
Public Admin & Other Services	1,725	3.2%	1,730	3.2%	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,770</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>53,830</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>

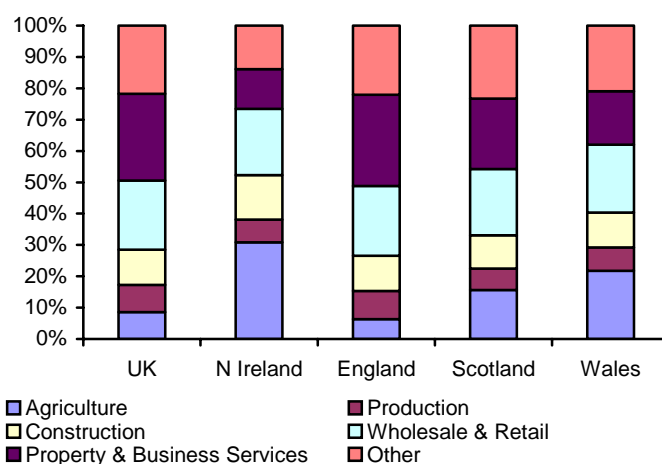
Source: UK Business: Activity, Size and Location  
 Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 and thus may not add to totals.

## Sectoral Composition of VAT Registered Enterprises

The Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing Sector has maintained its dominant position, accounting for the largest proportion (30.9%) of VAT registered businesses in Northern Ireland. There has been little change in the structural breakdown of VAT registered businesses over the year with all broad industry groups contributing similar proportions to those last year. The largest actual increase in the number of VAT registered businesses can be seen within the Property and Business Services group where there are 370 more businesses registered for VAT in 2004 than in 2003, this represents a 5.7% increase.

Northern Ireland is quite different to the other regions of the UK in terms of its structural composition. Whilst Northern Ireland is clearly dominated by the Agricultural sector, this is not the case in the other countries of the UK. Figure 3 shows the structural composition of the UK and each of the countries within the UK.

**Figure 3 - Sectoral Breakdown of VAT Enterprises by UK Region**



Northern Ireland has a much higher proportion of Agricultural businesses than the UK average of 8.5%. Whilst the share of Production, Construction and Wholesale and Retail businesses is similar across all the regions, there is quite a disparity between the UK and Northern Ireland in terms of the proportion of Property and Business Services enterprises with only 12.7% of NI VAT registered businesses classified within this broad industry group compared to the UK average of 27.6%.

<sup>2</sup>Additional tables and information regarding VAT Registered Enterprises can be downloaded from the IDBR website, log onto the DETI Statistics website [www.statistics.detini.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.detini.gov.uk) then follow the links to Surveys and Inquiries then IDBR



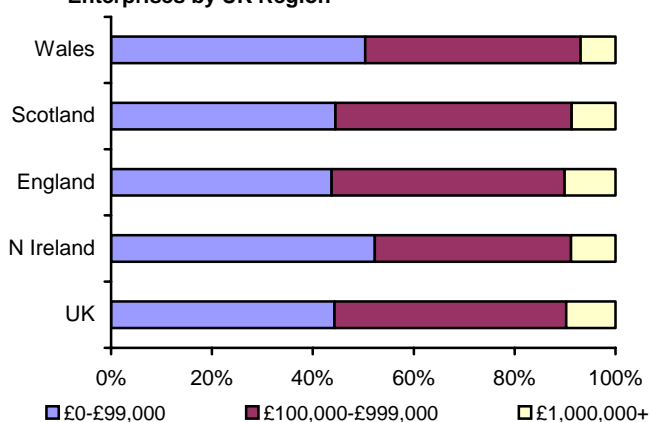
## VAT Registered Enterprises by Turnover Sizeband

More than half (52.3%) of the businesses registered for VAT in Northern Ireland have a turnover which is less than £100,000. Less than one in ten (8.8%) VAT registered businesses in Northern Ireland have a turnover which exceeds £1 million. This variation in size in terms of turnover is quite similar across the UK. Table 8 and figure 4 provide further information on the financial structure of businesses across the UK.

**Proportion of VAT Registered Businesses by Turnover Sizeband and Country**  
Table 8

Country	Turnover Size (£ Thousand)			Total
	0-99 % of businesses	100-999 % of businesses	1,000+ % of businesses	
United Kingdom	44.3%	45.9%	9.8%	100%
Northern Ireland	52.3%	38.9%	8.8%	100%
England	43.7%	46.2%	10.1%	100%
Scotland	44.5%	46.8%	8.7%	100%
Wales	50.4%	42.8%	6.9%	100%

**Figure 4 - Turnover Breakdown of VAT Enterprises by UK Region**



## VAT Registered Enterprises by District Council

For every business held on the IDBR, a District Council (DC) is allocated based on the address where the business is registered for VAT (normally the head office). Thus a business with a head office in Belfast is included in figures for Belfast, even though it may have work sites in other DC areas. Similarly, businesses that have their United Kingdom headquarters in Great Britain will be included only in the region where their head office is based. Therefore

many multi-national businesses are excluded from such analyses.

In 2004, Belfast accounted for the largest proportion (11.2%) of VAT registered businesses in Northern Ireland whilst Carrickfergus DC contributed the smallest number (575 or 1.1%) of such businesses. Fermanagh has experienced the largest increase over the year in the number of VAT registered businesses, rising from 3,210 in 2003 to 3,330 in 2004. Table 9 provides further information on the changes over the year in the number of VAT registered businesses by DC.

**VAT Registered Enterprises in Northern Ireland by District Council, 2003 to 2004**  
Table 9

District Council	2003		2004		Change 2003-04
	Number of Businesses	% of total	Number of Businesses	% of total	
Antrim	1,620	3.01%	1,630	3.03%	0.62%
Ards	2,170	4.04%	2,160	4.01%	-0.46%
Armagh	2,650	4.93%	2,645	4.91%	-0.19%
Ballymena	2,265	4.21%	2,290	4.25%	1.10%
Ballymoney	1,165	2.17%	1,190	2.21%	2.15%
Banbridge	1,775	3.30%	1,775	3.30%	0%
Belfast	6,090	11.33%	6,035	11.21%	-0.90%
Carrickfergus	575	1.07%	575	1.07%	0%
Castlereagh	1,070	1.99%	1,065	1.98%	-0.47%
Coleraine	1,805	3.36%	1,785	3.32%	-1.11%
Cookstown	1,835	3.41%	1,830	3.40%	-0.27%
Craigavon	2,100	3.91%	2,130	3.96%	1.43%
Derry	1,975	3.67%	1,975	3.67%	0%
Down	2,290	4.26%	2,290	4.25%	0%
Dungannon	2,690	5.00%	2,695	5.01%	0.19%
Fermanagh	3,210	5.97%	3,330	6.19%	3.74%
Larne	945	1.76%	915	1.70%	-3.17%
Limavady	1,045	1.94%	1,065	1.98%	1.91%
Lisburn	2,970	5.52%	2,965	5.51%	-0.17%
Magherafelt	2,080	3.87%	2,080	3.86%	0%
Moyle	730	1.36%	720	1.34%	-1.37%
Newry & Mourne	3,425	6.37%	3,405	6.33%	-0.58%
Newtownabbey	1,560	2.90%	1,550	2.88%	-0.64%
North Down	1,455	2.71%	1,455	2.70%	0%
Omagh	2,650	4.93%	2,645	4.91%	-0.19%
Strabane	1,625	3.02%	1,630	3.03%	0.31%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>53,770</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>53,830</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0.11%</b>

Source: UK Business: Activity, Size and Location

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 and thus may not add to totals.

# VAT Registration & De-Registration: Rates & Survival

## 4

The Department of Trade and Industry's Small Business Service (SBS) annually publish statistics on VAT registrations and de-registrations for the UK regions, having taken information from the IDBR. The statistics are the best official guide to the pattern of business start-ups and closures. Coverage includes both companies and self employed run businesses but excludes those businesses that operate below the VAT threshold – for example, most of the very small one-person businesses.

Registration rates provide an indicator of the level of entrepreneurship and of the health of the business population. Many factors influence the pattern of business start-ups. Among the most important are economic growth (encouraging new ventures and demand for business and personal services), the level of industrial restructuring and contracting out, and the stock of people with management or small business experience.

It should be noted that VAT registrations are not synonymous with business start-ups; some registrations are the result of changes in ownership or legal status of a business. Businesses de-registering for VAT do so due to closure, or (in a minority of cases) because turnover has fallen below the registration threshold. Closure does not necessarily involve bankruptcy or insolvency proceedings, which make up only around one in four closures throughout the UK.

Table 10 shows VAT registrations and de-registrations per 10,000 people aged over 16, throughout the UK, for the period 2000 to 2003. In 2003, the rate of VAT registration in Northern Ireland rose to 29 registrations for every 10,000 people aged over 16 in Northern Ireland, this compared to a rate of

28 in 2002. Although NI lagged behind the UK registration rate of 40, it was above the rate of the North East (23) and equal to the rate in Scotland and Wales.

The rate of de-registration in Northern Ireland has also risen over the year, from 27 in 2002 to 30 in 2003. In 2003, NI had a higher rate of de-registration than either Scotland (28) or Wales (29) however it was somewhat better than England which reported a de-registration rate of 38 in 2003.

**VAT Registration & De-Registration Rates by UK Region, 2000 - 2003**

**Table 10**

Region <sup>1</sup>	2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Reg	De-Reg	Reg	De-Reg	Reg	De-Reg	Reg	De-Reg
North East	22	20	20	22	21	20	23	20
North West	34	31	33	31	33	33	35	30
Yorks & the Humber	31	32	34	32	36	33	34	29
East Midlands	36	32	34	32	36	33	37	33
West Midlands	35	31	34	32	34	34	37	34
East of England	43	37	40	39	41	40	42	39
London	67	58	59	56	57	60	62	58
South East	46	39	44	40	44	42	47	43
South West	40	37	36	35	37	38	40	37
England	42	37	39	37	39	39	42	38
Wales	27	27	26	26	26	29	29	29
Scotland	28	28	28	28	28	27	29	28
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>36</b>

Source: Small Business Service, DTI

<sup>1</sup>Rates are per 10,000 resident adults aged 16+ at the middle of each year

SBS annually publishes business “survival rates” that show the percentage of businesses that are still trading (ie. still registered for VAT) a certain number of years after they first registered for VAT. These are not “actual” survival rates, as some businesses registering may already have been in existence but below the VAT threshold, while some de-registering may remain in business but with a turnover below the VAT threshold. Survival rates tend to be somewhat inflated as they do not include the very smallest businesses which fall below the VAT registration threshold, these businesses often have very low survival rates.

Table 11 compares the survival rates of Northern Ireland with the UK and its regions. 72.4% of businesses which registered for VAT in Northern Ireland in 1999 were still registered for VAT three years later, this is the highest survival rate of all the UK regions. Northern Ireland has increased its rate of survival from 68.5% of businesses registered in 1993 surviving for 3 years or more to 72.4% surviving if registered in 1999, this represents a net increase in the survival rate of 3.9 percentage points compared to 4.5 in England, 6.8 in Wales, 2.3 in Scotland and 4.4 for the UK.

**Three year survival rates of VAT registered businesses, by region**  
**Table 11**

Region	Year of Registration								Change 93-99	Average rate
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999			
North East	58.5	58.6	62.4	64.7	66.4	66.2	65.5	7.0	63.2	
North West	59.2	59.8	62.7	63.6	64.2	65.1	64.9	5.7	62.8	
Yorks & the Humber	60.6	61.3	64.3	64.3	66.7	65.1	66.1	5.5	64.1	
East Midlands	62.7	61.9	65.0	65.2	67.1	66.6	67.7	5.0	65.2	
West Midlands	60.9	61.9	63.1	64.7	65.9	66.4	66.5	5.6	64.2	
East of England	63.6	64.2	67.1	68.5	69.8	68.8	68.1	4.5	67.2	
London	61.4	60.8	62.6	63.3	64.2	62.5	62.8	1.4	62.5	
South East	63.5	64.3	68.3	69.5	70.7	69.6	69.7	6.2	67.9	
South West	63.4	64.6	68.1	68.6	70.2	68.7	68.0	4.6	67.4	
England	61.9	62.2	65.0	66.0	67.3	66.3	66.4	4.5	65.0	
Wales	61.3	63.6	65.5	66.5	67.7	66.5	68.0	6.8	65.6	
Scotland	63.0	62.2	64.9	64.0	66.5	64.5	65.3	2.3	64.3	
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>68.5</b>	<b>73.7</b>	<b>76.1</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>72.4</b>	<b>72.4</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>73.3</b>	
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>62.1</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>65.3</b>	<b>66.0</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>66.3</b>	<b>66.5</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>65.2</b>	

Source: Small Business Service, DTI

# Foreign Ownership Analysis, 2004

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The market information company Dun and Bradstreet, annually supply the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with information on foreign owned businesses operating in the United Kingdom. This information is then loaded onto the IDBR. Statistics Research Branch, DETI, supplement this with information from two sources: Invest Northern Ireland's list of client companies and a list of publicly traded US companies with subsidiaries, affiliates or branch offices employing more than 10 people in Northern Ireland, published by the Investor Responsibility Research Centre, Washington DC (The IRRC is an independent, non-profit making research firm founded in 1972). The following analyses are based on these combined sources.

In 2004, there were approximately 687 foreign owned businesses operating in Northern Ireland, this represents a rise of 8.9% on the previous year. Figure 5 displays information on the core foreign countries which own businesses operating in Northern Ireland. The Republic of Ireland accounts for the largest proportion (37%) of foreign owned businesses, followed by the USA which accounts for 25% of such businesses.

**Figure 5 - Foreign owned businesses by country of ownership**

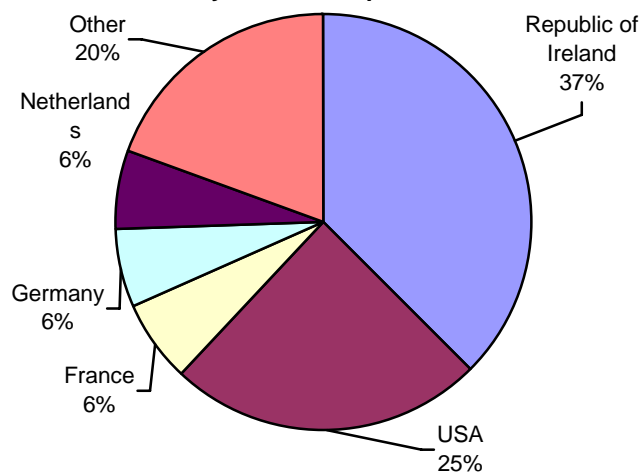


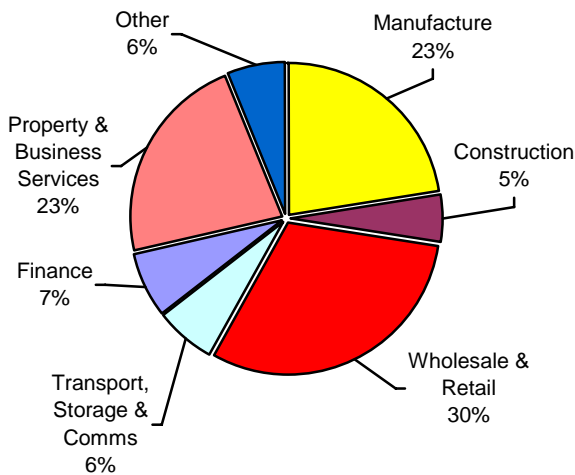
Table 12 provides further detail on the countries of ownership of foreign owned businesses in 2003 and 2004.

**Foreign owned businesses operating in Northern Ireland, 2003-04  
Table 12**

Country <sup>1</sup>	2003		2004	
	Businesses	% of total	Businesses	% of total
Republic of Ireland	232	36.77%	257	37.41%
USA	154	24.41%	169	24.60%
France	47	7.45%	44	6.40%
Netherlands (inc Antilles)	41	6.50%	43	6.26%
Germany	37	5.86%	41	5.97%
Denmark	13	2.06%	13	1.89%
Japan	12	1.90%	12	1.75%
Switzerland	12	1.90%	12	1.46%
Canada	8	1.27%	10	1.46%
Sweden	8	1.27%	10	1.31%
Australia	9	1.43%	9	1.31%
Bermuda	8	1.27%	9	1.31%
Finland	9	1.43%	9	1.31%
Channel Islands	6	0.95%	7	1.02%
Belgium	3	0.48%	6	0.87%
South Korea	6	0.95%	6	0.87%
Norway	4	0.63%	4	0.58%
Luxembourg	2	0.32%	3	0.44%
Portugal	1	0.16%	3	0.44%
South Africa	3	0.48%	3	0.44%
Spain	2	0.32%	3	0.44%
Taiwan	3	0.48%	3	0.44%
Italy	2	0.32%	2	0.29%
Virgin Islands	2	0.32%	2	0.29%
Austria	1	0.16%	1	0.15%
Cayman Islands	1	0.16%	1	0.15%
Greece	1	0.16%	1	0.15%
India	1	0.16%	1	0.15%
Isle of Man	1	0.16%	1	0.15%
Kuwait	1	0.16%	1	0.15%
Liechtenstein	1	0.16%	1	0.15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>100%</b>

The Wholesale and Retail Trade classification accounted for the highest proportion (30.6%) of foreign owned businesses. Other notable sectors include the Manufacturing sector and the Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities sector which each accounted for 22.6% of foreign owned businesses. Figure 6 shows the sectoral ownership of foreign owned businesses.

**Figure 6 - Foreign owned businesses by sector**



The Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities sector held a slightly larger share (23%) of foreign owned businesses in 2004 than in 2003 when it accounted for 20% of such businesses. The Manufacturing share of foreign owned businesses has dropped slightly over the year, from 25% in 2003 to 23% in 2004.

Foreign owned businesses are mostly small businesses, that is those which employ less than 50 persons, such businesses account for 71.2% of foreign owned businesses. Although large businesses (those employing 250 or more persons) account for less than 10% of all foreign owned businesses, they account for almost 70% of the employees within such businesses.

# Contact Information

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**Further Information:** A range of tables can be downloaded from the DETI website using the above link. Tables include information on Enterprises at UK, Northern Ireland and District Council levels along with information on local units.

The publication “UK Business: Activity, Size and Location” produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) contains detailed information on all enterprises in the UK and includes information on classification, size and location. The publication can be downloaded from:  
[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_commerce/PA1003\\_2004/PA1003\\_2004.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_commerce/PA1003_2004/PA1003_2004.pdf)

Queries regarding the ONS publication should be directed to Andrew Sage (details below).

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