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Introduction

As Joint Secretaries we are pleased to present this, the fourth Annual Report of the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC), which covers the year 2003.

The operation of the NSMC during the year was affected by the continuing suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly, which had come into effect in October 2002. Following the introduction of suspension, the British and Irish Governments, by an exchange of notes on 19 November 2002, agreed that "Decisions of the North/South Ministerial Council on policies and actions relating to the Implementation Bodies, Tourism Ireland Limited or their respective functions shall be taken by our two Governments. No new functions shall be conferred on the Implementation Bodies". These arrangements were designed to ensure that the Bodies would continue to fulfil their important public functions on a "care and maintenance" basis, pending the restoration of devolved government to Northern Ireland.

In addition to the arrangements for the North/South Bodies described above, work in the "Areas for Co-operation" (matters in respect of which co-operation is taken forward by existing bodies in each jurisdiction separately) continued in 2003 and the Report details the progress made in their respect, also in terms of delivering tangible benefits to both parts of the island.

Once again, it has been our privilege to work with our colleagues in the Joint Secretariat to support the work of Ministers and to help maintain the efficient conduct of business. We commend the staff of the Secretariat for their commitment in continuing to provide a quality service in a complex and difficult environment.

During 2003 we worked with colleagues in the North/South Bodies and Departments in seeking to ensure the highest standards of public accountability by the Bodies, in terms both of the finance and regulatory requirements which must be met by public sector organisations, and of the necessity to deliver effectively on the important mandates given to them. To that end, we examined how collectively we could meet the standards of best practice in terms of corporate governance of the Bodies. As part of this process we organised two successful seminars in Armagh as well as a series of follow-up meetings, and this work on maintaining high standards of public sector governance continues today.

We would like to express our thanks for the continued co-operation and support of Ministers and officials in both jurisdictions, and in the North/South Bodies, and we look forward to continuing to play our part in taking forward the remit of North/South co-operation to mutual benefit.

Peter Smyth
Joint Secretary

Tim O'Connor
Joint Secretary

June 2004



Establishment

1.1 The North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) was established on Thursday 2 December 1999 on the entry into force of the British-Irish Agreement of 8 March 1999, which was signed by the British and Irish Governments as part of the Agreement reached in the Multi-Party Negotiations in Belfast on Good Friday, 10 April 1998 ("the Agreement"). The Agreement stipulates that the North/South Ministerial Council will bring together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government to develop consultation, co-operation and action within the island of Ireland - including through implementation on an all-island and cross-border basis - on matters of mutual interest and within the competence of each Administration, North and South.

1.2 The NSMC comprises Ministers of the Northern Ireland Administration and the Irish Government, working together to take forward co-operation between both parts of the island to mutual benefit.

Areas of Operation of the Council

1.3 The Agreement provided that at least 12 subject areas would be identified for co-operation and implementation. Co-operation in these areas would be taken forward in two ways - in the case of at least six of them by means of new North/South Implementation Bodies, and in the case of at least six others by means of existing bodies in each jurisdiction separately operating at a cross-border or all-island level.

1.4 The six Areas identified as those in which co-operation would be taken forward by the new North/South Implementation Bodies were:

- Inland Waterways;
- Food Safety;
- Trade and Business Development;
- Special EU Programmes;
- Language (Irish and Ulster-Scots); and
- Aquaculture and Marine Matters.

Aspects of six other Areas were identified as those in which co-operation would be taken forward by existing bodies in each jurisdiction separately (known as the 'Areas for Co-operation'):

- Agriculture;
- Education;
- Environment;
- Health;
- Transport; and
- Tourism

1.5 The Irish and British Governments subsequently concluded an Agreement on the establishment of the North/South Bodies on 8 March, 1999 ("the Implementation Bodies Agreement"). This set out the functions and structures of the North/South Bodies and the common arrangements applying to them, and was given domestic effect, North and South, by means of the North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order, 1999, and the British-Irish Agreement Act, 1999, respectively. Collectively, these organisations are known as the North/South Bodies, or simply as "the Bodies".

1.6 The 12 Areas constitute those matters on which the NSMC can take decisions by agreement on (a) policies for implementation separately in each jurisdiction and on (b) policies and actions at an all-island and cross-border level for implementation by the Bodies. Further development of these arrangements is possible by agreement in the Council, and with the specific endorsement of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Oireachtas, subject to remaining within the competences and responsibilities of the two Administrations.

The Formats of Council Meetings

1.7 The NSMC meets in a number of Formats. It meets in Plenary Format with the Northern Ireland Executive delegation led by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Irish Government delegation led by the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste. The task of the Plenary is to take an overview of co-operation on the island and of the North/South institutions.

1.8 The NSMC also meets in Institutional Format with the Northern Ireland Executive being represented by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Irish Government by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The task of the Institutional Format is to consider institutional and cross-sectoral issues, including issues relating to the European Union, and to resolve any disagreements.

1.9 The NSMC meets in Sectoral Format to oversee co-operation in the agreed 12 Areas or Sectors. At these meetings, the Irish Government is represented by the Minister responsible for that Sector, while the Northern Ireland Administration is represented by two Ministers nominated by the First Minister and Deputy First Minister on a cross-community basis, one normally being the Minister with responsibility for the relevant Sector within the Executive. This is in line with the requirement of the Agreement and the Northern Ireland Act 1998 that participation by the Executive in the NSMC must be such as to ensure cross-community involvement.

Suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly

1.10 Following the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly on 14 October 2002, an agreement between the UK and Irish Governments was made and contained in an Exchange of Notes dated 19 November 2002. This agreement provided a mechanism for decisions to be taken on policies and actions relating to the Bodies and Tourism Ireland during the period of suspension of the Assembly. Interim Procedures

have been put in place by the NSMC Joint Secretariat for the processing of Ministerial decisions while the arrangements set out in the Exchange of Notes between the two Governments apply.

Functions of the Council

1.11 The Council carries out a number of functions in accordance with Strand Two of the Agreement. These were set out in the Agreement, as follows:

- To exchange information, discuss and consult with a view to co-operation on matters of mutual interest within the competence of both Administrations, North and South;
- To use best endeavours to reach agreement on the adoption of common policies, in areas where there is a mutual cross-border and all-island benefit, and which are within the competence of both Administrations, North and South, making determined efforts to overcome any disagreements;
- To take decisions by agreement on policies for implementation separately in each jurisdiction, in relevant meaningful areas within the competence of both Administrations, North and South; and
- To take decisions by agreement on policies and action at an all-island and cross-border level to be implemented by the North/South Bodies.

North/South Bodies

1.12 Each of the six North/South Bodies operates on an all-island basis. While having a clear operational remit, all of them function under the overall direction of the NSMC, with accountability lines back, not only to the Council, the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Assembly, but also to the Finance and other Departments of government responsible for their funding in each jurisdiction.

The Bodies are:

- **Waterways Ireland;**
- **The Food Safety Promotion Board (FSPB);**
- **The Trade and Business Development Body (InterTradeIreland);**
- **The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB);**
- **The North/South Language Body** (consisting of two Agencies i.e. Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch); and
- **The Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC)** (consisting of two Agencies i.e. the Loughs Agency and The Lights Agency - see page 14).

1.13 In regard to three of the Bodies - InterTradeIreland, the North/South Language Body and the FCILC - the functions of each Body are exercised by a Board appointed by the NSMC. (Although not an Implementation Body, this is also the case with Tourism Ireland.) A fourth Body, the FSPB, has an advisory Board, also appointed by the NSMC, but the functions of the Body are exercised by the Chief Executive. The remaining two Bodies, Waterways Ireland and the SEUPB, do not have Boards; in each of these cases, the functions of the Body are exercised by the Chief Executive.

1.14 Further information on the work of the Bodies is set out in Chapter 2.

Areas For Co-Operation

1.15 The matters within the Areas for Co-operation that were agreed for initial consideration by the NSMC are as follows:

- **Education:** education for children with special needs (eg autism, hearing impairment), educational under-achievement, teacher qualifications, and school, youth and teacher exchanges;

- **Agriculture:** discussion of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) issues, animal and plant health policy and research, and rural development;
- **Environment:** water quality management, waste management in a cross-border context, research into environmental protection, environmental databases, environmental impact of agriculture, and information exchange and environmental awareness;
- **Health:** accident and emergency services, planning for major emergencies, high technology equipment, cancer research and health promotion;
- **Transport:** strategic planning and road and rail safety. While co-operation would primarily arise in respect of road and rail planning, it would take account of issues arising in the port and airport sectors; and
- **Tourism:** it was agreed to establish a publicly-owned limited company to market the island of Ireland overseas as a tourism destination.

1.16 Further information on the work of the NSMC in these areas is set out in Chapter 2.

North/South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat

1.17 A standing Joint Secretariat, staffed by members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Irish Civil Service, supports the work of the NSMC. Further information on the work of the Secretariat is set out in Annex 2.

This chapter provides an outline of the activities undertaken in each of the sectors in 2003.

Trade and Business Development Sector



Trade and Business Development Body - Inter *Tradel*reland

2.1.1 The Board of Inter *Tradel*reland is chaired by Dr Martin Naughton and the Vice-Chairperson is Mr. Barry Fitzsimons. The Chief Executive of Inter *Tradel*reland is Mr Liam Nellis. The Board members are listed in Annex 5.

Functions/Objective

2.1.2 Inter *Tradel*reland's mission, as stated in its Corporate Plan 2002-2004, is "to lead the development of the island economy through distinctive knowledge-based interventions, which will produce significant returns in the areas of cross-border trade and business development". Its overall objective is to promote North/South trade and business development. To achieve this Inter *Tradel*reland is working to develop the capability of businesses to trade on an all-island basis by increasing the stock of knowledge and information required by business and policy makers, and by improving the flow of such knowledge to those who can use it to create value.

2.1.3 Under the overall policy direction of the NSMC, Inter *Tradel*reland works in close collaboration with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Belfast, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Dublin, and with the existing development agencies, North and South.

2.1.4 Inter *Tradel*reland also has the objective of enhancing enterprise competitiveness in a North/South context in areas such as skills availability, telecoms, information technology and electronic commerce.

Activities

2.1.5 During 2003 Inter *Tradel*reland has delivered projects covering Trade Awareness, Trade Development, Business and Economic Research, Micro-Enterprise Support, Private Equity, Science and Technology, All-Island Benchmarking, and Supply Chain and Cluster Development.

Inter *Tradel*reland's key achievements during 2003 include:

- The creation of 9 strategic all-island partnerships, covering industrial sectors, universities and economic development agencies. These include Task Forces addressing all-island Science and Technology issues.
- The establishment of more than 60 technology transfer projects involving businesses and research institutes across the island, through the FUSION project.
- The creation of unique facilities such as the all-island Research and Development portal (expertiseireland.com) which has been achieved through collaboration with the nine universities on the island, the first all-island Seedcorn Competition (through the Inter *Tradel*reland EquityNetwork project) and the all-island Public Procurement Portal (go-source.com) which is a collaboration between Inter *Tradel*reland, Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland.
- Providing direct financial support to selected companies seeking to expand their businesses all-

island, through the FOCUS and ACUMEN Projects.

- Providing financial, legal and market information to more than 2,200 companies through island-wide seminars and the Body's Information Resource Centre.
- The promotion of trade awareness and the creation of business opportunities through a programme of all-island awards and events in partnership with other economic development organisations, including the organisation of the first major conference addressing All-Island Competitiveness at a government policy level.
- The preparation and publication of Business and Economic Research Reports such as North/South Trade Statistics, Quarterly Trade and Production Monitors, Market Sector Reports and Case Studies. The focus of these reports is to describe the collaborative competitive advantages of working in the context of an all-island economy and market.

2.1.6 In 2004 Inter *Tradel*reland will continue to prioritise, as cross-cutting themes, the development and facilitation of strategic relationships, networks and partnerships between businesses and business representative bodies, public sector institutions and education institutes in order to improve the value of all-island trade and business development activity.

2.1.7 Further information on Inter *Tradel*reland can be found on the Body's website www.intertradeireland.com

Food Safety Sector



Food Safety Promotion Board

2.2.1 The Food Safety Promotion Board (FSPB) is principally charged with the promotion of food safety, and supporting scientific co-operation between institutions working in that field. It has an Advisory Board of 12 members, appointed by the NSMC. The Board is chaired by Mr Bertie Kerr, and the Vice-Chairperson is Professor Charlie Daly. The Chief Executive of the FSPB is Mr Martin Higgins. The Board members are listed in Annex 5.

Functions/Objectives

2.2.2 The FSPB operates under the brand identifier 'safefood' or in the Irish language 'BiaSlán', and comprises three directorates - Scientific and Technical, Marketing and Communications, and Planning and Resources. This structure ensures that the Body is adequately resourced and the necessary supports are in place to develop and implement the programmes that support its remit and the realisation of its mission.

2.2.3 The FSPB carries out its role through publicity campaigns, specialist conferences, and by training and advising both professionals and the general public. It is also

involved in supporting North/South scientific co-operation, and links between institutions working in the field of food safety - laboratories, statutory food safety enforcement agencies and international and domestic research bodies. The development of cost-effective specialised laboratory testing also falls within the Board's remit. The Board also has a role to provide independent scientific assessment of food safety matters. Cross-border co-operation between organisations working in these areas is central to the work of the Board.

Activities

2.2.4 During the year **safefood** commenced the recruitment process for nine staff, to complete its initial approved complement of thirty, and completed the fitting out of a sub-office in Dublin for which prior approval had been granted by the NSMC.

2.2.5 The priority function of **safefood** is to promote food safety throughout the food chain, and to bring about acceptance that this is a responsibility shared by industry, the retail, catering and distribution sectors, health professionals and consumers. The organisation's promotional activities rely on a sound scientific basis for action and a key component here is its scientific research programme. During 2003, **safefood** commissioned nine major research projects, together with five postgraduate research fellowships. This brings to 37 the total of major projects funded.

2.2.6 In addition, a number of research networks were established to provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and ideas amongst professionals. Providing opportunities for partnership and collaboration is also a critical element of the **safefood** strategy. The organisation has been particularly successful in developing linkages between laboratories. By facilitating collaborative work programmes, short-term staff mobility programmes and seminars and workshops, scientific co-operation on the island of Ireland has been greatly enhanced. In May a major conference on best practice was held jointly with Excellence Ireland.

2.2.7 Food safety is a complex and dynamic field and, working with its advisory structures, **safefood** identified and addressed a number of emerging issues. These included a

review of new and emerging pathogens, assessment of food safety knowledge amongst consumers, and the need for harmonization of advice in relation to cooking and storage temperatures. In partnership with other public health bodies, the Body published the results of a major telephone survey on gastroenteritis on the island.

2.2.8 To complement this body of scientific work, **safefood** has used other mechanisms to gauge public awareness and to identify issues of concern. During September and October a series of thirteen public meetings was held at venues throughout the island. High profile events such as Food Safety Week and the RUAS Balmoral show in Northern Ireland, the Young Scientist Exhibition in Dublin, together with a number of more specialized seminars, allowed the Body to interact with a wide range of audiences.

2.2.9 A cornerstone of the **safefood** communications programme in 2003 was a multi-media advertising campaign aimed at improving hygiene awareness, with particular emphasis on hand washing. In order to ensure that the advertising programme was reaching the target audiences and having the desired effect, tracking research was commissioned to facilitate evaluation of the programme. The advertising campaign was complemented by a proactive communications plan surrounding scientific developments and publications.

2.2.10 **safefood** made a submission to the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland in relation to the advertising of foods to children, and is also engaged on an ongoing basis with the Food Standards Agency regarding related policies in the UK.

2.2.11 The organisation's Equality Scheme was approved during 2003.

2.2.12 Targeting of social need and social inclusion are key factors in improving public health through food safety and nutrition initiatives. 2003 saw the launch of the "Decent Food For All" project in the Dungannon/Armagh areas, for which **safefood** provided the majority of the funding. This project will be evaluated to assess whether this novel approach can be used as a template for other community-based initiatives.

2.2.13 Further information on **safefood** can be found on the Body's website www.safefoodonline.com

Aquaculture and Marine Sector



Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission

2.3.1 The NSMC meets in the Aquaculture and Marine Sector in order to take decisions on policies and action to be implemented by the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC).

2.3.2 The Implementation Bodies Agreement provides that the FCILC would exercise its functions through two agencies. The functions of the Commission in relation to the Foyle and Carlingford Areas are exercised through the Loughs Agency (which in respect of part of its remit inherited the functions of

the Foyle Fisheries Commission). The Implementation Bodies Agreement also provides that the FCILC should be the General Lighthouse Authority for the island of Ireland. This function currently rests with the Commissioners of Irish Lights, which has lines of accountability to the UK Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, acting as Trustee of the General Lighthouse Fund. British and Irish legislation will be required for the Body to become the General Lighthouse Authority for the island of Ireland and those functions are to be exercised through an agency of the FCILC known as the Lights Agency. However, at its Plenary meeting on 28 June 2002, the NSMC, having considered the provisions for the transfer of the functions

currently carried out by the Commissioners of Irish Lights, recognised that complex issues surrounded such a transfer and asked the relevant Ministers and Departments, North and South, to examine the alternative possibilities as a matter of urgency and bring back proposals to Council. It is intended to take this matter forward upon restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland.

2.3.3 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 Board is chaired by Mr Peter Savage and the Vice-Chairperson is Lord Cooke of Islandreagh. The Chief Executive of the Loughs Agency is Mr Derick Anderson. The membership of the Board is listed in Annex 5.

Loughs Agency

Functions/Objectives

2.3.4 The FCILC was given responsibility, which it exercises through the Loughs Agency, for the functions of the Foyle Fisheries Commission on 2 December 1999. These functions - "the conservation, protection and improvement of the fisheries of the Foyle Area" - were extended to the Carlingford Area.

2.3.5 In addition, through the Agency, FCILC is responsible for the promotion and development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough for commercial and recreational purposes in the area of marine fishery and aquaculture matters, the development of marine tourism, and the development and licensing of aquaculture in the Foyle and Carlingford Areas.

2.3.6 Fundamental to FCILC, through the Agency, undertaking this full range of responsibilities is the amendment of the primary legislation under which the Foyle Fisheries Commission operated. The necessary amendments to this legislation - the Foyle Fisheries Act 1952 and the Foyle Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1952 - are in the course of

preparation by the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Activities

2.3.7 Two new members were appointed to the Board of FCILC during the year. Ms Jacqui McConville replaced Ms Sheila Tyrrell, and Mr Tarlach Ó Crosáin replaced Mr Arthur Morgan. The Board met on six occasions during the year and continued the development of programmes and strategies to meet its responsibilities under the Implementation Bodies Agreement. The Board is committed to the delivery of these responsibilities through partnership and consultation, and to this end the Foyle Carlingford Area Advisory Forum met on five occasions under the leadership of its chair Mr Pat McLaughlin, its vice-chair Mr Eamon Mullan, and its secretary Mr Gary Neill. It discussed issues both in Focus Group format and in the wider Forum.

2.3.8 The Agency's interpretive education and information facility "Riverwatch" became fully operational during the year, with over 6,000 visitors to the centre. The outreach programme was targeted principally at schoolchildren, with a view to generating interest, creating knowledge and "ownership" of the resources of the Loughs and their catchments. This proved very successful through such initiatives as "Adopt a Stream", "Alevin Release" and "Hatchery in the Classroom".

2.3.9 Work is continuing to finalise the Bills to amend the Foyle Fisheries Acts to enable the responsibilities for aquaculture and shellfisheries to be undertaken by FCILC through the Agency. The preparation of plans and proposals for the regulation, management, promotion and development of these important and valuable fisheries towards optimum sustainability continues.

2.3.10 The experiences of other such fisheries in Europe, USA and Canada were presented at a workshop "Managing Shellfish for Sustainability" in Newry during May, which was attended by over 100 stakeholders. A similar workshop was

held in Derry during December on the “Management of Salmon for Sustainability”. Again experiences from Ireland, GB, Canada, Finland and Iceland were presented to an audience of some 120 anglers and netsmen, and these generated constructive debates and discussion.

2.3.11 The salmon runs back to the Foyle were again excellent and while a long dry spell during the summer and autumn inhibited angling activity, sufficient salmon moved into the fresh water to trigger a one-week extension to the commercial fishery season, as in 2002.

2.3.12 The development of the recreational fisheries of the areas moved forward in several ways. Regulations were introduced to simplify and harmonise the angling licence regime, with a view to encouraging more visitor or tourist anglers to the island. The Agency, with the assistance of angling experts from GB, undertook extensive surveys of the Loughs to establish their potential for development, and notable quantities of bass, tope, sea trout and other species were identified within the Agency's areas of responsibility.

2.3.13 With a similar objective in view, and building on the Audit of Fisheries-Based Recreation and Leisure Resources completed last year, a five-year Development Plan for recreational fisheries was commissioned and completed during the year. The Agency will formally launch this during 2004.

2.3.14 This methodology is also being applied to the Marine Tourism Sector, and the Agency, in partnership with the North-West Region Cross-Border Group and the East Border Region Group has brought forward proposals for an audit of the marine tourism resources in both areas. This proposal received Ministerial approval towards the end of the year, and consultants will report during 2004.

2.3.15 Further information on the Loughs Agency can be found on the Body's website www.loughs-agency.org

Special EU Programmes Sector



Special EU Programmes Body

Functions/Objectives

2.4.1 In 1999, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) assumed responsibility for the management of the 1994-1999 round of EU Structural Fund Programmes, which previously had been undertaken by the Department of Finance and Personnel in the North and the Department of Finance in the South. This responsibility included the closure of these Programmes no later than 31 March 2003. The SEUPB also became the Managing Authority for the PEACE II and INTERREG IIIA Programmes, with responsibility for monitoring the performance

of the North/South elements of the other Community Initiative Programmes (LEADER+, EQUAL and URBAN II). The SEUPB also has responsibility for monitoring and promoting the implementation of co-operation between the two parts of Ireland through the terms of the Common Chapter, which is an integral component of the both the National Development Plan for Ireland and the Northern Ireland Structural Funds Plan. Ms Nuala Kerr is Acting Chief Executive of the SEUPB.

Activities

2.4.2 2003 was a challenging and extremely busy year for the SEUPB and for the PEACE II and INTERREG IIIA Programmes.

The SEUPB received approval to recruit additional staff within its staffing complement, and undertook an extensive programme of recruitment in the latter part of the year. Even so, the Body faced many work challenges under continued pressures of staffing shortages. It incorporated Corporate Governance best practice into its administration system, and rolled out the Central Payments Unit to work at full capacity. The Body's Equality Scheme was approved in June 2003.

2.4.3 The primary focus for the PEACE II Programme was to ensure that the financial targets for drawing down funds set by the EU Commission, commonly referred to as N+2, were met for 2003. Four Monitoring Committee meetings were held and the Body was instrumental in moving forward a process of simplifying the application, monitoring and evaluation of the Programme to improve transparency.

2.4.4 A series of PEACE II Roadshows was launched throughout the eligible area in April and concluded in June. These events enabled groups and Implementing Bodies to come together to look at the way the Programme was developing, and to meet with senior members of the Body.

2.4.5 Following discussions with the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, the community and voluntary sector and the responsible departments, the Body chaired meetings of a 60 Day Action Team which dealt specifically with further simplifications to the PEACE II Programme. The results of this Action Team initiative were launched on 10 December at a conference in Belfast which attracted over 200 participants, including members of funded projects and Implementing Bodies.

2.4.6 A suite of publications, including Service Standards for the Programme, was also launched at that event. The publications provide clear guidance on what is expected from Implementing Bodies, and what they in turn can expect from the SEUPB.

2.4.7 A more pro-active publicity campaign was mounted which resulted in positive coverage and a better relationship with the media.

2.4.8 By December 2003, some €600 million had been committed and over 3,000 projects were benefiting from the PEACE II Programme.

2.4.9 The INTERREG IIIA Programme made the first funding awards to projects at a selection meeting in June. The most important task was to develop and implement the Programme procedures, and to ensure that all funding measures were open.

2.4.10 Throughout 2003, INTERREG IIIA visited a number of locations in the eligible area with an information roadshow, combining this with the formal launch of the INTERREG IIIA Implementing Agents such as ICBAN, ESB and NWRCB.

2.4.11 By the end of 2003, nearly €58 million had been committed and a total of 242 applications had been received. INTERREG IIIA faces the challenge of N+2 in 2004 with a financial expenditure target of some €44 million.

2.4.12 SEUPB continued its commitment to the other Community Initiatives with the participation of the Director of Community Initiatives in a high profile URBAN II Conference held in the autumn of 2003, and with continued oversight of this and other programmes.

2.4.13 Further information on SEUPB can be found on the Body's website www.seupb.org

Language Sector

The North/South Language Body (An Foras Teanga/Tha Boord o Leid)

Functions/Objectives

2.5.1 The Language Body is a single Body reporting to the NSMC, but composed of two separate agencies - the Irish Language Agency/Foras na Gaeilge, and the Ulster-Scots Agency/Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch.

2.5.2 The Chairperson of Foras na Gaeilge, and the Chairperson of Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch, are joint Chairpersons of the Language Body. Maighréad Uí Mháirtín is Chairperson of Foras na Gaeilge. During 2003 Lord Laird of Altgarvan was Chairperson of Tha Boord o Ulstèr - Scotch. The Body has a Board of 24 members appointed by the NSMC. A list of Board Members and their agencies is at Annex 5.



Foras Na Gaeilge

Functions/Objectives

2.5.3 Through Foras na Gaeilge the Body has responsibility for the promotion of the Irish language on an all-island basis.

2.5.4 As well as taking over the functions of Bord na Gaeilge, the Body was given a wide range of functions to add to its effectiveness in promoting Irish. For example, in the area of education, dictionaries and terminology, it assumed responsibility for the Terminology Committee and took over the functions of An Gúm.

2.5.5 Maighr  ad U   M  airtin is Chairperson of Foras na Gaeilge and there are 15 other members on the Board of the Body, who have responsibility for the functions of the Body through Foras na Gaeilge (see Annex 5). The Chief Executive is Mr Seosamh Mac Donncha.

Activities

2.5.6 Activities undertaken by Foras na Gaeilge during the year included:

- Funding for more than 20 Irish language organisations, North and South, as well as substantive projects and minor ventures;
- Sponsorship for a number of projects, including the All-Ireland Camogie Final in Croke Park, F  ile an Phobal in Belfast, Ros na R  n on TG4 and the Comhaltas Ceolt  ir     ireann Macalla na h  ireann all-island tour;
- In the area of publications, Foras na Gaeilge provided funding for Foinse, L  , Comhar, Feasta, An tUltach, www.beo.ie, and also published 11 editions of its own newspaper SAOL;
- The Irish Language Development Officer scheme was continued in local authorities, health boards and in the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland in partnership with Foras na Gaeilge;
- Research was commissioned on attitudes to the Irish Language, North and South;
- Joint funding of CCEA post was agreed to assist in making the new primary level syllabus suitable for the Irish Medium Sector;
- Working with and advising NCEA on the Irish language syllabus as part of the initiative "Languages in the Primary Curriculum";
- Irish-Medium Resource Unit, Belfast, grant-aided to produce a series of new textbooks for first level curriculum;

- Multimedia storytelling project piloted in first-level schools, North and South;
- Project to facilitate transition of pupils in first level schools to Irish-medium secondary schools piloted North and South;
- Development and publication (in association with private sector) of computer software courses to teach Irish;
- Funding continued (in association with the Department of Education) of Comhairle na Gaelscola  ochta Strategic Development Plan;
- The contract for Phase One of the English-Irish Dictionary Project was signed and work commenced. Phase One is the technical and planning phase of the project and is due for completion in October 2004. One hundred full sample entries for the print and electronic versions of the dictionary will be produced at the end of this phase, as well as all the technical and work templates for the completion of the project;
- Production of almost 80 individual publications including primary and post-primary educational resources, textbooks, digital material, language reference material and reading material for young people;
- The first package of language resource material was produced for Junior Infants as part of the joint project by Foras na Gaeilge and the Department of Education and Science in relation to educational resources for teaching Irish in Irish-medium primary schools and Gaeltacht primary schools in the South;
- Successful workshops in bilingual lexicography were organised in Dublin and Galway with a view to training potential lexicographers and translators for the Dictionary Project;
- Over 3,500 terminological inquiries were dealt with, and some 1,700 new terms or terminological phrases were sanctioned and published in the monthly journal, Comhar;

- New material was issued on the Web site www.acmhainn.ie, including the Irish-English side of the new Dictionary of Literary Criticism, an expanded and updated version of Woodwork Terms, and a grammatical document containing An Coiste T  arma  ochta's new recommendations concerning lenition and inflexion in certain circumstances;
- A trial version of the CD of Terminology, comprising 9 dictionaries, was published in November;
- 3 new Subcommittees were established (in the fields of Education, Business and Home Economics) and have been meeting on a monthly basis;
-   is (the book wholesaling division of Foras na Gaeilge) had total sales of   1,064,177 in 2003, an increase of 4.36% on the previous year. 147 new Irish language publications were added to the stock list in 2003;
- In partnership with Tha Boord o Ulst  r-Scotch and The British Council (Belfast and Dublin), An Foras organised a symposium entitled "Language and Law in Northern Ireland" which was held in Parliament Buildings, Stormont, on 20-21 February, at the invitation of the Minister with responsibility for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Angela Smith, MP;

- Over 150 projects relating to the arts - arts festivals, film-making, the visual arts, story-telling and mime, drama and puppetry, sean-n  s singing - were supported and sponsored throughout the island;
- Training workshops for creative writers, actors, directors and sean-n  s singers were conducted throughout the island, organised and supported by Foras na Gaeilge; and
- Over 25 translation agencies and projects relating to the development of software, websites, and terminology were grant-aided.

2.5.7 Further information on Foras na Gaeilge can be found on the Agency's website www.forasnagaeilge.ie



Tha Boord o Ulstèr Scotch

The Ulster-Scots Agency

Functions/Objectives

2.5.8 Through Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch the Body has responsibility for the promotion of greater awareness and use of Ullans and of Ulster-Scots cultural issues, both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island.

2.5.9 The Lord Laird of Artigarvan was the Chairman of Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch during 2003 and there are 7

other members on the Board of the Body who have responsibility for the functions of the Body through Tha Boord o Ulstèr Scotch (see Annex 5). The Chief Executive of Tha Boord is Mr George Patton.

Activities

2.5.10 The 2003 Business Plan for Tha Boord o Ulstèr Scotch is aligned with Tha Boord's Corporate Plan 2002-2004 and is designed to fulfil the Agency's Mission Statement "to promote the study, conservation, development and use of Ulster-Scots as a living language, to encourage and develop the full range of its attendant culture and to promote an

understanding of the history of the Ulster-Scots". To this end, the Agency takes advantages of opportunities to promote the Ulster-Scots language, culture and history throughout the island of Ireland.

2.5.11 The Agency continues to focus on four strategic themes - Linguistic Development, Culture, Education and Public Understanding of Ulster-Scots. The Business Plan defines the programme of work that translates these themes into action, and outlines the resources, objectives, key deliverables, targets and associated impact.

2.5.12 2003 witnessed the completion of the material for Key Stages I and II in primary schools by the Ulster-Scots Project Team at Stranmillis University College. Work has also commenced on the preparation of materials for use in secondary schools, and on an Adult Language Project.

2.5.13 The Agency continues to fulfil its remit in providing financial support through its grants scheme to a wide range of community groups who engage in Ulster-Scots activities. In 2003 the Agency offered a total of 305 grants to 148 groups.

2.5.14 March 2003 saw the launch of what has proved to be the Agency's successful website. This development has played a vital role in the Agency's strategic plan for raising public awareness. Similarly the continued production of the Ulster-Scots newspaper and the provision of leaflets on people and events in Ulster-Scots history have had a positive impact.

2.5.15 The Agency employed its first permanent staff in the course of the year and in welcoming this development, tribute must also be paid to those who either on secondment or engaged in a temporary capacity ensured that the Agency continued to progress.

2.5.16 Further information on the Ulster-Scots Agency can be found on the website www.ulsterscotsagency.com

Inland Waterways Sector



Waterways Ireland

Functions/Objectives

2.6.1 Waterways Ireland's primary function is the management, maintenance, development and restoration of specified inland navigable waterway systems throughout the island, principally for recreational purposes. Waterways Ireland is responsible for the navigation systems detailed in paragraph 2.6.2, which were previously under the respective control of the Department of Community, Rural, and Gaeltacht Affairs in the South and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland.

2.6.2 The systems referred to above are - the Shannon-erne Waterway, the Erne System, the Grand Canal, the Barrow Navigation, the Lower Bann Navigation, the Royal Canal, and the Shannon Navigation.

2.6.3 Waterways Ireland is also charged with taking forward further studies and appraisals in relation to the possible restoration of the Ulster Canal.

2.6.4 The Body operates in three regions: Northern, Eastern and Western.

2.6.5 The Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland is Mr John Martin.

Activities

2.6.6 2003 marked yet another milestone in the commitment of Waterways Ireland to create a unique environment for all inland waterway users.

2.6.7 From an operational viewpoint, the recreation and user facilities on the waterways continued to be enhanced. Landing jetties were installed at locations on the Royal Canal, the Barrow Navigation, the Grand Canal and the Lower Bann. Other projects included embankment reconstruction at Bagnagh Bog on the Royal Canal and bank protection work on the Grand Canal. On the Shannon Navigation, floating moorings at Shannonbridge opened on 25th June; and on the Shannon-erne, access works to the river bank with stabilisation of the bank structure at Mullanwary were carried out.

2.6.8 Work continued on two large-scale projects - at Ballyleague Harbour, Roscommon to create a 32 berth marina, scheduled to open in June 2004; and in Scariff Harbour to extend the existing quay wall and provide jetties close to the town centre, scheduled to open in April 2004.

2.6.9 Consultation took place with interested parties and planning authorities on the Shannon regarding the design and nature of works at Portrunny, Barley and Garrykennedy harbours. The restoration works on the Royal Canal continued with feasibility studies and negotiations completed regarding the construction of four bridges along the canal.

2.6.10 On the human resources front, Waterways Ireland undertook a recruitment exercise to fill 21 approved posts. This generated over 2000 expressions of interest. The training needs of the organisation were addressed in terms of training needs analyses, procurement of training, and the provision of in-house training. Development of human resources policies and procedures continued, and currently interim policies are in place pending further consultation.

2.6.11 The Finance Division advanced the development of financial procedures with draft purchasing procedures being issued. 2003 also saw the implementation of cash reporting for the sponsoring Departments and the introduction of financial management reports.

2.6.12 Work on the Waterways Ireland Corporate Plan for 2005- 2007 commenced in December, while policy development continued with work on Houseboats, Vacant Property and Onshore Facilities. The Equality Scheme, approved by the NSMC in 2002, was implemented with the rollout of awareness training for staff and the development of a process for screening policies.

2.6.13 Following public consultation meetings, together with input from staff and management, tourism, recreation/interest bodies and customers of Waterways Ireland, the Waterways Ireland Marketing and Promotion Strategy was adopted in late 2003. This had the objectives of awareness creation; development of Waterways Ireland's corporate identity; promoting greater use of the waterways; working in partnership with other bodies; and building a platform for sustained market development.

2.6.14 Marketing activity during the year included participation in the IMF Dublin Boat Show and the Ireland Angling Show; as well as sponsorship of angling, sailing and rowing events on the Erne System, the Shannon, the Shannon-erne, the Royal and Grand Canals and the Lower Bann. A series of brochures on each of the seven waterways under the remit of the organisation was published to highlight the character, navigation and activities on each waterway. 2003 also saw the publication of the first "What's On" guide featuring the events taking place along the seven waterways.

2.6.15 The annual Waterways Ireland staff conference took place in Coleraine in November and was attended by 130 members of staff, together with representatives of the sponsoring Departments and the Joint Secretariat of the NSMC. Officially opened by the Mayor of Coleraine, Councillor Stewart, the theme of recreation on the waterways was explored. A number of speakers from Ireland and the UK gave presentations to the conference.

2.6.16 A staff newsletter was introduced by the organisation in 2003. Editorial control was given to a voluntary committee, and two editions of the newsletter were produced.

2.6.17 Further information on Waterways Ireland can be found on the Body's website www.waterwaysireland.org

Tourism Sector



Tourism Ireland

2.7.1 The NSMC in this sector oversees the work of Tourism Ireland, the publicly-owned limited company which is responsible for marketing the island of Ireland overseas as a tourist destination. The Company has a Board of 12 members appointed by NSMC (see Annex 5). The Chairperson of the Company is Mr Andrew Coppel and the Vice-Chairperson is Ms Ann Riordan. The Chief Executive is Mr Paul O'Toole.

Activities

2.7.2 Despite challenging circumstances (SARS and the war in Iraq), 2003 ended on a high note for the tourism industry on the island of Ireland, with an estimated 4.5% - 5% growth in all-island visitor numbers for the year, a predicted growth of at least 8.3% in visitors to Northern Ireland, and an approximate 4% increase in visitors to the rest of Ireland.

2.7.3 Overall, in 2003, the island of Ireland experienced a significant gain in market share in both a global and European context, outperforming top traditional holiday destinations including GB, France and Spain.

2.7.4 In particular, there was strong growth in visitor numbers from mainland Europe, as well as a welcome recovery in the North American market. Visitor numbers from GB, the island of Ireland's largest source market, are estimated to have increased by 4.5%.

2.7.5 Following a strategic and comprehensive planning process involving Tourism Ireland, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Bord Fáilte (now Fáilte Ireland), and the tourism industry, Tourism Ireland's 2003 consumer marketing was based on:

- Identifying and evaluating those markets that offered the best prospect for growth, then identifying and targeting the strategic and tactical segments within those markets - the 'best prospect' customers;
- Examining how best to communicate the benefits of a holiday on the island of Ireland to these potential customers, and
- Determining the appropriate marketing mix for each segment.

2.7.6 Using the marketing tools and funds available, Tourism Ireland's 19 overseas market offices undertook a wide range of above and below the line marketing activities, tailored to suit each market, depending on whether it was advanced (eg GB, North America, France and Germany), developing (eg Australia, Italy and the Netherlands) or emerging (eg Spain, the Nordics and Japan).

2.7.7 Above the line activity included a global advertising campaign, incorporating television, print and radio; while below the line activity included direct marketing campaigns and familiarisation trips for international tour operators. There was also an extensive publicity campaign, which brought journalists from all over the world to the island of Ireland, so they could sample the benefits of a holiday in Ireland for themselves.

2.7.8 Tourism Ireland implemented the most extensive ever Autumn/Winter campaigns in 2003 in key overseas markets. The campaigns were aimed at maximising business

opportunities to year-end and to kick-start and stimulate business for 2004. The €8 million programme, the largest ever, was focussed mainly on GB, North America, France and Germany, where market intelligence suggested best return on investment in the short term.

2.7.9 In 2003, Tourism Ireland continued with its commitment to support Northern Ireland to realise its tourism potential. For example, the 'North by North-West' campaign, which took place in Autumn 2003 teamed up Tourism Ireland with leading travel partners to offer great value inclusive holidays to Northern Ireland and North-West Ireland. Ferry companies, airlines, tour operators and accommodation providers worked with Tourism Ireland to encourage visitors to stay a little longer by offering hundreds of special offers.

2.7.10 At the end of 2003, two major reports were published which set out very significant targets for the growth and development of tourism over the coming decade - in the South, the Report of the Tourism Policy Review Group; and in Northern Ireland, the report of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's Tourism Strategy Group.

2.7.11 Tourism Ireland is fully committed to playing its role in providing the support that industry enterprises will require to realise the further tourism potential that the two reports identify for the island.

2.7.12 Tourism Ireland has set out ambitious plans for 2004, aiming to increase all-island visitor numbers by 4.4% in this year to over 7.7 million, within which the target for Northern Ireland is a 6.9% growth.

2.7.13 Tourism Ireland will continue to focus the bulk of its resources on GB, North America, France and Germany. The GB market is targeted to grow by 3.5%, mainland Europe by 5.8% and North America by 6.6% in 2004.

2.7.14 Going forward into 2004, Tourism Ireland will continue to work with the industry to build on the upturn in visitor numbers and capitalise on the emerging opportunities.

2.7.15 Further information on Tourism Ireland can be found on the Company's website www.tourismireland.com

Chief Executives



Photo: From left to right
 Liam Nellis, John Martin, Peter Smyth, Nuala Kerr,
 Paul O'Toole, Tim O'Connor, Derick Anderson,
 Seosamh Mac Donncha, Martin Higgins and George Patton

Education Sector

2.8.1 The aspects of North/South co-operation in Education that were agreed for initial consideration by the NSMC were education for children with special needs; educational under-achievement; teacher qualifications; and school, youth and teacher exchanges.

Activities

2.8.2 To progress these aspects a number of Joint Working Groups were established. Although there were no formal meetings of the Education sector during 2003, the Working Groups continued to meet and carry forward the work which the NSMC had previously mandated them. This has resulted in progress within the designated areas as described in the following paragraphs.

School, Youth and Teacher Exchange Working Group North/South Exchange Consortium

- The NSMC endorsed the intention of the Education Departments, North and South, to proceed to give effect to the proposal that a consortium of public sector bodies be established to improve the ways which cross-border schools, youth and teacher exchanges are managed and facilitated.
- While in 2003 it was not possible to proceed to give full effect to the establishment of a joint North/South delivery agency to manage cross-border schools, youth, youth worker and teacher exchanges, an interim arrangement has been put in place which includes the commissioning of necessary research into school, youth and teacher co-operation between North and South. This research will produce specific figures on the number of school, youth and teacher exchanges and will identify best practice, duplication and gaps in provision.

Special Education Co-Ordination Group Middletown Centre

- Agreement was reached between the two Education Departments and representatives of the St. Louis Order, for the purchase of the former St. Joseph's Adolescent Training Centre, Middletown, Co. Armagh, for the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in the education of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Centre is to be an all-island facility providing expert advice and guidance on best practice in the field of assessment of children and young people with ASD, the training of teachers and other professionals, support for parents, and the development of education plans for individuals.

Autism and Dyslexia Resources

- Two significant initiatives in relation to the production of resources (CD-ROMs and videos) in respect of autism and dyslexia were undertaken.
- The resources for parents and teachers who require information on ASD were made available to every school in Ireland during 2003. Similar products, which have been developed in regard to dyslexia, will be available by the end of May 2004.

Literacy/Numeracy Working Group

- Information and updates have been provided on initiatives taken by both sides, and joint training has taken place in 2003, particularly in the area of literacy. An Author on Line training course was included in the RTU Summer School programme, and a number of places were made available to teachers from the South. The Department of Education and Science (DES) organised a First Steps (in Literacy) course for trainers, and places were made available for representatives from the North.

- The Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) provided colleagues in DES with a copy of an evaluation of the Enriched Curriculum pilot project which had been carried out in its area. In addition, materials prepared by the NI Numeracy Group for parents to enable them to support their children in learning mathematics were shared with DES colleagues.
- The group has continued to consider the establishment of a joint training facility for Reading Recovery and the development of early literacy skills.

Qualifications and Superannuation

- The Joint Superannuation Working Group has identified a range of options for effecting pension transfer arrangements for teachers. In examining the possible alternatives, the Working Group aims to ensure that teachers moving between the two jurisdictions, with consequent transfer of accrued pension rights, will be awarded benefits in the receiving scheme of broadly equivalent value to the benefits which would have been received in the surrendering scheme.

- As the establishment of the one transfer scheme would impact on the transfer of other public sector pension schemes, the Teachers Superannuation Group will liaise closely with those taking forward the recommendations on Public Sector Pensions generally on the island, contained in the "Obstacles to Mobility Study" and mandated by the Council Plenary in June 2002, including the proposed Pensions Working Group, when established.

EU Peace II Programme

2.8.3 Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland receive financial support from the European Union under the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE II) 2000-2004. The overall EU aid for PEACE II is €500 million, of which €100 million is allocated to the Border Region. Measure 5.5 of the Programme is dedicated to providing funding for education, cross-border school and youth co-operation projects. To date 50 applications have been received in respect of this measure, and by the end of June 2004, it is anticipated that €4.85 million will have been allocated to 14 successful cross-border projects.

Agriculture Sector

2.9.1 The aspects of North/South co-operation in Agriculture that were agreed for initial consideration by the NSMC were Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) issues, animal and plant health policy and research, and rural development.

Activities

2.9.2 During 2003 the Agriculture sector of the NSMC has progressed:

- The development of an all-island Animal Health Strategy for control of animal movements and the prevention, containment and eradication of epizootic diseases in Ireland. This involves the convergence of animal health policies North and South and the development of joint strategies for dealing with animal diseases. The ultimate objectives are to establish a common import regime and equivalent internal arrangements with a view to achieving free movement of animals and animal products within the island. A joint position paper between the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF) was developed during 2003;
- A total of nine policy working groups have been established at official level to take forward various initiatives. The remit of these groups includes TB and Brucellosis, TSEs (BSE and Scrapie), veterinary medicines, other Zoonoses and animal diseases, disease surveillance, animal welfare, import and export of live animals and animal products, animal identification, traceability and cross-border aspects of fraud;

- Both Agriculture Departments have been examining sectors such as organic farming, crop variety testing and training for further potential co-operation;
- Further progress was made on the development of an All-island Plant Health and Research Strategy, including co-operation between the two jurisdictions in relation to plant protection products. Meetings have taken place on Plant Health matters of common interest. In the Pesticides sector, contacts were further developed and maintained. The first phase of a 4-year cycle of usage surveys for plant protection products, conducted on an all-island basis, was initiated. The first phase is due for completion in 2004 and relates to use on grassland and forage crops; and
- Liaison also took place on issues arising at WTO, EU enlargement and the mid-term review of the CAP.

Environment Sector

2.10.1 The aspects of North/South co-operation in Environment that were agreed for initial consideration by the NSMC include water quality management, waste management in a cross-border context, research into environmental protection, environmental databases, environmental impact of agriculture, information exchange and environmental awareness.

Activities

2.10.2 Progress was maintained in taking forward the previously mandated work programme of the NSMC on a range of environmental issues:

- A joint consultation exercise was undertaken on the co-ordinated implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and in particular the delineation of International River Basin Districts (IRBDs). The delineation of IRBDs under the Directive was agreed with subsequent legislation (with common elements) for transposition of the Directive enacted in each jurisdiction. A proposal was developed for EU funding under INTERREG for cross-border WFD implementation activities, and approval in principle for the project, costing an estimated €7.5 million (£5.1 million), was obtained from the Interreg Steering Committee;

- Work continued on developing an all-island strategic approach to market development for recyclable material, and agreement was reached on an all-island contract for the management and disposal of waste fridges/freezers; and
- Work continued on a scoping study into the main environmental impacts of agriculture, including an inventory of relevant management practices and controls currently applied to agriculture, North and South with an emphasis on water quality impacts in particular. The study will provide an information base and identify a range of options, which could provide a basis for future co-operation in this area.

2.10.3 An initial work programme aimed at developing opportunities for information exchange and raising environmental awareness in areas of common interest was taken forward in 2003. The work involved co-operative initiatives on shared information resources, including the exchange of publications, staff exchange, joint exhibitions, conferences and website links.

Health Sector

2.11.1 The aspects of North/South co-operation in Health that were agreed for initial consideration by the NSMC were Accident and Emergency Services, Planning for Major Emergencies, High Technology Equipment, Cancer Research and Health Promotion.

Activities

2.11.2 Contacts between officials of the two Departments and others involved in progressing the health co-operation agenda continued through 2003.

2.11.3 In relation to **Accident and Emergency Services**, the North/South Regional Hospitals Service Group (NSRHSG) was tasked with overseeing developments and considering opportunities for developing partnerships covering wider regional services:

- local cross-border collaboration covering hospitals in the border areas; and
- wider co-operation on a regional or supra-regional basis, covering specialist services which are, or could only be, viable where delivered on an all-island basis.

2.11.4 Although the NSRHSG did not formally meet during the year, groundwork has continued in a number of areas where the benefits of co-operation were considered and where reviews of services were undertaken.

2.11.5 Three joint North/South Working Groups continued their assignments in the field of **Planning for Major Emergencies** in the areas of:

- Hospital and Community-Related Emergency Planning;
- Pre-Hospital Emergency Care; and
- Fire Services.

2.11.6 The cross-border co-operation initiative, CAWT (Co-operation and Working Together), was appointed to undertake a project management role in order to progress a number of initiatives in the areas of Hospital and Community-Related Emergency Planning and Pre-Hospital Emergency Care.

2.11.7 Other progress includes:

- completion of a resource mapping exercise and communications protocol for community care facilities in border areas;
- establishment of a programme of emergency planning training courses covering the medical response to a major emergency;
- finalisation of a feasibility study on the costs and benefits of an all-island Helicopter Emergency Medical Service;
- development of costed "First Responder" schemes in border areas;
- developing a road traffic accident response strategy for fire brigades in border areas (including familiarisation and joint training); and
- co-operation in fire prevention awareness campaigns.

2.11.8 In relation to **High Technology Equipment**, the Joint Health Technology Assessment Group set in train a range of work to be taken forward jointly, in the areas of:

- Positron Emission Tomography (PET);
- Specialised Radio-Therapy Treatments for Cancer;
- Acute Facilities Support Services;
- Joint Access to European Union Health Technology Assessment Networks and Expertise; and
- North/South Radiotherapy Physics Audit Scheme.

2.11.9 The Group also identified a number of co-operative areas of work where it may be more beneficial to make progress or share information on a joint basis. These include issues around population screening, immunology and genetics and the Unique Patient Identifier Project. Officials met on 3 June 2003 to review progress and to consider a future agenda.

2.11.10 Action on **Cancer Research** continued in the context of the Memorandum of Understanding of October 1999 which established a Cancer Consortium between the National Cancer Institute, USA and the Health Departments, North and South.

2.11.11 Among the activities of the Consortium during the year were:

- the second All-Ireland Cancer Conference which took place in Cork on 20 - 22 October 2003. This conference was a follow-up to the inaugural conference in Belfast in 1999;
- The launch of the first all-Ireland Cancer Network in February 2003. The network will ensure that patients, North and South, have access to the latest and most effective cancer therapies; and
- the continuation of the Scholar Exchange and Nursing Exchange programmes.

2.11.12 Regular meetings continued between the Health Promotion authorities, North and South. This work has been enhanced through the appointment (in March 2003) of a North/South programme manager, whose main role is to develop a co-ordinated North/South health promotion programme. Progress has included:

- **Physical Activity:** Following the success of the first all-island Physical Activity Conference in November 2002, it was agreed that the theme of the next All-Ireland Physical Activity Conference will be obesity, with the emphasis on prevention. The conference is scheduled for November 2004;
- **Research:** Discussions have commenced with a view to the establishment of an all-island database of health and lifestyle data;
- **Health Promoting Hospitals:** A Health Promoting Hospitals Co-ordinator is soon to be appointed in Northern Ireland. Proposals for a joint North/South Strategy and a proposal to jointly host the 2005 European Conference, were under consideration at the end of the year;
- **Training:** A joint training seminar on Principles of Health Promotion took place in June. Following the seminar, it was decided to set up a Working Group to examine the possibility of putting in place formal structures for future co-operation;
- **Alcohol:** A Joint Seminar on Alcohol Policy was held in Dublin in September; and
- **Workplace Health Promotion:** The two Health Promotion authorities are co-operating in preparation for the Fourth European Conference on Promoting Workplace Health, to be held in Dublin Castle in June 2004.

Transport Sector

2.12.1 The aspects of North/South co-operation in Transport that were agreed for initial consideration by the NSMC were strategic planning and road and rail safety. While co-operation would primarily arise in respect of road and rail planning, it would take account of issues arising in the port and airport sectors.

Activities

2.12.2 Despite the suspension of devolved institutions in Northern Ireland, co-operation and contact between the two Administrations has continued on a practical level in the transport sector. The Irish Minister for Transport, Mr Seamus Brennan, T.D., met with Ms Angela Smith, M.P. Minister at

the Northern Ireland Office on 11 February 2003. Meetings also took place at senior official level during 2003 between the Department of Transport and the Departments for Regional Development and for the Environment in Northern Ireland. Those meetings focused on cross-border road and rail developments, road and rail safety issues, the road haulage sector, and the future development of City of Derry Airport.

2.12.3 During 2003 the Irish Exchequer, with the agreement of the Northern Ireland authorities, continued to provide financial support under EU rules for the air services operated between City of Derry Airport and Dublin by the Scottish carrier Loganair.

Under the Interim Procedures in place the following decisions were taken in 2003:

Trade and Business Development

- **Agreed** on 30 January, the appointment of Board Members to Inter *Tradelreland* from 13 December 2002 to 12 December 2005; and that Dr Martin Naughton be reappointed Chairperson, and that Mr Barry Fitzsimons be appointed Vice-Chairperson.
- **Recommended** on 25 February, the budget provision for 2003, including the respective contributions North and South, and the indicative total budgets for 2004-05.
- **Approved** on 28 February, Inter *Tradelreland*'s Operating Plan for 2003.
- **Noted** on 28 July, Inter *Tradelreland*'s Annual Report and Accounts for 2002.
- **Approved** on 17 December, Inter *Tradelreland*'s Business Plan for 2004; **recommended** the budget provision for Inter *Tradelreland*, including the respective contributions North and South; and **noted** the projected total budgets for 2005-2006.

Food Safety

- **Agreed** on 29 January, the appointment of members to the Advisory Board from 13 December 2003 to 12 December 2005; and that Mr Bertie Kerr be reappointed Chairperson and that Professor Charlie Daly be appointed Vice-Chairperson.
- **Agreed** on 6 February, that Mr Ronan Garvey should be replaced by Mr Odran Flynn on the Advisory Board, and that this appointment should be effective from 13 December 2002 to 12 December 2005.
- **Recommended** on 27 February, the budget provision for 2003 for the FSPB, including the respective contributions North and South; and the indicative total budgets for 2004-05.

- **Confirmed** on 2 April, the appointment of the Chief Executive of the FSPB and **approved** the application of the 4% general round increase applicable to public sector workers, including Chief Executives, in the South with effect from 1 October 2002, subject to the approval of Finance Ministers.
- **Approved** on 25 November, (i) the creation, grading and remuneration of 9 posts; (ii) the recruitment of staff by open competition to fill the posts; and (iii) that future adjustment in salary for all staff (excluding the Chief Executive) should be in line with the corresponding grades in the Irish Civil and Public Service, and shall be agreed between the Sponsoring Departments and Finance Departments without further reference to the NSMC.
- **Approved** on 18 December, the Business Plan for 2004; **recommended** the budget provision for the FSPB as set out in the table for 2004, including the respective contributions North and South; and **noted** the projected total budgets for 2005-2006.

Aquaculture and Marine Sector

- **Approved** on 29 January, the appointment of Board Members to the FCILC from 13 December 2002 to 12 December 2005; and that Mr Peter Savage and Lord Cooke of Islandreagh be reappointed Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson respectively.
- **Approved** on 28 February, the draft Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Licensing of Fishing Engines) (Amendment) Regulations 2003; and **authorised** the Joint Secretaries to the NSMC to sign and approve the draft regulations on their behalf.
- **Recommended** on 11 March, the budget provision for 2003, including the respective contributions North and South, and the indicative total budgets for 2004-05.
- **Approved** on 15 October, that the Loughs Agency recruit a consultancy to examine the development potential of marine-related tourism and recreational

activities in both Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle, and the role of the Loughs Agency in promoting that development.

- **Approved** on 9 December, the Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Licensing of Fishing Engines) (Amendment No 2) Regulations 2003; and **authorised** the Joint Secretaries to the NSMC to sign and approve the draft regulations on their behalf.
- **Noted** on 10 December, the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission - Loughs Agency Financial Statements for the period ending 31 December 2000.

Special EU Programme Sector

- **Recommended** on 6 March, the SEUPB budget provision for 2003, including the respective contributions North and South; and the indicative total budgets for 2004-05.
- **Approved** on 28 April, five additional permanent posts and six fixed-term posts; **approved** the upgrade of the Regional Partnership Board Secretariat post; and **noted** that a full staffing and structural review of the SEUPB will be conducted in the early part of 2004.
- **Agreed** on 4 July, that Nuala Kerr, the Deputy CEO of the SEUPB, should exercise the functions of the Chief Executive on a temporary basis from 21 May 2003.
- **Noted** on 7 July, the SEUPB Annual Report and Accounts for 2001.
- **Noted** on 18 November, the SEUPB Annual Report and Accounts for 2002.
- **Approved** on 5 December, the SEUPB Corporate Plan 2003-05 and Business Plan 2003.
- **Approved** on 5 December, that Mr John McKinney will resign as Chief Executive with effect from Wednesday 10 December 2003, and the initiation as soon as possible of the procedure to identify a replacement for Mr McKinney, subject to further Ministerial consultation when a suitable candidate has been identified.

- **Approved** on 10 December, the SEUPB Business Plan for 2004; **recommended** the budget provision for the Body as set out in the table for 2004, including the respective contributions North and South; and **noted** the projected total budgets for 2005-06.

Language Sector

- **Agreed** on 29 January, the appointment of members to the Board of the Language Body from 13 December 2002 to 12 December 2005; and that Maighréad Uí Mháirtín and Lord Laird of Artigarvan be reappointed Chairpersons of the Irish Language Agency and the Ulster-Scots Agency respectively, to act as Joint Chairpersons of the Language Body.
- **Recommended** on 26 February, the budget provision for the Body for 2003, including the respective contributions North and South, and the indicative total budgets for 2004-05.
- **Approved** on 19 May, the application of the general round pay increase under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, to existing salary rates of those staff based in the South, with effect from 1 October 2002, subject to the final approval of Finance Ministers; and that future general round pay increases for all staff employed by An Foras Teanga, shall be agreed between the relevant Sponsoring Departments, North and South, with the approval of Finance Departments, and without further reference to the NSMC.
- **Agreed** on 1 September, that Dr Ian Adamson should be appointed to the Board of the Language Body from 1 September 2003 to 12 December 2005.
- **Approved** on 11 September, the revised Business Plans for Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster Scots Agency for 2003; and **recommended** the increased budget provision for the Language Body for 2003, including the respective contributions North and South.

Foras Na Gaeilge

- **Approved** on 19 May, 2003 the salary and salary range increases for the CEO of Foras na Gaeilge.
- **Approved** on 10 June, subject to the final approval of Finance Ministers, the grading and salary scales for 13 posts in Foras na Gaeilge; the recruitment of staff, by open competition, for the filling of these posts; that future adjustment in salary for all staff (excluding the Chief Executive) should take place in line with the corresponding grades in the Northern Ireland Civil Service and Irish Civil Service, and shall be agreed between the Sponsoring and Finance Departments without further reference to the NSMC.

Tha Boord o Ulstèr Scotch

- **Agreed** (in principle) on 26 February, that Mr George Patton be appointed as Chief Executive of The Ulster-Scots Agency.
- **Approved** on 31 March, the recruitment of a Finance and Administration Manager; a Grants Officer; a Finance and Administration officer; and a Personal Assistant; and also **approved** that future adjustments in salary for all permanent staff (excluding the Chief Executive) should take place in line with the corresponding grades in the Northern Ireland and Irish Civil Services, as appropriate, and shall be agreed between the Sponsoring and Finance Departments without further reference to the NSMC.
- **Confirmed** on 14 April, the appointment of Mr George Patton as Chief Executive of The Ulster-Scots Agency.
- **Approved** on 11 June, subject to the approval of Finance Ministers, the post of Development Officer, to be based at the Raphoe Office; and that the application of benchmarking and future general round increases to this salary scale shall be agreed between the relevant Sponsoring Departments, North and South, with the approval of the Finance Departments and without further reference to the NSMC.

Inland Waterways Sector

- **Recommended** on 24 February, the budget provision for 2003, including the respective contributions, North and South; and the indicative total budgets for 2004-05.
- **Approved** on 17 December, the Business Plan for 2004; **recommended** the budget provision for Waterways Ireland as set out in the table for 2004, including the respective contributions North and South; and **noted** the projected total budgets for 2005-06.

Tourism Sector

- **Accepted** on 28 January, the resignation of Mr Roy Bailie from the Board, and approved the appointment of Mr Tom McGrath to replace him.
- **Approved** on 13 May, the proposals for additional marketing activities (with an associated budget of €4.142 million/£2.609 million, to be met by the Irish Government); and **agreed** that Tourism Ireland be asked to bring forward further marketing proposals for consideration by Ministers, within the context of the Northern Ireland budgetary cycle, having regard to the agreed 2:1 split in the overall South:North contributions to the Company's marketing programme.
- **Noted** on 24 July, that, with the dissolution of Bord Fáilte and the transfer of functions to the National Tourism Development Authority, all relevant references to Bord Fáilte in NSMC papers, including the composition of the Board of Tourism Ireland, should now be read as references to the National Tourism Development Authority; **accepted** the resignation of the Chairman and acting Chief Executive Officer of Bord Fáilte, Mr Noel McGinley and Mr Niall Reddy respectively, as Directors of Tourism Ireland with effect from 27 May 2003; and approved the appointment of the Chairperson and CEO of the new National Tourism Development Authority, Ms Gillian Bowler and Mr Shaun Quinn respectively, as Directors of Tourism Ireland with effect from 28 May 2003.

- **Noted** on 26 September, Tourism Ireland's Annual Report and Accounts for 2002.
- **Approved** on 17 November, a change in Article 39 of the Articles of Association of the company to allow the first Board of Directors to serve for not less than four years.
- **Agreed** on 8 December, the provision of additional Northern Ireland funding of €2.048 million/£1.270 million to Tourism Ireland for increased marketing activities.
- **Agreed** on 8 December, Tourism Ireland's overall pay and overheads budget of €20.34 million to be met by a contribution of €4.6 million (£2.87 million) from the North and €15.7 million (£9.73 million) from the South; **agreed** that for future budgeting purposes the North:South ratio for Tourism Ireland's pay and overhead costs shall be 1: 3.4; and **agreed** Tourism Ireland's establishment number of 152.
- **Approved** on 8 December, Tourism Ireland's Operating Plan for 2004; **recommended** the budget provision for Tourism Ireland as set out for 2004, including the respective contributions North and South; and **noted** the projected total budgets for 2005-06.

The Joint Secretariat

Background

Strand Two of the Agreement specified that the North/South Ministerial Council was to be supported by a standing Joint Secretariat, staffed by members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Irish Civil Service. The Southern side of the Joint Secretariat operates under the aegis of the Department of Foreign Affairs, while the Northern side operates under the aegis of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Staffing

The Memorandum of Understanding on Procedure agreed by the Council at the Inaugural Plenary meeting in Armagh on 13 December, 1999 set out the arrangements for, and the functions of, the Joint Secretariat of the Council. Under the terms of the Memorandum, it was agreed that the Joint Secretariat would be located in Armagh and headed by Joint Secretaries, one appointed by each Administration. Each side was also required to nominate a Deputy Joint Secretary and other administrative and clerical support staff. Officials from both sides of the Secretariat work alongside one another in shared office accommodation in Armagh. Tim O'Connor is the Southern Joint Secretary. Peter Smyth is the Northern Joint Secretary. The Deputy Joint Secretaries are Paddy Fay (South) and Pat Donaghy (North).

Functions

Under the terms of the Memorandum, 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.

In addition to the functions above the Joint Secretariat also co-ordinates the Interim Procedures process as outlined in paras 1.10 of this Report, and facilitates the development of arrangements within the North/South Bodies to deliver best practice in terms of corporate governance and accountability.

Funding

Staff costs associated with the Joint Secretariat are met by their parent administrations. All other costs associated with the Joint Secretariat or the Council are divided equally between the two administrations (See Annex 3).

Financial Information

Financial Information

1 January 2003 - 31 December 2003

Payments and Budget (North and South)

Total payments for the financial period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003 amounted to £1,331,558/€1,987,400 and a breakdown of the main expenditure areas is set out opposite.

NSMC Expenditure - 1 January 2003 - 31 December 2003

Item	£	€
Salaries	945,809	1,411,655
Administration	301,002	449,257
Meetings/Conferences	28,136	41,994
Consultancy	37,716	56,293
Capital Expenditure	18,895	28,201
Total	£1,331,558	€1,987,400

Annex 4 North/South Bodies Contact Details

North/South Bodies Contact Details

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INTERTRADEIRELAND - The Trade and Business Development Body

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Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch

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Tourism Ireland

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North/South Bodies Board Members (2003)

Food and Safety Promotion Board Advisory Board

Councillor Bertie Kerr
(Chairperson)

Professor Charlie Daly
(Vice Chairperson)

Mr Don Anderson

Mr Leslie Craig

Ms Carmel Foley

Professor Patrick Fottrell

Mr Odran Flynn

Mr Patrick McColgan

Ms Catherine Murphy

Mr Damien O'Dwyer

Ms Anne Speed

Professor Seán Strain

The Trade and Business Development Body Board Members

Dr Martin Naughton
(Chairperson)

Mr Barry Fitzsimons
(Vice Chairperson)

Ms Mary Ainscough

Ms Mary Breslin

Mr Trefor Campbell

Mr John Fitzgerald

Mr Jack Gilmour

Ms Jackie Harrison

Mr Carl McCann

Mr Fergal McCormack

Dr Inez McCormack

Mr Robbie Smyth

North/South Language Body Foras Na Gaeilge

Mrs Maighréad Uí Mháirtín
**(Chairperson of Foras na Gaeilge/Joint Chairperson
of An Foras Teanga)**

Mr Liam Corey

Ms Anne Craig

Mr Gordon McCoy

Mr Aodán Mac Póilin

Mr Gearóid Mac Siacais

Mr Patrick McGlone

Ms Treasa Ní Ailpín

Ms Caitríona Ní Cheallaigh

Ms Máiréad Nic Sheaghain

Mr Maolsheachlainn Ó Caollaí

Mr Leachlainn Ó Catháin

Mr Pádraig Ó Duibhir

Mr Gearóid Ó hEara

Mr Diarmuid Ó Murchú

Ms Brid Uí Néill

Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch

Lord Laird of Artigarvan*
**(Chairperson of Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch/Joint
Chairperson of North/South Language Body)**

Dr Pádraig de Bhál

Mr James Devenney

Dr Linde Lunney

Mr Éamon O'Domhnaill

Mr Alistair Simpson

Mr Robert Stoker

Dr Ian Adamson

* Resigned April 2004

The Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission Board Members

Mr Peter Savage
(Chairperson)

Lord Cooke of Islandreagh
(Vice Chairperson)

Mr Jack Allen

Mr Keith Anderson

Mr Dick Blakiston-Houston

Mr Francis Feely

Dr Patrick J Griffin

Ms Siobhan Logue

Ms Jacqui McConville

Mr Joseph Martin

Mr Tarlach Ó Crosáin

Mr Andrew Ward

Tourism Ireland Board of Directors

Mr Andrew Coppel
(Chairperson)

Ms Ann Riordan
(Vice-Chairperson)

Ms Gillian Bowler Appointed May 2003

Mr Alan Clarke

Mr Dennis Galway

Mr Howard Hastings

Mr Tony Kelly

Mr Noel McGinley Resigned May 2003

Mr Tom McGrath Appointed January 2003

Mr Felix Mooney

Mr John Power

Mr Shaun Quinn Appointed May 2003

Mr Niall Reddy Resigned May 2003

Mr Charles Sinnott

Departmental Information

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* Co-ordinating role on Northern Ireland
* *Co-ordinating role on Southern side

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