

NI CHAMBER CONNECTIONS HELPS INDIGO IVY COLLAR THE MARKET WITH ADVICE FROM ART ON FASHION



Indigo Ivy was founded by designer Tess Cooke in 2012 as a high-end tweed clothing business which she runs from a studio at her home in the village of Doagh in County Antrim. Tess designs the tweed fabrics – the majority of which are a 50:50 blend of cashmere and wool. The garments, which include coats, jackets, gilets and waist coats are cut and handmade in the UK. They are sold through the company's website or directly from the studio.

Indigo Ivy's Marketing Manager Tara Mackie says NI Chamber Connections, partnered with Ulster Bank, enabled the company to make a link with Northern Ireland fashion firm Art on Fashion in order to hear about its growth and learn from its experience of securing a loan from the £50 million Growth Loan Fund which is managed by WhiteRock Capital Partners.

Tara says: *"I attended a NI Chamber networking event and talked with Richard Willis, who heads the NI Chamber Connections programme. I told Richard that Indigo Ivy was keen to talk directly to a firm in Northern Ireland, also engaged in the fashion industry, to hear the processes it had gone through on its export journey. Richard suggested I talk to Celine Magill, Managing Director of Art on Fashion and put me in contact with her. We met at an industry fair where we were both exhibiting and had a really good discussion. Celine told me how Art on Fashion had secured a loan from the Growth Loan Fund which is being used to support the company's marketing plans and meet*

working capital needs. The talk with Celine was a great help and it was very useful to hear how the Fund is assisting the company achieve its growth plans. Indigo Ivy is keen to do more marketing and expand further in export markets – funding is key to this."

Art on Fashion, based in Belfast, was established by Celine Magill in 2012 as a niche fashion brand. The company works with international artists to print their artwork on designer clothes. Each garment is produced in small quantities, thereby ensuring uniqueness. The firm exports to the UK, Ireland, Germany, Holland and America.

Celine says: *"I was delighted to meet Tara. We discussed a number of things including my experience of attending trade exhibitions, the costs involved and securing orders as opposed to showcasing. I also told Tara about the logistics side of my business, courier services and customs. The Growth Loan Fund element has been invaluable. Every entrepreneur has to find funding if they want to go forward in terms of the plans and the vision for the company. The connections you make with other businesses through NI Chamber are always very interesting. I am really glad to help any business that would like advice."*



NI Chamber Connections, partnered with Ulster Bank, supports local companies on a one to one basis to grow and trade internationally.

The objectives of the programme are to:

- Assist businesses to develop and grow
- Provide a vehicle for shared learning
- Encourage new market development
- Inspire businesses to investigate opportunities.

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CONNECTIONS

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A WORD FROM OUR PARTNER

At Ulster Bank we are very pleased to partner with the NI Chamber to support the Connections programme. Fostering a culture of collaboration that can support businesses with their international growth ambitions is important to the success of our economy. Supporting entrepreneurship is very important to us at Ulster Bank.

We have a suite of products available to assist aspiring exporters and we are the only local bank with a full membership of the international banking association, IBOS. We have the people, connections and experience to help so wherever you're business takes you we'll make sure you are equipped to succeed. With £1.5bn available to lend to businesses this year, we look forward to supporting sustainable growth and development in NI companies.

