

## Your Innovation

Please make sure you answer questions 1-5 fully, with as much detail as possible to ensure we can assess your innovation accurately.

**1) Clearly explain your innovation. Your innovation must be a new or improved product, process, service, model, that you will/have developed and/or implemented within the business and **MUST** align with the Innovate NI definition of Business innovation.**

As we get on in years, daily gestures that we used to go through without a single moment's thought can suddenly become challenging. Buttoning up your own shirt is one of those: for people whose motor skills are affected by age and disabled people who can't feel their fingertips, dressing daily can become quite the chore.

We recently undertook an investigation to try and figure out the amount of time needed to put on a shirt as an elderly person. They found that seniors take three to five times as long as their younger counterparts to put on a dress shirt.

We then set out to find a solution to this problem and decided to develop an ergonomic button making it easier for the elderly to dress. The "Easy button" is oblong shaped; one side is thinner than the other and slightly curved to foster a better grip.

The other side is concave, to make it easier to insert into the buttonhole.

Note: They clearly explain their innovation and do not talk about the business or themselves.

**2) Please provide details of why this innovation is novel (significantly different) from what is currently in your business and/or available in the market.**

Traditional buttons are flat and round in shape and make it very difficult for people with difficulties with their fingers to grip. Elderly people can sometimes find it very difficult using traditional buttons which causes frustration and takes extra time getting ready.

After extensive market research we found that there is very limited alternatives to traditional buttons. There are hooks, which is an additional piece of equipment you would need to keep handy when getting dressed.

Our ergonomic button is fitted in the traditional way to any clothing and therefore there are no barriers to market entry.

Note: They are explaining why their product is novel/different

**3) Clearly explain how you believe your innovation will create value within your business and/or the Northern Ireland economy? Your response may also include any elements of sustainability or positive environmental impacts.**

The new button will be an additional product line which will generate new revenues into the business. It is an exportable product that we can launch into new markets. It will allow for growth and sustainability in the business over the next number of years.

**4) Outline what validation and testing activities you have or will carry out ?**

We have engaged with a number of focus group at different events targeted at the older population. We gathered feedback from these groups and make alterations to the button so that it was fit for purpose.

We also engaged with a number of channel partners who have expressed serious interest in stocking our product once all testing and validation is completed and we move into production.

**5) If purchasing or bringing into your business existing technologies/products, explain in detail how they will enable the development of your innovation ?**

We are purchasing some 3D printers to help with the design and development phase of our innovation process.

**Note: the purchase of equipment is shown not to be the innovation but to aid the innovation project.**

**6) Please clearly explain your plans, including any support (financial or other) you feel you may require progress your innovation?**

We require support in the following areas

– Advice and guidance on testing and certification  
Advice and guidance on design rights

Financial support for the development of a number of MVP versions for in-market testing

Advice and guidance on market entry and channel partnership development. **Support required clearly explained**

## Commercialisation and value creation

**1) Clearly describe what tasks or activities you carried out in the commercialisation process.** This may include creating a pricing model, marketing plan or researching and developing channels to market.

Free text

**2) If a product or service, demonstrate how it has been commercially launched in the market.** This might include acquired customers, ecommerce, regions sold into, channel partners or distributors.

Free text

**3) If a process or model, describe how it has been successfully implemented within the business, please clearly explain the benefits it has delivered to your business.** This may include increased efficiencies, output, profits, time or resource savings.

Free text