



North South Ministerial Council
An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas

North South Ministerial Council

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

Health

Aquaculture and Marine

Transport

Special EU Programmes

Food Safety

Language

Environment

Education

Tourism

Trade and Business Development

Inland Waterways

Agriculture

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INTRODUCTION BY JOINT SECRETARIES

Aquaculture and Marine Matters

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to report that 2008 was a year of further consolidation for the North South Ministerial Council.

On 7 February 2008 there was a successful NSMC Plenary meeting at the Dundalk Institute of Technology at which Ministers discussed the work of the Council. Among the practical issues progressed at the meeting was Child Protection, where Ministers agreed to take forward work designed to enhance collaboration and co-operation on this sensitive and important issue.

At the NSMC meetings throughout the year, Ministers continued to oversee the work of the North South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland. Ministers received progress reports from Chairs and Chief Executives, reviewed objectives and targets against business plans and discussed future work by the Bodies. The focus of Ministerial attention has been to ensure that both jurisdictions obtain maximum value for money from the work of the Bodies.

Ministers also continued to advance mutually beneficial work in the NSMC Areas for Co-operation to deliver tangible benefits. Among the issues progressed were the upgrading of the A5 (Aughnacloy to the North West) and A8 (Belfast – Larne) roads, joint efforts to remove illegally dumped waste from sites in Northern Ireland, the re-opening of a stretch of the Ulster Canal, co-operation on tackling educational underachievement, the development of a strategy on animal health and suicide prevention.

The new website www.borderpeople.info launched by Ministers in October 2007 has been a particular success. The website provides information for people intending to live, work or study in the other jurisdiction and during the year traffic to the website grew to 10,000 hits per month. The Secretariat also began work on the transfer of pensions on a cross-border basis and on cross-border banking issues. By year end, this was producing positive results.



The Secretariat maintained a fruitful dialogue with organisations relevant to the work of the NSMC, such as cross border partnerships, community and voluntary organisations, Chambers of Commerce and local authorities in border regions.

Based in Armagh, the Secretariat maintains good relationships with local elected, business, church and civic representatives. During the year, Armagh City and District Council won the tender to construct new accommodation for the Secretariat. We look forward to continued good partnership working with the Council in the year ahead.

Mary Bunting
Joint Secretary (North)

Tom Hanney
Joint Secretary (South)

CHAPTER ONE

SUMMARY OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Aquaculture and Marine Matters

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CHAPTER ONE: Summary of Key Developments

BACKGROUND

1.1 This report covers the work of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) in the period January to December 2008. During the year there were twelve meetings of the NSMC – one in Plenary format and eleven in sectoral format.

1.2 The following table shows the NSMC meetings which were held during 2008:

NSMC Meeting	Date	Location
Plenary	7 February	Dundalk
Agriculture	30 April	Enniskillen
Transport	21 May	Mullaghbawn
Aquaculture and Marine	21 May	Dublin
Health & Food Safety	28 May	Belfast
Education	28 May	Downpatrick
Tourism	29 May	Enniskillen
Trade & Business Development	29 May	Enniskillen
Aquaculture and Marine	26 June	Belfast
Inland Waterways	4 July	Limavady
Language	4 July	Limavady
Education	10 December	Dublin

1.3 At these meetings, Ministers took important decisions relating to the work of the North South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland Limited (the Bodies) and Areas for Co-operation. Full details of what was discussed including matters relating to corporate governance in the Bodies and progress in the work programmes in the Areas for Co-operation are contained in chapters 2 and 3.

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT NEW ACCOMMODATION PROJECT

1.4 Good progress has been made in acquiring new, purpose-built, accommodation for the NSMC Joint Secretariat in Armagh. Following a public procurement competition, the tender to develop the new accommodation was awarded to Armagh City and District Council who will lease the building to the NSMC Joint Secretariat. The new accommodation, which should be available during 2010, will provide office accommodation and facilities to host NSMC meetings. The design reflects the highest environmental and energy savings standards possible and will be a showpiece for Armagh in the use of new technologies in these areas. It will also act as an important catalyst to regeneration of a disadvantaged area of the City.

MOBILITY ISSUES

1.5 The Cross-Border Mobility Website www.borderpeople.info which was launched by Ministers in October 2007 continues to go from strength to strength. Following a successful marketing campaign in the summer, the website is attracting approximately 10,000 visitors per month. The website provides easily accessible public service information for people who wish to move across the border to live, work and study.

1.6 Two working groups have been established by the NSMC - one to explore options for going forward on the transfer of pension rights on a cross-border basis, and the other to examine cross-border banking issues, including transaction charges.

1.7 On **banking**, a number of banks have agreed to provide information on the cost of typical cross-border personal banking transactions. This information has been published in a comparison table on www.borderpeople.info thus providing for the first time a degree of transparency in relation to those costs.

1.8 With regard to **pensions**, taking account of the variation in pension arrangements across the public sectors in both jurisdictions, the working group decided to consider as a specific case study the portability of teachers' pensions since this had been raised within NSMC.

1.9 Both working groups will report back to the NSMC in 2009.

OUTREACH EVENTS

1.10 An important aspect of the work of the NSMC Joint Secretariat is to effectively communicate the activities of the NSMC. During the year, the Secretariat responded to requests for briefings from a wide range of interested groups including: students from the University of Notre Dame; Chevening Fellows; senior officials representing the Croatian Government; students from the American Young Ambassadors Programme; Palestinian students sponsored by the Glenree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation; the Société Française des Études Irlandaises; the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action, and Owen Patterson, Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

1.11 The Secretariat also maintained dialogue with groups and organisations involved in cooperation in border regions including community groups, cross border partnerships and business leaders and officials

from the Chambers of Commerce and local authorities in Newry and Dundalk and the North West.

1.12 A highlight of the year included an event in Armagh in May, devoted to Irish and Ulster Scots culture, and featuring a performance by the Cross-Border Orchestra of Ireland and the Reverend Gary Hastings and Brian Mullen. The event, which was hosted by the NSMC Secretariat in co-operation with Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster Scots Agency, attracted an attendance of over 200 including Executive Ministers Conor Murphy, MP, MLA and Jeffrey Donaldson, MP, MLA.



Pictured at the event in May 2008 celebrating Irish and Ulster Scots culture are from left, Tom Hanney, Joint Secretary, Jeffrey Donaldson, MP, MLA, Conor Murphy, MP, MLA and Mary Bunting, Joint Secretary



CHAPTER TWO

NSMC PLENARY MEETING

Aquaculture and Marine Matters

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CHAPTER TWO: NSMC Plenary Meeting



Pictured at the NSMC Plenary Meeting in Dundalk are deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, MP, MLA, An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern and First Minister The Right Hon Ian Paisley, MP, MLA.

2.1 The NSMC met in Plenary format at the Dundalk Institute of Technology on 7th February. The Irish Government delegation was led by the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern TD who chaired the meeting. The Northern Ireland Executive delegation was led by the First Minister, The Rt Hon Dr Ian Paisley MP, MLA and deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MP, MLA.

2.2 At the meeting the Council:

- endorsed the progress made, including agreement on a management structure to take forward the decisions on the A5 (North West Gateway to Aughnacloy) and A8 (Belfast to Larne) road projects and welcomed progress to date on the Narrow Water Bridge proposal;
- welcomed agreement on the modalities for taking forward the re-opening of a stretch of the Ulster Canal between Clones and Upper Lough Erne;
- looked forward to the early assessment of options for the future development of the Dublin/Belfast Enterprise rail service especially in relation to increased service frequency and reduced travel times;
- agreed that co-operation on Road Safety will continue to be a high priority including recognition of driver disqualification and penalty points and road safety in border areas;
- agreed that the tourism sector is making a major contribution to economic growth and employment and welcomed Tourism Ireland's challenging targets of increasing tourism revenue growth of between 6.6-7.5% per annum, visitor growth of between 4.2-5.1% per annum and promotable growth of 14.0 to 17.2% over the next 3 years;
- looked forward to reports from the Working Groups established at the NSMC meeting in Institutional format in October 2007 on the transfer of pensions on a cross-border basis and on cross-border banking issues which are of direct relevance to greater cross-border mobility;
- welcomed the opportunity to discuss Child Protection issues within the NSMC and to consider

how effective child protection measures could be developed through enhanced collaboration and co-operation;

- noted and welcomed current cross-border co-operation on Child Protection involving Departments, agencies and policing bodies;
- requested the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Office of the Minister for Children to establish and co-chair a cross-border group of officials from relevant departments to intensify co-operation on Child Protection including:
 - a. early progress on an all-island Child Protection awareness campaign;
 - b. the identification of other medium/long term measures to improve Child Protection, including an examination of an all-island approach to child protection, focusing in particular on vetting and exchange of information;
 - c. any areas for co-operation on children's services emerging from the North South Feasibility Study on health and social services; and to report progress to the next NSMC Plenary meeting.
- noted the progress made to date by the St Andrews Agreement Review Group in taking forward the Review and the intention to bring forward a final report to a NSMC Plenary meeting later in 2008;
- noted the Irish Government's consultation with their social partners on the subject of the North South Consultative Forum and also noted the position as previously outlined for reviewing the Civic Forum in Northern Ireland; and
- noted the ongoing discussions between the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly on the North South Parliamentary Forum and agreed to keep this matter under review.



CHAPTER THREE

NSMC MEETINGS IN SECTORAL FORMAT

Aquaculture and Marine Matters

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Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of NSMC meetings in sectoral format in 2008. The Joint Communiqués from these meetings are available at www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org.

Agriculture



Left to Right – Éamon Ó Cuív TD, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Mary Coughlan TD, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Michelle Gildernew, MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

Meeting	Date	Location
Agriculture	30 April	Enniskillen

3.1.1 The Northern Ireland Executive was represented at this meeting by Michelle Gildernew, MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and Arlene Foster, MLA, Minister of the Environment. The Irish Government was represented by Mary Coughlan, TD, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Éamon Ó Cuív, TD, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

3.1.2 At the meeting, Ministers noted progress on the draft All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy and plans for a future cross-border event with key agriculture stakeholders from both jurisdictions to discuss the all-island strategic approach. In relation to plant health and pesticides, the Council recognised the need to develop a more strategic approach to cross-border co-operation and agreed to establish a Steering Group to identify areas of mutual interest.

3.1.3 There was also a wide-ranging discussion on issues of common concern in relation to the EU Common Agriculture Policy. They welcomed recent CAP reforms, in

particular the significant simplification which has already been achieved to the Single Farm Payment Scheme.

3.1.4 On rural development, Ministers discussed an innovative and strategic approach to collaboration and co-operation on Rural Development Programmes aimed at fostering reconciliation in remote rural areas and complementing the economic regeneration of disadvantaged cross-border regions. In relation to the EU Programmes (2007-2013), there are proposals for a Rural Enabler Project, under the PEACE III Programme, which aims to bring together rural people from both traditions and migrants to increase understanding and to work to address issues of sectarianism and racism in a rural context. Under the IINTERREG IVA Programme a cross-border project to promote tailored rural development initiatives for a number of the most disadvantaged rural regions is proposed.

Education



Pictured at the NSMC meeting in Downpatrick are Caitriona Ruane MLA, Minister for Education and Batt O’Keeffe TD, Minister for Education and Science.

Meeting	Date	Location
Education	28 May	Downpatrick
Education	10 December	Dublin

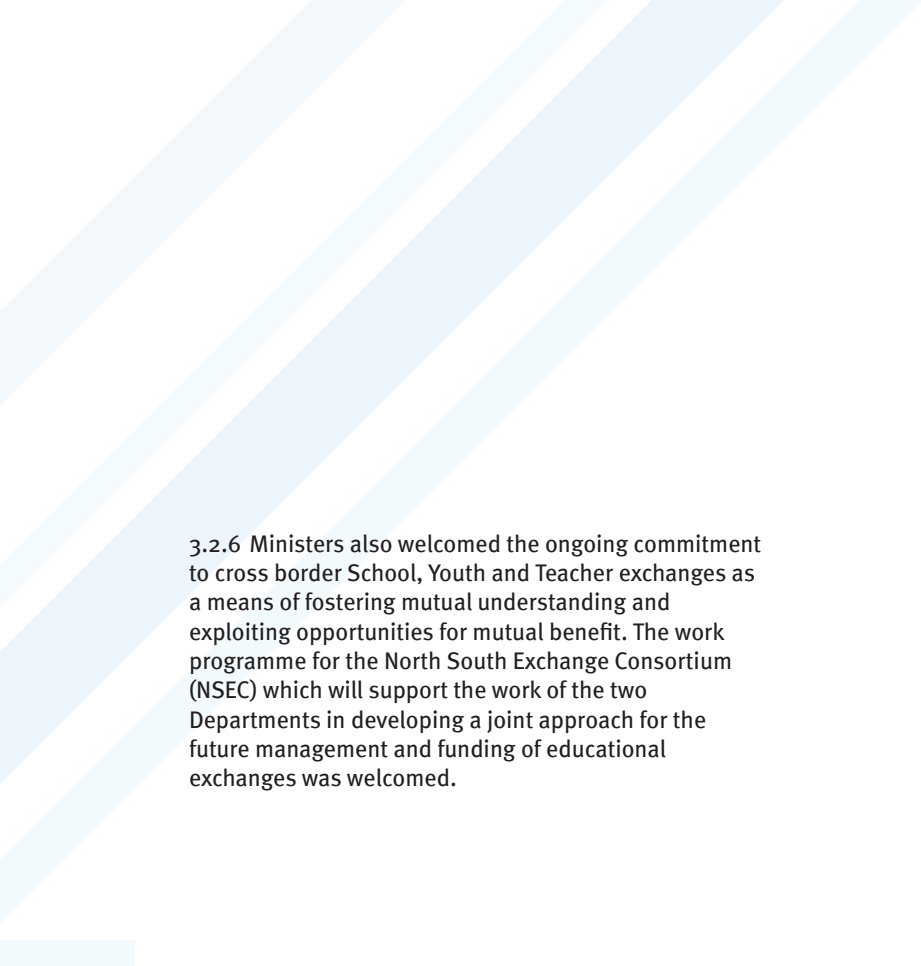
3.2.1 At both of these meetings, the Irish Government was represented by Batt O’Keeffe TD, Minister for Education and Science. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented at both meetings by Caitriona Ruane MLA, Minister for Education. Edwin Poots MLA, Minister of Culture Arts and Leisure also represented the Executive at the May meeting while Junior Minister Jeffrey Donaldson, MP, MLA also represented the Executive at the December meeting.

3.2.2 Ministers endorsed proposals for future work on Educational Underachievement which will initially focus on interventions to support parents and families in helping their children with education and challenges facing children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. They also noted the positive report from the successful first joint conference on numeracy. The areas identified in the report for further development, including possible collaboration in the area of mathematics in initial teacher education, are under consideration by the two Departments.

3.2.3 Ministers welcomed the establishment by the Department of Education of a Taskforce on Traveller Education which will bring together a wide range of stakeholders across the island. In addition, it is proposed to hold a North South conference on Best Practice in Traveller Education in March, 2009. A proposal to hold a peer learning event in March 2009 on the subject of school attendance was also welcomed and Ministers looked forward to receiving a progress report at the next meeting.

3.2.4 In relation to Teacher Qualifications, Ministers noted the ongoing work in providing seminars for student teachers to provide information on the Irish language qualification requirements for teaching in Southern schools, the ongoing collaborative work on leadership development issues and on the joint research project on how best to attract and develop new school leaders.

3.2.5 In the area of Special Education Needs, Ministers noted the further progress made on the services provided by the all-island Middletown Centre for Autism and the work that the Centre’s staff have undertaken in order to consult with parents and other interested parties. Ministers welcomed plans by the two Departments of Education to jointly organise an Autistic Spectrum Disorders Conference in November 2009.



3.2.6 Ministers also welcomed the ongoing commitment to cross border School, Youth and Teacher exchanges as a means of fostering mutual understanding and exploiting opportunities for mutual benefit. The work programme for the North South Exchange Consortium (NSEC) which will support the work of the two Departments in developing a joint approach for the future management and funding of educational exchanges was welcomed.

Environment



Left - Sammy Wilson MP, MLA, Minister of the Environment.



Right - John Gormley TD, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

SECTOR

3.3.1 The NSMC Area for Cooperation in Environment includes Research into Environmental Protection and Water Quality Management and Waste Management in a Cross-Border context.

3.3.2 Work on these issues was taken forward in 2008 by the Department of Environment and the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government.

- Progress was made on the removal of illegally dumped waste in accordance with the road map previously agreed.
- The two Departments continued to progress the development of a joint Market Development Programme for recycled materials based on specific deliverables of mutual benefit and exploiting opportunities to benefit from economies of scale. The issue of a paper mill will be discussed at an NSMC meeting in due course.
- Progress continued on implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive. Draft River Basin Management Plans were developed for the three cross-border river basin districts as required by the Directive and published on 22 December 2008.

These plans set out the environmental objectives for water bodies to meet the required water quality standards together with the measures to be undertaken to achieve these objectives.

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) reviewed current co-operation on environmental research and explored the scope for further work including environmental awareness campaigns.

Health



Left to Right Michelle Gildernew MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michael McGimpsey, MLA Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Mary Harney TD, Minister for Health and Children and Mary Wallace, TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for Health Promotion and Food Safety.

Meeting	Date	Location
Health and Food Safety	28 May	Belfast

3.4.1 The Northern Ireland Executive was represented at this meeting by Michael McGimpsey MLA, Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Michelle Gildernew MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Irish Government was represented by Mary Harney, TD, Minister for Health and Children and Mary Wallace, TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for Health Promotion and Food Safety.

3.4.2 At the meeting, in relation to Health, Ministers welcomed the progress made on a range of issues including, the initial findings of the pilot studies into cross-border co-operation on GP out of hours provision, developments regarding the location of a satellite radiotherapy centre at Altnagelvin Hospital and the range of developments on Cancer Research. They received an update on the joint Feasibility Study which will consider options and opportunities for greater co-operation in the sphere of health and social care. Ministers welcomed the broad range of co-operation on health promotion currently underway across key areas including men's

health, physical activity/nutrition, research, health promoting hospitals, training, smoking, breast feeding and workplace health promotion.

3.4.3 Ministers discussed the broad range of co-operation on suicide prevention and endorsed proposals for planned future co-operation in areas such as; the all-island evaluation of the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, the development of performance indicators relating to the All-Island Action Plan, and the production of an annual report on the all-island Plan to be tabled at NSMC on an annual basis.

3.4.4 The establishment of a co-ordinating group from both Health Departments and the development of a work programme to intensify co-operation on Child Protection was welcomed. Plans to develop a cross-border awareness raising campaign in conjunction with non-governmental organisations to consider the increasing problems associated with the internet and social networking were discussed and ongoing co-operation on cross border monitoring and management of sex offenders was welcomed.

Tourism



At the Tourism Ireland **Ambassadors for Tourism awards** (September 2008) is Jimmy Murphy, Chairman of Brendan Worldwide Vacations (centre) with (l-r) Hugh Friel, Chairman of Tourism Ireland; Minister Arlene Foster MLA; Minister Martin Cullen TD; and Paul O’Toole, Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland.

BACKGROUND

3.5.1 Tourism Ireland Ltd is responsible for marketing overseas the island of Ireland as a tourist destination. Tourism Ireland has a Board of 12 members appointed by the NSMC. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board are Mr Hugh Friel and Ms. Ciara Boyle, respectively. The current Board members are listed in Annex 2. The Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland is Mr Paul O’Toole. Further details are available at www.tourismireland.com.

Meeting	Date	Location
Tourism	29 May	Enniskillen

3.5.2 The Northern Ireland Executive was represented at this meeting by Nigel Dodds OBE, MP, MLA, Minister of Enterprise Trade and Investment and Michelle Gildernew MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Irish Government was represented by Martin Cullen, TD Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism.

3.5.3 At the meeting, Ministers received a progress report from the Chairperson. The report focused on governance, Corporate and Business Plans and the Board’s views on the key components of competitiveness.

3.5.4 Ministers noted progress in implementing Tourism Ireland’s Business Plan 2008, the analysis of the Visitor and Revenue Targets, and the more challenging trading environment arising from increased economic uncertainty in some key overseas markets.

3.5.5 They also noted the increasing importance of new and developing markets for the future growth of overseas visitors to the island of Ireland. Tourism Ireland’s proposal to open a New and Developing Markets Hub Office to enable the Company to operate more effectively against increasing global competition was welcomed. Ministers approved an increase in Tourism Ireland’s staffing complement to enable the Company to recruit staff for the proposed New and Developing Markets Hub office.

3.5.6 In relation to capturing data on the number of visitors, Ministers noted a paper on Tourism Statistics and requested their Departments to engage with the relevant agencies with a view to reporting to the next appropriate NSMC meeting.

Transport



Pictured at the launch of the Cross-Border Seatbelts campaign are Chief Superintendent John Farrelly, Gay Byrne, Chairman of the Road Safety Authority in Ireland and Assistant Chief Constable Roy Toner

Meeting	Date	Location
Transport	21 May	Mullaghbawn

3.6.1 The Northern Ireland Executive was represented at this meeting by Conor Murphy MP, MLA, Minister for Regional Development and Arlene Foster MLA, Minister of the Environment. The Irish Government was represented by Minister Noel Dempsey TD, Minister for Transport.

3.6.2 At the meeting, Ministers noted and welcomed the opportunity to discuss cross-border co-operation in relation to Strategic Transport Planning and Road Safety.

3.6.3 They noted progress on the A5 (North-West Gateway to Aughnacloy) and A8 (Belfast to Larne) road projects and that the A5 project was on target to achieve its preliminary route corridor assessment by late 2008.

3.6.4 Ministers reviewed progress on proposals for improving the Dublin-Belfast rail service and noted the commitment of the Department for Regional Development to improve the railway line from Belfast to Derry and to undertake a study to consider the long term social, physical and economic redevelopment of the railway throughout the North West.

3.6.5 They noted the progress being made on reducing road deaths by the authorities on both sides of the border. Ministers requested an intensification of work on a bilateral agreement on the EU Convention on Driving Disqualifications to ensure that it was brought into effect by late 2008/early 2009 and the potential for further liaison on key road safety issues such as drink driving limits, road safety strategies and cross border enforcement.

3.6.6 Ministers noted that Derry City Council had provided the necessary undertakings in relation to the governance arrangements at the City of Derry airport to enable the first payment of grant claims to be made in February 2008. The Executive and the Irish Government had paid grants amounting to over £5.6m. In addition to the approved grant scheme, Derry City Council funded the construction of a new taxiway and extended aircraft parking apron. They noted that Derry City Council had committed to the immediate incorporation of City of Derry airport into a company wholly owned by the Council followed, within a period of 18 months, by either sale of equity in the company outright or by sale of the company but with the Council retaining control of the airport land

CHAPTER THREE: NSMC Meetings in Sectoral Format

through a long-term lease. Derry City Council had established an advisory Board comprising independent members committed to completion of reform by December 2009.

3.6.7 Ministers reviewed progress on projects to reopen the Annaghroe and Knocknaginny bridges on the Tyrone/Monaghan border and discussed progress on the Irish Government's proposal for the construction of a bridge at Narrow Water linking County Louth with County Down.

3.6.8 Ministers discussed Sustainable Transport and noted that the Department of Transport had launched the 2020 Vision - Sustainable Travel and Transport paper for public consultation and that the Department for Regional Development was already progressing a number of initiatives on sustainable transport.

3.6.9 Ministers noted that a cross border community based rural transport pilot project was expected to commence before the end of 2008.

3.6.10 Work and studies on rapid transit were being undertaken in Cork, Galway, Limerick, Waterford and Belfast and Ministers welcomed the ongoing work and discussions between officials in relation to the sharing of information and co-operation in this area.

3.6.11 Ministers welcomed the presentation by IBEC/CBI on the findings of the "Freight Transport Report for the Island of Ireland" and agreed that their officials consider those recommendations of the Study relevant to the NSMC Transport Area for Co-operation and report to future meeting.

Aquaculture and Marine



Fishery Officers electrofishing on the River Roe

FOYLE, CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS COMMISSION

BACKGROUND

3.7.1 The NSMC meets on Aquaculture and Marine matters in order to take decisions on policies and action to be implemented by the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC). The FCILC has a Board of 12 members appointed by the NSMC which exercises the functions of the Body in relation to the Foyle and Carlingford areas through the Loughs Agency. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board are Mr Tarlach O Crosain and Ms Jacqui McConville respectively. The current Board members are listed in Annex 2. The Chief Executive of the Loughs Agency is Mr Derick Anderson. Further details are available at www.loughs-agency.org.

Meeting	Date	Location
FCILC	21 May	Dublin
FCILC	26 June	Belfast

3.7.2 At the meeting on 21 May the Irish Government was represented by Eamon Ryan, TD, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Michelle Gildernew, MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and Minister Edwin Poots, MLA, Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure. At the meeting on 26 June the Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Minister Gildernew and Junior Minister Jeffrey Donaldson, MP, MLA. The Irish Government was represented by Minister Ryan and Minister of State Sean Power, TD.

3.7.3 At these meetings, Ministers received progress reports from the Chairperson and the Chief Executive. These reports included the Agency's plans, in collaboration with other bodies, for the delivery of its Marine Tourism and Recreation and Fishing strategy. Ministers also noted that the Agency had purchased a 17 metre catamaran at a cost of approximately £300,000 (€380,000). This boat will be used to collect the management data required for the sustainable development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough

CHAPTER THREE: NSMC Meetings in Sectoral Format

3.7.4 Ministers noted progress on Commencement Orders to give effect to provisions of the 2007 Foyle and Carlingford Fisheries legislation. The Orders are required to bring forward a staged and managed introduction of the new powers available to the Loughs Agency to develop and license aquaculture and to protect the fisheries in the Foyle and Carlingford areas. Ministers noted that the first Order came into operation on June 1 2008 and the intention is to introduce the two further Orders in 2009.

3.7.5 Following public consultations in 2007 and again in 2008 on the proposals, Ministers approved five sets of regulations aimed at the conservation of salmon, sea trout and the native oyster in the Foyle and Carlingford areas. These include the Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Prohibition on Sale of Salmon and Sea Trout Caught by Rod and Line) Regulations 2008; the Foyle Area (Control of Oyster Fishing) Regulations 2008; the Foyle Area (Licensing of Oyster Fishing) Regulations 2008; the Foyle Area (Oyster Log Book and Identification) Regulations 2008; and the Foyle Area (Designated landing Areas) Regulations 2008.

Food Safety



Pictured at the launch of ‘Little Steps go a Long Way’ at Cranmore Integrated Primary School, are P5 pupils Johna Crocket, Jack McArdel and Catherine McGarry. “Little Steps go a Long way” is a campaign from *safefood*, the Health Promotion Agency Northern Ireland and the Health Service Executive aimed at tackling the serious problem of obesity across the island of Ireland.

FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION BOARD

BACKGROUND

3.8.1 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 the promotion of food safety, and supporting scientific co-operation between institutions working in that field. Mr John Dardis and Mr Campbell Tweedie are Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board respectively. The current Board members are listed in Annex 2. The Chief Executive of safefood is Mr Martin Higgins. Further details are available at www.safefood.eu .

Meeting	Date	Location
Food Safety	28 May	Belfast

3.8.2 The Northern Ireland Executive was represented at this meeting by Michael McGimpsey MLA, Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Michelle

Gildernew MP, MLA Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Irish Government was represented by Mary Harney, TD, Minister for Health and Children and Mary Wallace Minister of State with special responsibility for Health Promotion and Food Safety.

3.8.3 Ministers welcomed the appointment of the new Advisory Board for the Food Safety Promotion Board and received a progress report presented by the Chairperson and the CEO on the activities of *safefood*, including the appointment of experts to facilitate and provide technical and expert advice on *safefood*’s proposals on an enteric reference laboratory.

3.8.4 They noted the ongoing scientific and promotional activities of *safefood*, including, preliminary discussions with the Food Standards Agency in London regarding sharing of scientific information and the launch of new research projects including infectious intestinal disease in the community and completion of the gastroenteritis research project. The extension of the allergy awareness programme, the food hygiene awareness campaign and the ongoing partnership work with other bodies and

CHAPTER THREE: NSMC Meetings in Sectoral Format

agencies, highlighted in particular by the award of ‘best in show’ stand at the 2008 Balmoral Show were also noted.

3.8.5 Ministers also welcomed the establishment of the all-island obesity action forum for a three year period. They noted the development of a range of communications initiatives in selected settings including the workplace and educational settings, and noted work to build a new evidence base from a range of sources including academia, research in action and surveillance.

Inland Waterways



At the launch of the new Craft Registration Management System, from left; Ian Cameron, Waterways Ireland; Derek Kehoe, iB Solutions; Charles Lawn, Waterways Ireland; Brian Cleland, Waterways Ireland; Brian D’Arcy, Waterways Ireland; and Damien Marron, iB Solutions. Photograph taken in front of the new Waterways Ireland Headquarters building in Enniskillen.

WATERWAYS IRELAND

BACKGROUND

3.9.1 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. Waterways Ireland 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 is Mr John Martin. Further details are available at www.waterwaysireland.org.

Meeting	Date	Location
Inland Waterways	4 July	Limavady

3.9.2 The Northern Ireland Executive was represented at this meeting by Gregory Campbell MP, MLA, Minister of

Culture, Arts and Leisure and Conor Murphy MP, MLA, Minister for Regional Development. The Irish Government was represented by Éamon Ó Cuív, TD, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

3.9.3 At the meeting, Ministers received a progress report from the Chief Executive on the activities of Waterways Ireland. Ministers reviewed progress on the restoration of the Clones to Upper Lough Erne Section of the Ulster Canal and noted that Waterways Ireland had commenced the preliminary process including consultation and discussions with the Clones Erne East Partnership, land owners and various relevant statutory agencies. Ministers also noted the commencement of procedures to have the preliminary design undertaken, and the proposal that Waterways Ireland manage the land acquisition in advance of letting the contract.

3.9.4 Ministers welcomed Waterways Ireland’s tourism and marketing initiatives and noted the key objectives of developing its corporate identity, promoting greater use of the waterways, awareness creation and building a platform for sustained market development.

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3.9.5 Ministers noted that between September 2007 and May 2008, Waterways Ireland provided an additional 86 metres of public moorings on the Royal Canal and the Shannon, 283 metres of moorings on the Erne System and a 36 metre floating mooring and gangway on the Lower Bann. Ministers also noted how the waterways have been raised to one of the key tourism products on offer and Waterways Ireland's positive impact in the promotion of the waterways, their tourism and recreational potential, and in particular the experiences available along the waterway corridor from Belleek to Limerick.

3.9.6 Ministers discussed the Body's Business Plan for 2008 and noted the Annual Report and Accounts for 2006.

3.9.7 Ministers noted the proposals for a programme of activity under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013 including the completion of the re-opening of the Royal Canal to boating traffic in 2009, completion of investigations and construction of extensions on the Shannon Navigation, consolidation of other existing navigations by improving access, facilities and infrastructure and preliminary investigations on a number of other waterways.

3.9.8 Ministers noted that Waterways Ireland had commenced a pilot study in relation to registration of property to assess the resources and the processes required to register all of its property. They also noted that a tender had been awarded in respect of a pilot property registration of two areas of the canals in Dublin. Ministers agreed to a number of disposals and a Compulsory Purchase Order.

NEW WATERWAYS IRELAND HEADQUARTERS

3.9.9 The new Waterways Ireland headquarters building in Enniskillen, accommodating approximately 70 staff, was completed in September 2008 on schedule and within budget.

Language



Left to Right – Éamon Ó Cuív TD, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Gregory Campbell, MP, MLA, Minister of Culture Arts and Leisure

THE NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY (AN FORAS TEANGA/ THA BOORD O LEID)

BACKGROUND

3.10.1 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 NSMC. The Chairperson of Foras na Gaeilge, Mr Liam Ó Maoilmhichíl, and the Chairperson of Tha Boord O Ulstèr-Scotch, Mr Mark Thompson, are joint Chairpersons of the Language Body.

3.10.2 There are 15 other members on the Board of Foras na Gaeilge Board and 7 other members on the Board of Tha Boord O Ulstèr-Scotch. These are listed in Annex 2. Mr Ferdie Mac an Fhailigh is the Chief Executive of Foras na Gaeilge and Mr George Patton is the Chief Executive of Tha Boord O Ulstèr-Scotch. Further details are available at www.fornasnaeilge.ie and www.ulsterscotsagency.com

Meeting	Date	Location
Language	4 July	Limavady

3.10.3 The Northern Ireland Executive was represented at this meeting by Gregory Campbell, MP, MLA, Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure and Conor Murphy, MP, MLA, Minister of Regional Development. The Irish Government was represented by Eamon O’ Cuív TD, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

3.10.4 At this meeting, Ministers approved the Corporate and Business Plans and agreed the proposed budgets for both Agencies for 2008. They noted the indicative budgets for both Agencies for 2009 and 2010 subject to budgetary considerations in both jurisdictions.

3.10.5 Ministers noted a proposal from the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure to provide further additional funding of £1m to the Ulster-Scots Agency in 2009 and 2010. The Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs was positively disposed to the proposal (subject to budgetary considerations in both jurisdictions and assurances about the necessary financial accountability systems being in place in the Agency). Ministers

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requested officials to prepare a more developed paper on the proposed funding, to be brought before the next NSMC meeting in Language sectoral format.

3.10.6 Ministers welcomed the work that had been done to progress the decentralisation of 30 Foras na Gaeilge posts from Dublin to Gaoth Dobhair in accordance with the announcement made by the Irish Government in December 2003. They approved seven additional posts for Foras na Gaeilge noting that five of the posts would be located in Gaoth Dobhair and two in Belfast. They also considered future arrangements for Colmcille, approved the transfer of its functions, staff and funding to Foras na Gaeilge and agreed that Foras na Gaeilge and Bòrd na Gàidhlig would form a partnership to take forward the aims and objectives of Colmcille.

Special EU Programmes



Pictured at the launch of the *PEACE III AND INTERREG IVA PROGRAMMES* on 14 April 2008 by Commissioner Danuta Hübner, were the then Minister for Finance, Brian Cowen TD, the then Minister for Finance and Personnel, Rt Hon Peter Robinson MP MLA and Mr Pat Colgan, Chief Executive Officer, SEUPB.

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY (SEUPB)

BACKGROUND

3.11.1 The mission of the 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.

3.11.2 The SEUPB is the Managing Authority for the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE III) and the INTERREG IVA Programme. It is also responsible for monitoring and promoting the Common Chapter, the strategic framework for cross-border co-operation across a broad range of sectors agreed between the two Governments. The Body is also responsible for the North South elements of the Community Initiatives (LEADER +, URBAN II, and EQUAL in Ireland and Northern Ireland. SEUPB will also support North/South participation in INTERREG IVB Transnational Programmes and the

INTERREG IVC Interregional Programme. Further details are available at www.seupb.org.

ACTIVITIES

3.11.3 Details of the Body's activities in 2008 are set out in the paragraphs below.

EU PROGRAMMES 2000-2006

PEACE

3.11.4 During 2008 the SEUPB completed its role in respect of the closure of PEACE I on behalf of the two member states and also brought the PEACE II Programme to a successful closure.

INTERREG IIIA

3.11.5 The INTERREG IIIA Programme met all of its annual spending targets and achieved or exceeded most of its performance targets.

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EU PROGRAMMES 2007-2013

3.11.6 Both the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes were formally approved by the EU Commission on 6 November 2007. Including matching funding from the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive, a total of €589m (PEACE III €333m and INTERREG IVA €256m) will be made available through these programmes for investment to help build a peaceful stable society in Northern Ireland and the creation of a more prosperous cross border region. During 2008, for both Programmes, Steering Committees were established, project selection criteria were agreed and all themes were open for application. In 2008, the SEUPB focused on the efficient delivery of the new Programmes to ensure Programme objectives were met and Programme impact was maximised in the region.

INTERREG IVB AND INTERREG IVC PROGRAMMES

3.11.7 The SEUPB has a role in facilitating North South participation in the INTERREG IV Transnational and Interregional Programmes (IVB and IVC). During 2008 the SEUPB was active in promoting the programmes and encouraged quality project applications. The SEUPB also organised a number of events to promote North South participation in 2008, including a successful workshop in June and several presentations to potential project applicants.

EU OPEN DAYS 2008

3.11.8 The SEUPB and the two Finance Departments have developed proposals for the establishment of a PEACE network to communicate the experience of managing EU PEACE funding which were disseminated at an EU “Open Days” event in Brussels on 7 October 2008.

Trade and Business Development



InterTradelreland’s Seedcorn Business Competition o8 winners Mcor Technologies and Media Lightbox pictured with Trade & Commerce Minister John McGuinness TD.

BACKGROUND

3.12.1 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. These are listed in Annex 2. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Board of InterTradelreland are Dr David Dobbin and Mr John Fitzgerald respectively. The Chief Executive is Mr Liam Nellis. Further details are available at www.intertradeireland.com.

Meeting	Date	Location
InterTradelreland	29 May	Enniskillen

3.12.2 The Northern Ireland Executive was represented at this meeting by Nigel Dodds, MP, MLA, Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and Michelle Gildernew, MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Irish Government was represented by Micheál Martin TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Jimmy Devins TD,

Minister of State at the Departments of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Education and Science.

3.12.3 At the meeting, Ministers welcomed the appointment of the new Board of InterTradelreland. The Chairperson and the Chief Executive provided Ministers with a progress report on the activities of the Body. Ministers welcomed InterTradelreland’s creation of 39 North/South Business Networks and the provision of information, advice and services to more than 14,500 companies, the participation of more than 1300 companies directly on InterTradelreland’s programmes, resulting in the generation of £134m/€171m worth of trade and business development value, with an additional forecast of £260m/€331m to be reported from ongoing programmes.

3.12.4 The Ministers noted the increase in cross-border trade of 19.6% between 2003 and 2006 and that recent figures show that cross-border trade has increased to €3.1 billion in 2007.

3.12.5 InterTradelreland’s Corporate Plan was approved. Ministers noted two core strategic goals to generate Business Value, by enhancing company competitiveness

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and capability through co-operative North/South initiatives and to improve the Competitive Environment, for mutual benefit, through co-operative policy research, reports and networks. Ministers also supported the priority *InterTradelreland* will give to Science, Technology and Innovation in its Corporate Plan; and noted the targets identified in the 2008 Business Plan:

- £47m/c€69m total value of reported trade and business development activity generated by *InterTradelreland*'s North/South business networks and by firms engaged in *InterTradelreland*'s projects;
- 400 firms actively involved in developing the competitiveness of their businesses through the utilisation of *InterTradelreland*'s resources offered through its co-operative North/South initiatives;
- 2000 firms engaged in developing their business capabilities through the utilisation of *InterTradelreland*'s information and knowledge services;
- 25 North/South co-operative business and economic networks

3.12.6 Ministers also noted *InterTradelreland*'s Annual Review of Activities and Annual Report 2006.

ANNEX ONE

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL JOINT SECRETARIAT

Aquaculture and Marine Matters

The background features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent blue circles of varying sizes. Overlaid on these circles are several large, light blue arrows pointing in various directions, creating a sense of movement and flow. The overall color palette is a range of blues, from light to dark.

ANNEX ONE: 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 (DFA) is the parent Department of the Irish civil servants.

Mary Bunting is the Northern Joint Secretary and Tom Hanney is the Southern Joint Secretary. The Deputy Joint Secretaries are Pat Donaghy (Northern) and Niall Holohan (Southern).

FUNCTIONS

The functions of the Joint Secretariat include:

- arranging the schedule of Council meetings in different formats;
- securing prior political/Ministerial 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 and facilitating their development;
- liaising, where appropriate through the designated Department or Office in either jurisdiction, with the Secretariat of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, with 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 DFA. 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 2008 amounted to £1,724,872 / € 2,200,151.

ANNEX TWO

NORTH SOUTH BODIES' BOARD MEMBERS

Aquaculture and Marine Matters

The background of the page features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent blue circles of varying shades. Overlaid on these circles are several large, light blue arrows pointing in various directions, creating a sense of movement and flow. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on blue tones.

ANNEX TWO: North South Bodies' Board Members

FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION BOARD ADVISORY BOARD

John Dardis
(Chairperson)
Campbell Tweedie
(Vice Chairperson)
Ken Baird
Lynn Ní Bhaoigheallain
Joe Byrne
Brian Cunningham
Aoife Healy
Susan Heraghty
Neven Maguire
Seamus Sheridan
Con Traas
Jane Wells

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY - FORAS NA GAELIGE

Liam Ó Maoilmhichíl
(Chairperson of Foras na Gaelige/
Joint Chairperson of An Foras Teanga)
Eoghan Mac Cormaic
(Vice Chair)
Áine Andrews
Lucilita Breathnach
Seanna Breathnach
Adelaide Nic Cárthaigh
Máire Gallagher
Máiréad Nic Giolla Mhichíl
Liam Kennedy
Norman Henry
Éamonn Kinch
Marcas Mac Ruairi
Dónal Ó Bearra
Pádraic Ó Biadha
Diarmuid Ó Murchú
Caoilfhionn Nic Pháidín

THA BOORD O ULSTÈR SCOTCH

Mark Thompson
(Chairperson of Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch/
Joint Chairperson of North South Language Body)
Ian Adamson
Dr Aileen Douglas
Angela Graham
William Humphrey
William Leathem
Jacqui Reed
William Roulston

THE FOYLE, CARLINGFORD AND IRISH LIGHTS COMMISSION

Tarlach O Crosain
(Chairperson)
Jacqui McConville
(Vice Chairperson)
Enda Bonner
Brendan Byrne
John Byrne
Denis Haughey
Alan McCulla
Joe Miller
John Mulcahy
Winston Patterson
Thomas Sloan
Jim Wilson

THE TRADE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT BODY

David Dobbin
(Chairperson)

John Fitzgerald
(Vice Chairperson)

Brendan Butler

Ray Doherty

Rosaleen Doherty

Sean Gallagher

Jack Gilmour

Hugh Logue

Padraig MacLochlainn

Patricia McKeown

Dr Gerard O'Hare

Tom Scott

TOURISM IRELAND LIMITED

Hugh Friel
(Chairperson)

Ciara Boyle
(Vice-Chairperson)

Brian Ambrose

David Lyle

Robert Manson

Mandy Martin

Bill McGinnis

Tom McGrath

Moira McNamara

John Power

Shaun Quinn

Ann Riordan



