

North South Ministerial Council

2013 Annual Report



North South Ministerial Council
An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas

The cover page image reflects

Picture 1 – Wild Atlantic Way, Dingle Peninsula

Picture 2 – Lumiere, during City of Culture 2013

Picture 3 – Sunset on Lough Erne

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FOREWARD

An important focus of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) meetings in 2013 was the need to prioritise efforts on economic recovery, job creation, the best use of public funds and the most effective delivery of services for their citizens. During the year there were twenty five meetings of the North South Ministerial Council, twenty two in sectoral format, two in Plenary format and one in Institutional format.

The Plenary meetings in Dublin in July and Armagh in November gave the Ministers an opportunity to discuss the key issues facing both jurisdictions. Ministers welcomed the early signs of improvements in the economy but recognised that opportunities existed for co-operation that would be of mutual benefit to citizens in both jurisdictions. Within this context the NSMC agreed that Ministers consider priorities in their respective sectoral areas.

The bulk of the NSMC's work takes place through the sectoral meetings. The twenty two meetings held in this format provided an important opportunity to oversee the work of the North South Bodies and to ensure progress on the agreed Areas of Co-operation. During the first six months of 2013 Ireland held the EU Presidency and the sectoral meetings provided a valuable channel for Irish Ministers to brief Executive Ministers on developments during their Presidency. The importance of European funding was also highlighted in discussions and during the year Ministers recognised the opportunities to work together to maximise the drawdown of the EU Funding.


All but four of the twenty five NSMC meetings were held in Armagh. Once again the purpose built building in the centre of Armagh proved its value in hosting the majority of the meetings. The office was also used to provide important outreach to a number of groups and organisations on the work of the NSMC.

During the year John Martin, Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland and Derick Anderson, Chief Executive of the Loughs Agency retired. We wish John and Derick all the best in their retirement and welcome Dawn Livingstone to the post of Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland.

Finally, we would like to thank officials in the Northern Ireland Executive and Irish Government Departments, the North South Bodies and our own staff in the Joint Secretariat for their valued help and co-operation in 2013.



Colm Shannon
Joint Secretary (North)



Shane O'Neill
Joint Secretary (South)

CHAPTER ONE: NSMC PLENARY MEETINGS



Ministers at the NSMC Plenary meeting in Armagh on 8 November 2013

NSMC Plenary meetings involve Executive Ministers meeting with their counterparts in the Irish government to overview the co-operation and work of the North South Ministerial Council. There were two NSMC Plenary meetings in 2013, the first on 5 July in Dublin Castle and the second on 8 November 2013 at the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices in Armagh.

Both meetings were well attended with over 20 Ministers present on each occasion and the Taoiseach describing the November Plenary as “...*the best ever in terms of attitude, collaboration and what was achieved*”.

On both occasions the Irish Government delegation was led by the Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD and the Northern Ireland Executive delegation was led by the First Minister, the Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA, and the deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MLA. *The Joint Communiqués issued after the meetings are available at www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org.*

Financial and Economic Matters

The position of the Economies in both jurisdictions and the fiscal challenges facing both were prominent in discussions at the Plenary meetings. Ministers welcomed successes which included the G8 Summit, the Investment Conference held in Northern Ireland during October and the Global Irish Economic Forum. Ministers also agreed that they should continue to prioritise directing their efforts to economic

recovery, job creation, the best use of public funds and the most effective delivery of services for their citizens. The importance of attracting Foreign Direct Investment and ensuring adequate access to credit within the banking sector in each jurisdiction was recognised and the role of NAMA in making lending available to develop assets across the Island was welcomed.

The Council also welcomed Northern Ireland's *Together: Building a United Community* strategy.

Joint Secretaries' Progress Report

The Plenary Meetings also provided an opportunity for the Joint Secretaries to provide progress reports on the work taken forward by the NSMC during the year. Key issues highlighted included:

- business planning for a radiotherapy unit at Altnagelvin hospital;
- progress on the agreed work programme on child protection;
- the sharing of knowledge and experience in the delivery of road safety strategies and measures to further reduce road casualties;
- the launch of the £15.7 million Tourism Ireland Autumn promotional campaign;
- cooperation in the areas of "Educational Underperformance" and "Good School Leadership" workstreams;
- progress on current EU Programmes and the work ongoing on the development of post 2013 Territorial Cooperation EU Programmes;
- work on the implementation of the new Core Funding arrangements for Irish Language by Foras na Gaeilge;
- planning approvals for the Ulster Canal; and
- discussions on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Tourism

Ministers continued to recognise the importance of the Tourism Industry to the economy in both jurisdictions and welcomed the success of a number of major tourism initiatives in 2013 in particular "*The World Police and Fire Games, the Gathering Ireland 2013 and the Derry~Londonderry UK City of Culture celebrations.*" Ministers also looked forward to the hosting of the Giro d'Italia in Northern Ireland which has a cross border element as cyclists travel from Armagh to Dublin.

EU Matters

Ireland held the EU Presidency during the first half of 2013 and the meetings of the NSMC provided a useful opportunity for Irish Ministers to brief Executive Ministers on

the key issues being taken forward during their Presidency. Accessing European funding was recognised as an important priority by both administrations.

Youth Employment

Ministers noted the levels of youth unemployment in both jurisdictions, discussed the European Union's Youth Guarantee and agreed that, where possible, both jurisdictions should collaborate to tackle this issue. They welcomed the ongoing collaboration between the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department for Social Protection to tackle the issue of Youth Unemployment.

North West Gateway Initiative

Ministers welcomed the progress that had been made through the North West Gateway Initiative on a range of initiatives, delivered and planned, which aim to deliver economic and social benefits in the North West. At the meeting in November Ministers looked forward to receiving a report on the outcome of the ongoing stakeholder consultation exercise at a future NSMC Institutional meeting.

St Andrews Agreement Review

The Council agreed that Ministers consider their priorities in their respective sectoral areas and that the outcome of this exercise would be considered at a future NSMC Institutional meeting as part of the ongoing review.

North South Consultative Forum

The current position of the North South Consultative Forum was discussed at both Plenary meetings. Ministers agreed that this would be revisited at a future Plenary meeting.

CHAPTER TWO: NSMC MEETINGS IN SECTORAL FORMAT

This section includes a summary of NSMC meetings in sectoral format in 2013. The Joint Communiqués from these meetings are available at www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org.

Agriculture



Agriculture Meetings

NSMC Agriculture meetings took place on 10 July and 13 November 2013. Both meetings were attended by Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA and Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

Co-operation on Animal Health

Ministers agreed the significance of the continued work on the delivery of the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Action Plan, in particular:

- that the African Horse Sickness Regulations (NI) 2013 will come in to operation in November 2013 and DAFM is progressing similar legislation in line with the All-Island approach to deal with African Horse Sickness in the event of an outbreak of this epizootic disease;
- the continued work by officials to scope the possibility of a joint contingency plan in relation to rendering capacity on the island of Ireland;
- that officials are progressing work to establish respective disease surveillance priorities with a view of agreeing all island surveillance priorities;

- that officials from both jurisdictions continue engagement, including with GB Government departments to consider a range of equine registration issues; and
- the continued work by officials and industry representatives to establish control programmes for Bovine Viral Diarrhoea and Johne's Disease.

The Council agreed that officials investigate the possibility of an "All-Island" approach to the issue of wild animals in travelling circuses, and that their findings be reported to a future NSMC Agriculture meeting.

Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and International Trade Issues

At the meetings, the Council noted developments on CAP including the completion of the CAP reform political agreement between the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament in September 2013. Ministers noted that the legal texts arising from this political agreement should be adopted by the end of 2013, and agreed that the close contacts between DARD and DAFM officials on CAP issues should continue.

At both meetings Ministers discussed developments in International Trade.

Plant Health

The Council agreed that the respective Agriculture Departments will work closely with a view to developing a protocol for the cross border movement of larch logs.

Ministers discussed and acknowledged:

- ongoing cross border co-operation in an effort to control and eradicate tree diseases;
- that the All-Ireland Chalara Control Strategy launched in July 2013 to deal with the Ash Dieback outbreak is being implemented;
- ongoing co-operation on laboratory diagnostics;
- ongoing discussions in relation to the possible co-ordinated introduction of pre-notification legislation for certain tree species;
- continuing co-operation on the proposed new EU Plant Health legislative regime;
- continuing co-operation on National Action Plans for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive and the pesticides usage surveys; and
- DARD's intention to increase the resources devoted to plant health.

The Council noted the progress report provided by the Plant Health and Pesticides Steering Group on the implementation of its work programme, including:

- co-operation on the proposed new EU Plant health legislative regime;
- planned co-ordinated introduction of pre-notification legislation for certain tree species; and
- extensive laboratory capacity provided by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute to the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine.

Horse Welfare

Ministers noted that officials will meet to explore the possibility of having an all island horse passport centralised database and to enhance the security of the equine identification system. The Council also agreed that if significant equine welfare and abandonment issues were to arise over Winter 2013/14, required action would be taken on an all island basis.

Rural Development

Ministers welcomed the progress of the INTERREG IVA funding for strategic cross-border rural development projects, and noted the completion of the PEACE III-funded Rural Enablers project which met all of its targets in addressing issues of division within rural communities.

The Council welcomed:

- the North South rural development conference held in October 2013 which will contribute to strengthening the delivery of the LEADER programme; and
- the announcement of support for rural, faith based community engagement.

Ministers agreed that officials should organise a North South Conference in 2014 on rural development. The conference will develop further co-operation ideas and activity with the intention of delivery of early projects and acknowledged the breadth of actions currently being delivered to support cross-border rural development through the current INTERREG programme.

The Council noted the intention to create a distinct theme to support all-island cooperation within each jurisdiction's new Rural Development Programmes.

Education



Education Meetings

NSMC Education meetings took place on 27 February and 8 November 2013. Both meetings were attended by Ruairí Quinn TD, Minister of Education and Skills, John O'Dowd, MLA, Minister for Education and Nelson McCausland, MLA Minister for Social Development.

Future Sectoral Work Programme

The Council commended the successful high-level engagement that has taken place between officials in both Education Departments, the collation of the range of existing co-operation between the Education Departments and agreed the future education work programme that has been identified. This includes:

- Joint Inspection reports on Literacy and Numeracy;
- Initiatives to address Educational Underachievement and Disadvantage; and
- Work to promote Good School Leadership.

Ministers also agreed the management, oversight, and future reporting arrangements which have been developed as a result of the engagement between the Departments and that further progress in this area will be reported to the next NSMC Ministerial meeting in 2014.

Co-operation between Inspectorates

The Council noted the report of the Education Inspectorates on the structured co-operation between them including:

- participation in professional development programmes;
- Inspector exchanges;
- joint inspections of specialised projects; and
- regular meetings of the senior management teams in both Inspectorates.

Ministers welcomed and approved continuing endeavours to extend co-operative activities on issues which will be considered in early 2014 to include:

- Emerging evidence on improvements in learning from the evaluations of DEIS (the Action Plan of the Department of Education and Skills to combat educational disadvantage) ;
- Inspector exchanges, north-south and east-west;
- Developments in inspection practice, north and south;
- Possible joint participation in professional development for inspectors; and
- Involvement of inspectors (with authority) on inspection teams in respective jurisdictions.

The Council welcomed that a report on the joint North-South work on numeracy at post-primary level will be published in late 2014.

Ministers noted that a progress report will be made on these matters at the next NSMC meeting.

Special Education Needs

Ministers welcomed the progress being made by the two Departments and Middletown Centre in facilitating the expansion of the Centre's range of services since the commencement of the expansion in April 2013, and developments in recruitment by the Centre which allows continued progress to be made in delivering its services to children, professionals and parents.

Educational Underachievement

Ministers noted that the Educational Underachievement Working Group (EUWG) met on 4 September 2012 to review and advance its work programme, and that the Group has achieved much in terms of cooperation and sharing best practice.

The Council noted that, following a review of the EUWG's work, it has been determined that there should be a greater focus on social-based policies with an intended educational outcome. This will initially focus on an analysis of:

- international benchmarking studies;
- school-based and social interventions to address underachievement; and
- the impact of pre-school placements on primary-level performance.

The Council noted the current cooperation between the Education and Training Inspectorate and the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate on the production of two North/South Joint Inspectorate Reports to be published on their respective websites:

- Best Practice Guidelines in Literacy provision at Post-Primary Level (in early 2014); and
- Best practice Guidelines in Numeracy Provision at Post-Primary Level (towards the end of 2014)

Ministers welcomed the Education Departments' continuing support for all-island initiatives promoting literacy, organised by Children's Books Ireland, and numeracy through Maths Week and noted that the second year of the Department of Education's advertising campaign was launched on 1 October 2013. The Working Group will continue to consider the potential for further joint Departmental co-operation through the medium of web-based linkages.

School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges

The Council noted ongoing work to implement the recommendations outlined in the joint inspectorate evaluation report of the Dissolving Boundaries project, with particular reference to ensuring progress on greater self-evaluation by projects. The success of the all island live video-conference broadcast from Dundalk Institute of Technology in May 2013 celebrating Dissolving Boundaries Day was also welcomed.

Ministers welcomed the ongoing work of the Causeway Youth Exchange Programme and the North South Education and Training Standards (NSETS) Committee for Youth Work in Ireland.

Teacher Qualifications

Teacher Mobility

The Council welcomed the progress reported to the North South Teacher Qualifications Working Group (NSTQWG) meeting on 19 September 2013 on the implementation of the recommendations of the joint report from the two Teaching Councils on obstacles to teacher mobility.

Ministers also welcomed The Teaching Council of Ireland (TCI) decision in December 2012 to waive the fee for the assessment of qualifications for teachers from the North currently accredited by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI).

Ministers noted that the TCI in consultation with the GTCNI, is also working to simplify assessment of qualifications of teachers for the purposes of their registration with the TCI.

North/South Irish Medium Programme of Work

The Council welcomed the collaborative agreement that has been reached between the Marino Institute of Education and the University of Ulster on the provision of assistance and support to students from the North, and border regions of Ireland, wishing to undertake the Scrudú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge & Oiriúnú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (Irish language qualification), and noted that St Mary's University College Belfast, intends to apply to the TCI to deliver the language qualification , possibly in an on-line format.

Ministers welcomed the progress made to implement the jointly funded collaborative programme of work in the Irish medium sector for the 2012/13 academic year and that the NSTQWG (and its Irish Medium Sub-Group) has approved in principle an extension of the programme for 2013/14, which is awaiting approval of both Departments.

The Council also noted that the NSTQWG has agreed to commission an independent evaluation of collaborative programme of work in the Irish-medium sector to date and is drafting terms of reference for the evaluation. The Working Group is also considering widening the focus of the collaborative programme and taking a more strategic approach to its delivery.

Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS)

The Council noted that the 11th annual SCoTENS conference took place on 10th and 11th October 2013 in Sligo under the title of Learning Teaching: Reimagining the Profession and was opened by the Minister of Education and Minister of State for Training and Skills.

Ministers also noted that the Department of Education and Skills, Department of Education and Department for Employment and Learning are consulting on future funding provision for SCoTENS and that representatives from all three Departments will, as observers, attend one SCoTENS Management Committee meetings each year – the Departmental representatives will be attending their first meeting in February 2014.

Environment



Environment Meetings

There were two NSMC Environment meetings in 2013 on 23 April and 30 October. Phil Hogan TD, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government and Danny Kennedy MLA, Minister for Regional Development attended both meetings. Alex Attwood MLA, Minister of the Environment attended the April meeting and his successor as Minister for the Environment, Mark H Durkan attended the October meeting.

EU Matters

Ministers discussed the progress made during Ireland's Presidency of the European Union including the informal meeting of the Council of EU Environment that was held in April and in particular, the issue of air quality, which was one of the main themes of the meeting.

Waste Management

The All Island Bulky Waste Reuse Best Practice Management Feasibility Study which was published in July found that there is an opportunity to increase the reuse of bulky waste items on the island of Ireland based on demand from reuse organisations. The North South Market Development Steering Group will consider this report further.

In October 2013, The Department of the Environment published a revised Waste Management Strategy for Northern Ireland which shifts the focus of waste management from resource management to resource efficiency and this is reflected in the title "Delivering Resource Efficiency".

Following the introduction of the carrier bag levy in Northern Ireland, charging for carrier bags is now in place across the island.

The all-island used tyre survey report was published which indicated a significant level of used tyre recycling. The Department of the Environment is revising its Waste Tyre Action Plan to incorporate the Environment Committee's twelve revised recommendations in its final Used Tyre Report.

Cross Border Movements of Waste

Work on the two sites at Clogher, County Tyrone (Seskinore and Eskra) that was planned for in the 2012-2013 programme has been completed. In total, more than 15,000 tonnes of waste was removed from both sites. Works at 6 out of the 15 identified sites have now been completed with a further 9 sites remaining to be cleared of waste. Waste repatriation from three sites will be completed during 2013-14 and site investigation works have been carried out at the first site in County Tyrone. Removal of waste from this site commenced in early October 2013.

Dublin City Council has established a Framework Agreement for the Disposal of Repatriated Waste, and is continuing to progress the public procurement process for the haulage of excavated waste to authorised disposal facilities.

Joint enforcement action to deal with illegal operators continues to be a priority for both Environment Ministers and their Departments along with continued targeting of resources to this action.

Water Quality

Coordination continues between both jurisdictions in relation to preparations for the second-cycle river basin management plans in Ireland and Northern Ireland under the EU Water Framework Directive.

Continued co-ordination in relation to the Clean Coast and Coastcare Schemes and the symposium held in involving representatives from both jurisdictions.

The Clean Coast Coastcare Scheme (Wales/Ireland initiative) that encompasses the island of Ireland coastline is facilitated through a partnership of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, An Taisce and Tidy Towns Northern Ireland.

The achievement of Blue Flag awards in both jurisdictions was welcomed. It was noted that there is a decrease since the previous year due to stricter award criteria set out in the revised Bathing Water Directive.

In Northern Ireland the 2013 bathing water results have been exceptional, with all 23 identified sites meeting the mandatory standards. Of those 23 sites, 20 sites met the higher guideline standards of the Directive and these are the best results since the original sites were identified in 1994.

Environmental Protection

Further opportunities for mutually beneficial joint working to facilitate more effective and efficient policy approaches in the context of EU Directives on Air Quality were agreed. In order to improve air quality on an 'all island' basis, terms of reference for a study to examine the issue of airborne pollution from residential smoky coal combustion and the social and economic implications of potential policy options were approved. Ministers also received a presentation on the proposed all-island air quality research study.

Environmental Reporting and Research

The QUESTOR research partnership continues to succeed in securing European funding for environmental science and technology projects that involve Ireland, Northern Ireland, Europe and globally. QUESTOR research partnership has recently secured funding for a Framework Programme (FP7) research project to deliver innovative technologies and optimise energy delivery along the biomass supply chain.

Following preliminary research by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) into the environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) a more comprehensive research study is planned. The Terms of Reference for this study were subject to a public consultation process, which ended on 8 March 2013.

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency's second State of the Environment Report was published at the end of 2013.

The review of the EPA's research programme, STRIVE (Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for the Environment) took place and it is intended to develop a new research programme for the period 2014-2020.

Legislation currently before the Oireachtas will enable Science Foundation Ireland to provide research funding on an all-island basis.

Health



Minister Poots and Minister Fitzgerald attending the Child Protection Conference in Dundalk in May 2013

Health Meeting

In 2013 a North South Ministerial Council Health and Food Safety meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 18 October 2013. The meeting was attended by James Reilly TD, Minister for Health, Edwin Poots MLA, Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. Minister Reilly chaired the meeting.

Health Promotion

Ministers discussed a range of health promotion issues including progress made on strategies to prevent the harm related to alcohol misuse in both jurisdictions. The work of the North/South Alcohol Policy Group continues. A joint contract was awarded to conduct research/Health Impact Assessment on minimum unit pricing. It is anticipated that this research will be available in early 2014.

The progress made on strategies and initiatives to prevent overweight and obesity in both jurisdictions was commended by Ministers including the Northern Ireland Obesity Prevention Framework, Caloriewise and Front of Pack labelling and similar measures in Ireland under the aegis of the Special Action Group on Obesity and the agreement at EU level for an Action Plan on Childhood Obesity.

Ministers welcomed the launch on 3 October of the Report of the Tobacco Policy Review Group titled Tobacco Free Ireland. An All Island Tobacco Conference was held in November 2013.

The issue of suicide, particularly amongst young men was discussed and Ministers welcomed the publication of the All-Island “Young Men and Suicide Project” report which was jointly launched in January 2013.

Ministers were also briefed on and discussed the new Northern Ireland Breastfeeding Strategy. The strategy includes actions for partnership working with Ireland including exploring opportunities for all island research and campaigns to raise awareness and promote public acceptance of breastfeeding, particularly in public.

Cancer and Health Research Co-Operation

Ministers received an update on the business planning process for the establishment of a new radiotherapy unit at Altnagelvin. Construction of the facility is due to commence in the spring of 2014 and completion is scheduled for the summer of 2016. Officials from both jurisdictions have developed an agreed text for a Memorandum of Understanding on the project and continue to work together to ensure the delivery of a service level agreement for the operation of the unit.

In terms of the research agenda, Ministers acknowledged continued progress through the work of the Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium.

Ministers also acknowledged the continued success of the US-Ireland R&D Partnership. In addition, the Partnership plans to raise awareness internationally of the value it adds to excellent research focussing on improving healthcare, population health and economic development.

Child Protection

Ministers Fitzgerald and Poots launched the very successful All-Island Child Protection conference which was held in May 2013. The conference was attended by over 250 delegates from North and South and facilitated practitioners, managers, policy makers and legislators from both jurisdictions to share practice knowledge, research, experience and learning in relation to safeguarding and child protection practice.

Ministers reviewed the continuing progress with the agreed work programme on child protection and agreed that further progress on work on the child protection programme will be reported at future NSMC meetings.

EU Matters

Ministers acknowledged the significant North/South engagement during Ireland’s Presidency of the Council of the European Union including participation by Minister Poots and his officials at key events including the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers, the joint meeting of Chief Medical and Chief Nursing Officers and the eHealth Conference. Progress made during the course of the Irish Presidency in the area of health was discussed.

Tourism



Irish Tourism Minister Leo Varadkar (second left) and Executive Tourism Minister Arlene Foster (centre) with Brian Ambrose, Chairman of Tourism Ireland; Niall Gibbons, CEO of Tourism Ireland; and Howard Hastings, Chairman of NITB, on the Tourism Ireland stand in Berlin

Tourism Meeting

Tourism Ireland Ltd is responsible for marketing overseas the island of Ireland as a tourist destination. It has a Board of 12 directors appointed by the NSMC. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are Mr Brian Ambrose and Mr Jim Flannery. Current directors are listed in Annex Three. The Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland is Mr Niall Gibbons. Further details are available at www.tourismireland.com.

A NSMC Tourism meeting was held on 26 June 2013. Arlene Foster MLA, Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and John O'Dowd MLA, Minister for Education attended the meeting.

The performance overview for 2011 showed a growth in overseas visitors for the first time since 2007. While acknowledging the decline in visitors to the island of Ireland from Great Britain in recent years, Ministers welcomed the work of the Tourism Recovery Taskforce, comprising of Tourism Ireland, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Fáilte Ireland and industry representatives, on the development of the GB

Path to Growth Strategy to address this issue. Ministers noted the recommendations of this strategy which will be implemented by Tourism Ireland in 2013 and beyond.

Overseas visitors from markets other than GB were up, compared to the same period in 2012. This was driven by a particularly strong performance from North America and Mainland Europe.

The Chairperson and the CEO updated Ministers on the work of the Tourism Ireland Board including implementation of the 2013 Business Plan and development of the 2014-16 Corporate Plan. Ministers noted the on-going challenges and competitive environment for international tourism arising from global economic conditions.

The Council was briefed on the marketing campaign highlights for 2013, in particular the worldwide campaigns for The Gathering Ireland 2013 and the UK City of Culture 2013, the Jump into Northern Ireland showcase at the European Parliament, and the Global Greening initiative around St Patrick's Day. The Ireland.com website had also been rolled out at the start of the year, aimed at supporting over 30 individual markets.

In developing its corporate plan for the 2014-16 period Tourism Ireland is examining a number of themes including:

- Enhancing brand knowledge and relevance;
- Driving consumer engagement;
- Capitalising and building on Northern Ireland's strengths;
- Building successful partnerships and alliances;
- Focusing resources to compete and win;
- Harnessing the power of digital marketing; and
- Developing meaningful metrics to provide direction for investment.

The Council noted Tourism Ireland's Annual Report and Accounts for 2012, and approved the Body's Business Plan and Budget for 2013.

Transport



Transport Meetings

There were two NSMC Transport meetings in 2013, on 17 April and on 28 November. Minister Varadkar TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and Minister Kennedy MLA, Minister for Regional Development attended both meetings. Minister Attwood MLA, Minister of the Environment attended the April meeting and his successor Minister Mark H Durkan attended the November meeting.

Roads

On major road projects, Ministers confirmed their commitment to the A5 road scheme, respecting the April 2013 Court ruling that had introduced a delay to the project. The Council noted that the public consultation for the updated Environmental Statement shall commence in Spring of 2014. The Irish Government also reaffirmed its financial commitment to the project.

Good progress was noted in the construction works of the A8 scheme which is expected to be complete by spring 2015.

Mutual Recognition of Penalty Points

Discussions between the relevant departments, on this important issue continued during 2013. Public consultations run by Department of Environment in Northern

Ireland showed a majority in favour of the complex cross-border road safety enforcement measure. Ministers recognised the challenges in delivering this complex project and departments kept close liaison throughout the year as technical complexities were identified. Officials and Ministers are continuing to work closely together to conclude the most appropriate way to proceed.

Road User Safety

As Ministers noted that road fatalities across the island in 2013 showed an alarming upward trend year on year from 2012, the importance of maintaining and developing effective road safety strategies was made clear.

There was excellent co-operation between Departments in this matter throughout the year and Ministers welcomed the delivery of various ongoing and new road safety strategies aimed at reducing the number and severity of injuries across the island, including in enforcement operations and promotional campaigns.

The Council welcomed legislative progress in both jurisdictions - Ireland's Road Traffic (No. 2) Bill 2013 and Northern Ireland's Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill - which will include a number of significant changes designed to further improve road safety, from changes to penalty points regime and reforming of driver and vehicle testing and licensing and greater provisions to tackle drink driving.

Vehicle Safety Policy and Enforcement

Good cross-border collaboration on targeting a wide range of illegal activity within the goods haulage and passenger transport industries was welcomed by Ministers, including on vehicle roadworthiness and the misuse of fuel in the freight industry. The Council welcomed the expected impact of new permanent fuel makers to aid in detection of illegal fuel.

The continuing excellent co-operation on vehicle type recognition enshrined in the signed Memorandum of Understanding between Ireland and the UK was welcomed by the Council, as it was on enforcement of drivers hours and EU tachograph rules.

EU Matters & Strategic Transport Planning

Given the significant range of EU Transport Dossiers, it was agreed by Ministers to maintain co-operation between relevant departments in the pursuit of EU funding for projects of mutual Transport interest.

Ministers have asked that officials from relevant departments liaise over opportunities for further co-operation in matters of Strategic Transport Planning.

On the matter of EU funding, Ministers stressed the importance of not losing any EU funding available to the island for transport. Ministers agreed that monies not being available to the Narrow Water Bridge Project following the EU decision to retract funding to that specific project should be used elsewhere on other projects of cross-border transport benefit.

Aquaculture and Marine



Aquaculture and Marine Meetings

The NSMC meets in Aquaculture and Marine sectoral format to take decisions on policies and actions to be implemented by the Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC). The FCILC has a Board of 12 members appointed by the NSMC. The Board exercises the functions of the Body in relation to the Foyle and Carlingford areas through the Loughs Agency. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are Mr Winston Patterson and Mr Alan McCulla. The current Board members are listed in Annex Three. The Acting Chief Executive of the Loughs Agency is Mr John Pollock. Further details are available at www.loughs-agency.org.

During 2013 there were NSMC Aquaculture and Marine meetings on 3 May and 23 October. Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Pat Rabbitte TD, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources attended both meetings. Nelson McCausland MLA, Minister for Social Development attended the May meeting and Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA.

Progress Report

Ministers welcomed the Loughs Agency's participation in the City of Culture and, in particular, its proactive role in partnering with Tate Britain to supply local oysters at Turner Prize events in the city. The Turner Prize, now in its 29th year, is widely recognised as the most prestigious award for contemporary art.

The Ministers congratulated the Agency on receiving a Tourism Award, for the best Tourism initiative, at the Chamber of Commerce Business Awards 2013, for its high profile role in both the Flavours of the Foyle Seafood and Carlingford Oyster Festivals, which attracted 18,000 and 10,000 visitors respectively and, its successful role in hosting the Sea Angling Competition in the World Police and Fire Games.

The Agency provided a progress report on a number of EU funded Marine Tourism initiatives, including securing £208,400 of INTERREG IVA funding to develop the area around Malin Head, the most northerly point in Ireland, to facilitate visitors to this iconic site and, in partnership with Limavady Borough Council, securing £486,500 INTERREG IVA funding for the development of the visitor experience at Benone.

Ministers also discussed the key issue of conservation. The Council was advised that the rivers Faughan and Roe are maintaining relatively stable populations of Atlantic salmon and are meeting their management targets and conservation limits. In addition, the Agency reported that there had been an incremental improvement in the populations in the rivers Finn and Mourne since 2010/11.

Presentations

The Council welcomed a presentation by Inland Fisheries Ireland CEO Dr Ciaran Byrne on the thirtieth meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) in Drogheda from 4 to 7 June 2013. This international event brought together managers, scientists and Non Governmental Organisations from a wide range of countries to discuss conservation strategies for North Atlantic salmon stocks and how to increase the profile of salmon conservation.

The development of the oyster stock in Lough Foyle is an important priority for the Loughs Agency. A presentation by Ciaran McGonigle from the Agency on the monitoring of oyster stocks in Lough Foyle highlighted recent improvements in trends within the population dynamics in Lough Foyle for 2013. The presentation also provided updates on the improvement in landings and reduction in disease related mortalities from the oyster fishery.

Included in the presentation was an overview of research being carried out through the IBIS INTERREG Research Project. This project, which is helping to provide information to aid the management of the native oyster resource, will recommend future proposals to help increase its sustainability through habitat improvement and stock enhancement projects.

Legislation

The Council also approved for a further year, to July 2013, a procedure to support the Loughs Agency in dealing, through regulations, with emergencies.

Corporate and Business Plans

Ministers approved the Loughs Agency's Business Plan 2013.

The Council acknowledged the progress on the development of the Loughs Agency's Corporate Plan 2014-16 and Business Plan 2014-16; and agreed that the Loughs Agency will apply further efficiency savings to the 2014-16 budgets. The Council also agreed the key priorities for the Corporate Planning period including carrying out a strategic review and economic appraisal of Agency premises and accommodation needs, and carrying out a strategic review of the Loughs Agency enforcement and development roles. The Corporate and Business Plans will be brought for approval to a future NSMC meeting.

Board Membership

Ministers approved the appointment of Mick Murphy to the Board of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission in succession to Thomas Sloan.

Food Safety



Food Safety Meeting

The NSMC meets on Food Safety matters to take decisions on policies and actions to be implemented by the Food Safety Promotion Board (FSPB). FSPB operates under the brand identifier 'safefood'. It has an Advisory Board of 12 members, appointed by the NSMC, principally charged with promoting food safety and supporting scientific co-operation between institutions working in that field.

The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board are Ms Lynn Ní Bhaoighealláin and Ms Darina Allen respectively. The current Board members are listed in Annex Three. The Chief Executive of *safefood* is Mr Martin Higgins. Further details are available at www.safefood.eu Food Safety Promotion Board (**safefood**).

A food safety meeting was held in the NSMC offices Armagh on the 18 October 2013. The meeting was attended by James Reilly TD, Minister for Health, Edwin Poots MLA, Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. At this meeting Ministers received progress reports from the Chairperson and CEO.

Highlights included discussion of the Infectious Intestinal Disease (IID) Telephone Survey which allows for a comparison between disease incidence in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and facilitates an all-island estimate of the burden of the disease. The survey revealed that the estimated rate of IID in Ireland is similar to the rate in Northern Ireland and the UK, as a whole. The CEO's report also included findings of research exploring the knowledge, attitude and skills of primary care health professionals on the island of Ireland towards weight management.

The success of the All-island Obesity Action Forum workshop and meetings which focussed on childhood obesity were referred to in a presentation by the CEO to Ministers as was the commencement of a new communication campaign on childhood obesity. The new childhood obesity campaign was launched on the 21 October and focuses on helping parents tackle the everyday habits that are associated with excess weight in childhood and to maintain awareness of the health challenges posed by excess weight. One in four children starting school are overweight or obese and the campaign is **safefood's** contribution to tackling the problem.

Ministers welcomed a presentation from Ms Anne Walsh of the East Belfast Mission on the practical work undertaken by the Mission in tackling health inequalities, access to healthy and nutritious diet and healthy eating education programmes for those in poorer circumstances. The presentation focussed on the positive impacts of the funding provided by **safefood** over the period 2011-2013. The East Belfast Mission has now mainstreamed this very successful initiative

Inland Waterways



Inland Waterways Meetings

Waterways Ireland is responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of the inland navigable waterway systems throughout the island, principally for recreational purposes. It is currently responsible for the following waterways: Barrow navigation, Erne System, Grand Canal, Lower Bann Navigation, Royal Canal, Shannon-Erne Waterway and Shannon Navigation amounting to approximately 1,000km of navigable waterways. It is also responsible for the restoration of the section of the Ulster Canal between Clones and Upper Lough Erne and following restoration, for its management, maintenance and development. The Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland changed during 2013. Mr John Martin retired in July 2013 and was replaced by Mrs Dawn Livingstone. Further details are available at www.waterwaysireland.org

The NSMC met in Inland Waterways sectoral format in Armagh on 19 June and 20 November. Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dinny McGinley TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for Gaeltacht Affairs, Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister of Culture Arts and Leisure and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA attended both meetings.

Key achievements for Waterways Ireland in 2013 included:

- provision of 742 metres of additional moorings;
- sponsorship support was offered to 112 events with a total expenditure of €200,000;
- maintenance of the waterways with 99.65% of waterways remaining open to 30 September; and

- the production of three new publications, “A Taste of the Waterways 2013”, “What’s On 2013” and “Guide to the Grand Canal”.

A presentation on Waterways Irelands new web-site was made by Mr Éanna Rowe, Head of Marketing and Communications. The presentation highlighted the benefits of the newly developed web-site, the first in Ireland to be hosted on SharePoint platform, and how it can be used to promote the waterways as a major tourist attraction in its own right and also as a valuable recreational and educational resource. The website enables users, individuals and businesses to do business online with the introduction of online forms and payments for services.

Ulster Canal

Progress continues on the restoration work for the Clones to Upper Lough Erne section of the Ulster Canal. Relevant planning approval has been provided by all relevant statutory authorities. The Inter-Agency Group on the Ulster Canal set up to explore funding options for advancing the Ulster Canal project continue to meet and sponsor departments have agreed to examine the potential social benefits and leveraged funding opportunities in that context.

Following assessment of options presented by Sponsor Departments in relation to a Board for Waterways Ireland it was concluded that the existing governance arrangements should be strengthened and that there is no requirement for the appointment of a Board at this time.

New Chief Executive

Dawn Livingstone was appointed to the post of Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland for a seven year contract, with effect from 29 July 2013.

Language



The Lagan Hooley – an Ulster-Scots event

Language Body Meetings

The Language Body comprises two separate agencies – The Irish Language Agency/Foras na Gaeilge, and the Ulster-Scots Agency/Tha Boord O Ulstèr-Scotch. The Agencies promote the Irish language and Ulster Scots language and culture, respectively. The Board of the Language Body is appointed by the NSMC. The Chairperson of Foras na Gaeilge is Liam Ó Maoilmhichíl. The Chairperson of Tha Boord O Ulstèr- Scotch is Tom Scott. Mr Ó Maoilmhichíl and Mr Scott are joint Chairpersons of the Language Body.

There are 15 other members on the Board of Foras na Gaeilge and 7 other members on the Tha Boord O Ulstèr-Scotch. The current Board members are listed in Annex 3. Mr Ferdie Mac an Fhailigh is the Chief Executive of Foras na Gaeilge. Mr Ian Crozier is the Chief Executive of Tha Boord O Ulstèr-Scotch. Further details are available at www.forasnagaeilge.ie and www.ulsterscotsagency.com.

There were four NSMC Language meetings in 2013 on 6 March, 19 June, 10 July and 20 November. The meetings were attended by Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Dinny McGinley TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for Gaeltacht Affairs and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA.

Ministers received progress reports from the Chairpersons and CEOs of both agencies. Key developments discussed included:

Ulster-Scots Agency:

- Delivery of the Donegal Peace Prom in Letterkenny, which was the largest event of The Gathering in the county and also involved the Agency's first ever collaboration with the Cross Border Orchestra of Ireland;

- Provision of support for the Walled City Tattoo, which attracted 13,979 visitors to Derry/Londonderry as part of the UK City of Culture Programme;
- Provision of support in the education system, including 16 after-school clubs in the primary sector and 2 educational fairs in the post-primary sector in addition to advancement of the Ulster-Scots flagship programme for primary schools;
- Promotion of Ulster-Scots culture through delivery of 3 talks at the Agency's interpretative centre and 7 seminars to raise awareness of Agency funded programmes for festivals and summer schools in addition to support for a heritage event for over 400 people at the Presbyterian General Assembly held in Derry for the first time;
- Provision of community support, including funding for 6 Ulster-Scots community showcase events and funding to 195 groups for music and dance tuition;
- Sponsorship of a plaque for James Bryce, a prominent Ulster-Scots of Edwardian times, which was unveiled in May 2013 on the 175th anniversary of his birth as part of the partnership programme with the Ulster History Circle;
- Showcasing Ulster-Scots culture at Cockle Row Cottages in Groomsport in conjunction with North Down Borough Council, which attracted over 17,000 visitors in July and August;
- Development of an East-West heritage project with the Scottish Maritime Museum around the Ulster-Scots shipbuilders of Belfast; and
- the official opening of its new regional office in Raphoe.

Foras na Gaeilge:

- Ongoing measures for implementation of the new core funding arrangements, including seeking expressions of interest from qualifying organisations wishing to be considered for selection as a lead organisation;
- Progress has been made with key schemes, including advertisement of Scéim na nOifigeach Gaeilge 2013 – 2016 (Irish Language Officers Scheme);
- In order to support the Irish language in the arts sector, 57 applications for funding were approved under the Festivals Scheme 2013 as well as 10 applications for funding under the Drama Companies Scheme 2013;
- 70 projects were approved in order to provide opportunities and events for 3,000 young people to use the Irish language;
- 7 Irish language booklets were circulated with the Irish Daily Mail in September;
- An evaluation of the Summer Camps Scheme has been completed and funding will be provided for in excess of 50 camps catering for over 2,000 young people during July- August 2013;
- The Irish Language Officers Scheme in the north, which aims to improve the status of the Irish language at local level and build on Líofa 2015 by providing

the public with a range of bilingual services, has been advertised for the period July 2013-March 2016;

- A promotional campaign is underway throughout the public sector, north and south, in regard to the helpline FREAGRA which provides an Irish language translation service to the public sector;
- Organisation of a conference on minority languages in the arts, Voces in Artes, in May 2013 as part of Ireland's EU Presidency; and
- launch of the major new English-Irish dictionary.

Collaboration between the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge

- The establishment of a committee to oversee a joint work programme, the current consultation process on the joint Equality Scheme, and funding for 'The Honest Sod', a play in Ulster-Scots and Irish, which has toured to 88 schools and has been seen by over 3,000 pupils;
- Submission of the joint revised equality scheme to the Equality Commission for approval and updating of the safeguarding policy to include cyber-bullying;
- Development of an initiative to provide cultural workshops for secondary schools in the Integrated Sector in conjunction with delivery of the citizenship curriculum;
- A series of lectures which took place on Ulster placenames as part of two open days at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland; and
- Discussions on a number of joint projects, including a display about the charter towns, a series of lectures for key stage 3 children (ages 11-14) and a heritage project on the story of Hamilton and Montgomery (early Ulster-Scots settlers) and Con O'Neill (the dominant Irish landowner in Antrim/Down).

Ulster-Scots Agency - Discover Ulster-Scots

Ministers noted the work being undertaken by the Ulster-Scots Agency to progress the Discover Ulster-Scots initiative which will create: a coherent branding capable of being applied to tourist products/experiences which are relevant to Ulster-Scots heritage; and a single web-based access point where visitors will be able to find out about places to go and things to do which reflect Ulster-Scots heritage.

Foras na Gaeilge Review of Core Funding

Ministers approved new funding arrangements, to replace Foras na Gaeilge's existing core funding model, comprising the following key elements:

- the delivery by 6 lead organisations operating on an all-island basis of the following strategic priorities: Irish-medium education; Irish language in English-medium education; language-centred community and economic development; language use; language awareness and youth networks;

- the establishment by Foras na Gaeilge of an all-island partnership forum to ensure a collaborative approach by the 6 lead organisations;
- the establishment by Foras na Gaeilge of an all-island language development forum which is representative of local language interests funded by Foras na Gaeilge at community level;
- the development of a community radio scheme to provide funding for Irish language community radio in both jurisdictions; and
- future funding to be provided for An tÁisaonad, as appropriate, in the context of Foras na Gaeilge's statutory function in regard to supporting Irish-medium education and the teaching of Irish.

The Council also directed Foras na Gaeilge to proceed with implementation of the new funding arrangements with effect from 1 July 2014, subject to approval by Finance Departments, and agreed to extend the core funding arrangements to 30 June 2014 when the new funding arrangements will take effect.

Annual Reports and Accounts

Ministers noted that the 2010 consolidated Language Body Annual Report and Accounts were laid in the Houses of the Oireachtas and in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 5 July 2013 and that it is envisaged that the 2011 consolidated Language Body Annual Report and Accounts will be certified and laid by 31 December 2013. The Council also noted, in regard to the 2012 consolidated Annual Report and Accounts, that the field audit has been completed for Foras na Gaeilge and is due to take place shortly for the Ulster-Scots Agency, and that certification by the Comptrollers & Auditors General will follow as soon as possible in the new year.

Ministers acknowledged the ongoing co-operation with the independent offices of the Comptrollers & Auditors General in both jurisdictions, as a result of which 11 consolidated Annual Reports and Accounts for the Language Body have been published in the period from 2005 to date.



Launch of Irish Language app

Special EU Programmes



Primary school pupil's visting the PEACE III Programme funded Fab Lab in Belfast

Special EU Programmes Meetings

The mission of the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) is to effectively manage and implement funding programmes on behalf of the two Governments and the European Union aimed at delivering social and economic improvements to the people in Northern Ireland and Ireland through cross border, transnational and inter-regional cooperation. The Chief Executive of the SEUPB is Mr Pat Colgan. Further details are available at www.seupb.eu

The NSMC SEUPB meetings took place on 10th May 2013 and 6th December 2013 in Armagh. The May meeting was attended by Sammy Wilson MP MLA, Minister for Finance and Personnel, Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jennifer McCann MLA. The December meeting was attended by Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Simon Hamilton MLA, Minister for Finance and Personnel, and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jennifer McCann MLA. Minister Wilson chaired the May meeting and Minister Howlin chaired the December meeting.

Key developments for the SEUPB in 2013 included:

- Progress on the implementation of the PEACE III Programmes. At the NSMC Meeting in December it was reported 215 projects with a combined value of €310.9m (£265.8m) had been approved which represented a 93.4% commitment level. Of this, 214 projects have been issued with a Letter of Offer to the total value of €299.5m (£256.0m);
- The cumulative expenditure on the PEACE III Programme as of 30 September 2013 was €193.7m (£165.6m). The 2013 expenditure target had been achieved;
- As of 30 September 2013 Cross Border Groups have had 40 Letters of Offers with a total value of €61.8m (£52.8m);
- In 2013 the SEUPB facilitated North South participation in the INTERREG IV transnational and interregional programmes with 67 project partners with a financial value of €11m (£9m);
- The SEUPB took part in a PEACE conference in Brussels organised by the EU Commission in January 2013 titled “Bringing Divided Communities Together. The conference was attended by Commissioner Hahn, First Minister Peter Robinson and deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness and Minister Brendan Howlin,. The conference provided an opportunity for project promoters to give their testimonies on the value of the PEACE Programme to an international audience;
- The SEUPB continued to communicate the positive impacts of the EU programmes such as the International Peace Conference and International enterprise themed conference both held in Derry-Londonderry in May 2013;
- The planning process for the new round of EU programmes 2014 – 2020 continues and preparation for the programmes is progressing. It is intended that the Operational Programme for PEACE and INTERREG will be presented to the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government in 2014. Formal submission to the European Commission for agreement, will take place following public consultation and the agreement of both Governments. It is anticipated the programmes will be agreed in Autumn 2014;
- In May Ministers noted that the two Sponsor Departments had examined the governance arrangements within the Special EU Programmes Body and had agreed that the existing arrangements were comprehensive and multi-stranded and provided appropriate oversight for the Body;and
- In December Ministers agreed that a staffing review of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) has been completed. The draft report makes recommendations on SEUPB staffing for 2013 and 2014. The SEUPB will explore other opportunities with the Department of Finance and Personnel and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, to gain additional

efficiencies through implementation of the staffing review recommendations and the development and implementation of the new programmes.

At the May Meeting Ministers received a presentation on the INTERREG IVA Project Irish Scottish Links on Energy Study (ISLES) which aimed to assess the practicality of creating an off shore electricity grid based on renewable energy. The project was awarded INTERREG IVA funding of €1,545,639/£1,286,135.

At the December Meeting Ministers received a presentation on the INTERREG IVA Tellus Border project which is a regional mapping project collecting geo-environmental data on soils, water and rocks across six border counties and continuing the analysis of existing data in Northern Ireland. The project is a cross-border initiative between the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, the Geological Survey of Ireland, Queen's University Belfast and Dundalk Institute of Technology. The project was granted £4m funding from INTERREG IVA Environment theme.

Trade and Business Development



InterTradelreland's Seedcorn Competition 2013 Winners – Westway Health and Element Software pictured with Thomas Hunter McGowan CEO InterTradelreland.

Trade and Business Development Meeting

The Trade and Business Development Body, known as InterTradelreland, was established to exchange information and co-ordinate work on trade, business development and related matters, in areas where the two administrations specifically agree it would be in their mutual interest. InterTradelreland has a Board of 12 members appointed by the NSMC. The current Board members are listed in Annex Three. The Chief Executive of InterTradelreland is Mr Thomas Hunter McGowan. Further details are available at www.intertradeireland.com.

One NSMC Trade and Business Development meeting was held in Armagh on 26 June 2013. Chaired by Minister Arlene Foster MLA, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment with John O'Dowd MLA, Minister for Education as the accompanying Minister, Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation also attended.

- Ministers received Progress Reports from the Chairperson and Chief Executive on the activities of InterTradelreland throughout 2013. These included:
- InterTradelreland's performance for 2012 against business plan targets as delivering a 13:1 return on investments, assisting 92 first time innovators and 67 first time exporters and overall delivery of 6% efficiency savings; and
- The generation in 2012 of £92.1M/ €105.8M of Business Value from participating companies.

Ministers noted the results of the Quarter 1 Business Monitor Survey identifying energy and transport costs and cashflow as the biggest issues affecting business on the island.

Overall continued demand for InterTradelreland's services was noted.

In the area of research and innovation, the Council noted details of the drawdown of €60.7m of funding from the FP7 innovation programme, distributed among 69 projects and also welcomed the measures that had been ongoing to prepare for the all-island participation in the Horizon 2020 programme being rolled out at the end of the year, including the development of a Horizon 2020 app. The measures being undertaken to facilitate cross-border co-operation in this area were welcomed.

The findings of InterTradelreland's cross-border study 'Access to Finance for Growth in SMEs in Ireland and Northern Ireland' were noted, including a continuing dip in demand for credit, and the fact that the number of businesses citing lack of finance as a growth constraints was continuing to increase.

The Council also received a presentation by officials from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation on the Enterprise theme of the current INTERREG IVA Programme and heard some summary details as to the anticipated shape of the successor to this programme.

CHAPTER THREE: NSMC INSTITUTIONAL MEETING



The First Minister, Tánaiste and Deputy First Minister launch the 2012 NSMC Annual Report at the Institutional Meeting in April.

The NSMC met in Institutional format on 29 April 2013 in Stormont Castle, Belfast. The First Minister the Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA, the deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MLA and the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore TD attended the meeting. A copy of the Joint Communiqué issued after the meeting is available at www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org

Ministers had a broad discussion on the economy particularly the economic challenges faced within each jurisdiction and budgetary actions being taken to address these. They discussed Corporation Tax and NAMA, noted the importance of building confidence in the economy and the tourism industry and recognised the benefit of mutual cooperation in both. There was also a discussion on the G8 summit to be held in Enniskillen.

EU Matters

The Council discussed the Irish Presidency of the EU in 2013 and welcomed the co-operation that had taken place between Irish Government and Executive Ministers. They noted progress on various EU related matters and noted that while both the Multi-Annual Financial Framework and a reform of the Common Agriculture Policy had been agreed at European Governments' level negotiations were ongoing between the EU Council of Ministers and EU Parliament.

Ministers also discussed the situation with EU funds particularly from PEACE III, INTERREG IV and FP7 research and development programmes and the potential for future Programmes in particular a new PEACE Programme.

North West Gateway Initiative

Ministers welcomed progress under the North West Gateway Initiative and noted that there would be further engagement with key stakeholders to seek their views on the future development of the Initiative. They agreed to review progress on this engagement at a future meeting.

North South Bodies Issues

Ministers 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 within the Bodies. They also discussed governance issues including the review of the Financial Memoranda, changes to the North South Pension Scheme and noted changes to the Boards of the North South Bodies.

The Ministers thanked outgoing Chief Executives of Waterways Ireland, John Martin, and the Loughs Agency, Derick Anderson, for their contributions to the work of the North South Bodies and wished them well in their retirements.

St Andrews Agreement Review

Ministers discussed the St Andrews Agreement Review and looked forward to further discussion at the next NSMC Plenary meeting.

CHAPTER FOUR: NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OUTREACH



Pupils from Lisanally Special School receiving their work placement certificates from NSMC JS personnel

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility Programme the Joint Secretariat arranges various outreach activities for local groups.

In June the Joint Secretariat welcomed four pupils from Lisanally Special School in Armagh for a work experience project. This involved the pupils assisting with arrangements and delivery of two NSMC Meetings including being present for the arrival of Ministers and assisting with a diverse range of preparation duties and helping with catering.

The Joint Secretariat personnel managing the project are actively involved in community/sporting organisations and have received Access NI approval for those volunteer roles. Specific Joint Secretariat colleagues with previous involvement in working with community groups and with those with special needs mentored the pupils.

ANNEX ONE

NSMC MEETINGS IN 2013

The following table shows the NSMC meetings which were held.

NSMC Meeting	Date	Location
Plenary	5/7/13	Dublin Castle
	8/11/13	NSMC JS HQ
Institutional	29/4/13	Stormont Castle
Agriculture	10/7/13	NSMC JS HQ
	13/11/13	NSMC JS HQ
Education	27/2/13	NSMC JS HQ
	8/11/13	NSMC JS HQ
Environment	23/4/13	Custom House, Dublin
	30/10/13	NSMC JS HQ
Health and Food Safety	11/10/13	NSMC JS HQ
Tourism	26/6/13	NSMC JS HQ
Transport	28/3/13	Dublin Castle
	17/4/13	NSMC JS HQ
	28/11/13	NSMC JS HQ
Aquaculture & Marine	3/5/13	NSMC JS HQ
	23/10/13	NSMC JS HQ
Inland Waterways	19/6/13	NSMC JS HQ
	20/11/13	NSMC JS HQ
Language	6/3/13	NSMC JS HQ
	19/6/13	NSMC JS HQ
	10/7/13	NSMC JS HQ
	20/11/13	NSMC JS HQ
Special EU Programmes	10/5/13	NSMC JS HQ
	6/12/13	NSMC JS HQ
Trade & Business Development	26/6/13	NSMC JS HQ

ANNEX TWO

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL JOINT SECRETARIAT

The North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) is supported by a standing Joint Secretariat staffed by members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Irish Civil Service. The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is the parent Department of the Northern Ireland civil servants and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is the parent Department of the Irish civil servants.

Colm Shannon is the Joint Secretary (North) and Shane O'Neill Joint Secretary (South).

FUNCTIONS

The functions of the Joint Secretariat include:

- arranging the schedule of Council meetings in different formats;
- securing prior political agreement to agendas for meetings of the Council;
- preparing or commissioning papers for meetings of the Council, including in relation to its work programme;
- drafting Joint Communiqués and Records of Decisions of the Council;
- communicating decisions of the Council and monitoring their implementation;
- drafting an annual report on the proceedings of the Council;
- acting as a channel of communication with Implementation Bodies;
- liaising, where appropriate, through the designated Department or Office in either jurisdiction, with the Secretariat of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, the Secretariat of the British-Irish Council and with the North/South joint parliamentary forum and independent consultative forum when established; and
- carrying out such other tasks as the Council may direct.

FUNDING

Staff costs are met by OFMDFM and DFAT. All other costs associated with the Joint Secretariat and the NSMC are shared between the two administrations. The cost of running the Joint Secretariat in 2013 amounted to £1,553,948/€1,831,514.

ANNEX THREE

BOARD MEMBERS OF NORTH SOUTH BODIES

FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION BOARD ADVISORY BOARD

Lynn Ní Bhaoigheallain (Chairperson)
Darina Allen (Vice Chairperson)
Julie Andrews
Thomas Burns
Brendan Kehoe
Alan McGrath
Helen O'Donnell
Edward Spellman
Hannah Su
Campbell Tweedie
Mary Upton
Jane Wells

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY

FORAS NA GAELIGE

Liam Ó Maolmhichíl
(Chairperson of Foras na Gaelige/Joint Chairperson of An Foras Teanga)
Eoghan Mac Cormaic (Vice Chairperson)
Pól Callaghan
Colm Cavanagh
Áine Ní Chiaráin
Bríd Ní Chonghóile
Liam Kennedy
Seosamh Mac Donncha
Tomás Mac Eochagáin
Marcas Mac Ruairí
Seán Mícheál Ó Domhnaill
Dónal Ó hAiniféin
Therese Ruane
Tomás Sharkey (resigned – 18 September 2013)
Cáitríona Ní Shúilleabháin
Éamonn Ó Gribín
Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire (appointed 10 January 2014)

THA BOORD O ULSTÈR SCOTCH

Tom Scott
(Chairperson of Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch/Joint Chairperson of North South
Language Body)
Tony Crooks (Vice Chairperson)
Ida Fisher
William Leathem
Val O'Kelly
Hilary Singleton
Sharon Treacy-Dunne
Trevor Wilson

THE FOYLE, CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS COMMISSION

Winston Patterson (Chairperson)
Alan McCulla (Vice Chairperson)
Andrew Duncan
Phil Mahon
Joe Millar
Michael J McCormick
Theresa McLaverty
Seamus Rogers
Thomas Sloan (deceased 21 January 2013)
Donal Tipping
Jim Wilson
Mick Murphy (appointed 13 November 2013)
Laurence Arbuckle

THE TRADE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BODY

Martin Cronin (Chairperson)
Joanne Spain (Vice Chairperson)
Brendan Butler
Jake Gallagher
Ray Hayden
Hubert Brown Kerr
Timothy Mayes
Bridget Meehan (resigned 13 November 2013)
Patricia McKeown
Kevin Norton
Mairead Sorensen (resigned 8 August 2013)
Terri Scott (appointed 6 December 2013)
Rosemary Delaney (appointed 6 December 2013)

TOURISM IRELAND LIMITED

Brian Ambrose (Chairperson)
Jim Flannery (Vice-Chairperson)
Ciara Boyle
Denis Cregan
Shaun Quinn
Howard Hastings
John Healy
David Lyle
Christoph Mueller
Elaine Murphy
Derek Rainey
David Rodway