

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

SIXTH INSTITUTIONAL MEETING

STORMONT CASTLE

3 OCTOBER 2011

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The sixth meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) in Institutional format was held in Stormont Castle, Belfast on 3 October 2011.
2. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by the First Minister, the Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA, the deputy First Minister, John O'Dowd MLA and Danny Kennedy MLA, Minister for Regional Development. The Irish Government was represented by the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore TD. The First Minister and deputy First Minister chaired the meeting.
3. Ministers had a broad discussion on practical mutually beneficial co-operation in the context of the current economic and budgetary challenges facing each jurisdiction. Among the areas discussed were shared economic challenges, the context of North South co-operation and co-operation to save money in service delivery.

NORTH SOUTH BODIES ISSUES

4. The Council discussed matters relating to the North South Bodies noting progress in respect of their Corporate and Business Plans and the implementation of cumulative efficiency savings.

5. A review of Financial Memoranda of the North South Bodies is underway and a report on progress will be provided to the next NSMC Institutional meeting.
6. The Council noted that the Boards of the North South Bodies are due for renewal in December 2011 and that nominations will be brought forward for approval at the NSMC Plenary meeting in November 2011. Revised reduced remuneration rates for Board members to take effect from December 2011 were agreed.

EU MATTERS RAISED WITHIN NSMC

7. The Council discussed progress on EU related matters raised at NSMC meetings. This included discussions on collaboration to maximise drawdown of EU funds from the FP7 research and development programme. Ministers also discussed progress on current EU programmes and the potential for co-operation on future EU programmes.

CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY ISSUES

8. Ministers were informed that systems have been put in place to resolve delays in the processing of certain Department of Social Protection welfare benefit claims with a cross-border element.
9. The Council noted the continuing popularity of the Border People website www.borderpeople.info and that the Centre for Cross Border Studies, in partnership with other organisations, will apply for EU funding for the website which will incorporate specialist training for the provision of advice on cross-border matters.
10. Work taken forward to facilitate the comparison of vocational qualifications obtained in other jurisdictions was discussed. This includes the publication of a leaflet "Qualifications can cross boundaries: a rough guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland."

NORTH WEST GATEWAY INITIATIVE

11. Ministers noted the progress made under the North West Gateway Initiative.

**Joint Secretariat
3 October 2011**