

North South Ministerial Council

2012 Annual Report



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FOREWORD

There were 31 meetings of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) in 2012, the highest number in any one year since its formation. This brought the total number of NSMC meetings from Devolution in 2007 to date to one hundred and thirty-one.

Positive and cordial relations between the Irish Government and Executive Ministers were notable features of these meetings. Ministers took the opportunities presented to oversee the work of the North South Bodies and to ensure progress on the agreed Areas of Co-operation with a view to furthering cooperation on the island.

Key issues in 2012 included work to enable the mutual recognition of penalty points across both jurisdictions, the successful promotion of major tourism initiatives such as 'ni2012, our time our place', preparations for 'The Gathering 2013' and the 'UK City of Culture 2013', child protection and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and animal and plant health.

Executive Ministers were briefed by Irish Ministers on their government's priorities for Ireland's Presidency of the EU in 2013 and informed of ongoing planning and preparation. This will be the first time Ireland has held the EU Presidency when the NSMC institution has been fully operational and it presents an opportunity to deepen dialogue on matters of mutual benefit.

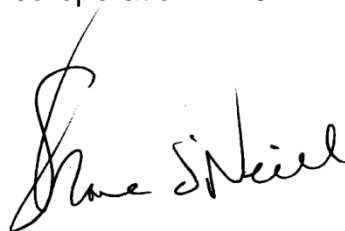
Organising North South meetings is a major logistical challenge for the NSMC staff with planning starting months in advance and involving the PSNI, the Gardaí, Executive Information Services, Private Ministerial Offices and officials from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the Department of the Taoiseach and other Government Departments North and South. The new NSMC building has helped to reduce the cost of the meetings with twenty-four of thirty-one meetings being held in the accommodation, including one Plenary.

In 2012, there were also significant changes in personnel within the Joint Secretariat with both of us new to the position of Joint Secretary. We wish to pay tribute to Mary Bunting who retired as Northern Joint Secretary after six years in the post in September 2012 and Pat Donaghy who retired in July following a twelve year spell as Northern Deputy Joint Secretary. We thank both Mary and Pat for all their work with the North South Ministerial Council and wish them every success in the future. We also want to welcome Donal Moran, who replaced Pat as Northern Deputy Secretary.

Finally, we would like to thank officials in the Northern Ireland Executive and Irish Government Departments, the North South Bodies, the Joint Secretariat and all our colleagues and friends for their valued help and co-operation in 2012.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colm Shannon'.

Colm Shannon
Joint Secretary (North)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane O'Neill'.

Shane O'Neill
Joint Secretary (South)

CHAPTER ONE: NSMC PLENARY MEETINGS



Eamonn Gilmore TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA, First Minister, Enda Kenny TD, Taoiseach and Martin McGuinness MLA, deputy First Minister at the June Plenary Meeting in Dublin

NSMC Plenary Meetings

The NSMC Plenary meetings are an important element of the work of the North South Ministerial Council and provide an opportunity for Executive Ministers to meet with their counterparts in the Irish government. There were two NSMC Plenary meetings in 2012, the first on 25 June in Farmleigh House, Dublin and the second on 2 November 2012 at the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices in Armagh. On both occasions the Irish Government delegation was led by the Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD and the Northern Ireland Executive delegation was led by the First Minister, the Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA, and the deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MLA. The Joint Communiqués issued after these meetings are available at www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org.

Like the rest of the global economy, both jurisdictions are facing significant economic challenges. How governments are dealing with these challenges was an important part of the discussions at Plenary meetings. In particular Ministers discussed the challenges being faced within the banking sector, Corporation Tax and the impact of NAMA on both jurisdictions. Ministers also noted the importance of building trade links with other countries, like China, and recognised that there are potential mutual benefits from cooperation when doing this.

Sadly, the November Plenary meeting was overshadowed by the brutal murder of Prison Officer David Black on his way to work the previous morning. Both Governments took the opportunity to jointly express their condemnation of those who carried out this atrocity and reaffirmed their determination that actions such as this should not be allowed to drag us back to the past.

Joint Secretaries' Progress Report

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

- work to enable the mutual recognition of Penalty points across both jurisdictions;
- successful promotion of major Tourism Initiatives such as ni2012 'our time our place', 'The Gathering' and 'UK City of Culture';
- progress on current EU Programmes and the work ongoing on the development of future programmes;
- the joint education survey in the border region;
- proposals for the review of core funded bodies which is being carried out by Foras na Gaeilge;
- Ulster Canal;
- child protection;
- animal and plant health; and
- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Tourism

Tourism and increasing the number of visitors to the island is vital to the economy in both jurisdictions. Ministers reviewed the work of Tourism Ireland and their effort to attract more visitors to the Island with several major tourism initiatives taking place including NI 2012 'our time our place', 'the Gathering' 2013 and the 'City of Culture' Celebrations in 2013. Both Tourism Ministers are working hard to ensure these initiatives are a success and Tourism Ireland is marketing these events overseas.

North West Gateway Initiative

At the June meeting Ministers considered a progress report on the North West Gateway Initiative and noted details of resources committed/spent in the North West Region. In November Ministers noted that a meeting of officials would take place to consider progress.

A5 and A8 Roads

At the June meeting Ministers approved a funding and implementation plan for the A5 and A8 roads projects and noted that the Irish Government remains committed to this project.

St Andrews Agreement Review

Ministers endorsed a number of recommendations relating to the North South Bodies which had been brought to the meeting following consideration at NSMC Sectoral meetings. The endorsement of these recommendations largely completed the first element of the Review. At the November meeting Ministers agreed that Senior Officials would meet and bring forward proposals on the remaining elements of the Review.

North South Consultative Forum

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

North South Parliamentary Forum/ North South Inter-Parliamentary Association

The North South Inter-Parliamentary Association has now been established and that it held its inaugural Plenary session on 12 October 2012. Ministers welcomed the establishment of the Association and wished the Speaker to the Assembly and the Ceann Comhairle every success.

CHAPTER TWO: NSMC INSTITUTIONAL MEETINGS



The Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA, First Minister, Eamonn Gilmore TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and Martin McGuinness MLA, deputy First Minister at the April Institutional Meeting in Dublin.

The NSMC met in Institutional format on 27 April 2012 in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, Dublin. The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Eamon Gilmore TD, First Minister the Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA and the deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MLA, attended the meeting. A copy of the Joint Communiqué issued after the meeting is available at www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org

Ministers exchanged views on the current economic situation and the budgetary challenges and discussed opportunities to build on existing co-operation particularly on the economy, service delivery and tourism. The meeting also focussed on opportunities to maximise tourism gains during 2012 and 2013 including 'ni2012 Our Time - Our Place', Derry~Londonderry UK City of Culture and 'The Gathering 2013'.

North West Gateway Initiative

Progress was welcomed on a range of initiatives which aim to deliver economic and social benefits in the North West including:

- the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government commitment to develop the One Plan for Derry ~ Londonderry;

- collaborative work between Derry City Council and Donegal County Council to develop synergies between the One Plan and An Stráteis the Donegal County Development Plan;
- construction of the new £70m Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin planned to commence in 2013 and be operational by 2016;
- commitment to the upgrade of two sections of the A5 with NI Executive funding of £330m including the Irish Government's commitment of £50m;
- commitment to date of over €120m from EU Programmes in the North West including the flagship projects such as the €30m Project Kelvin and €16m Peace Bridge;
- commitment to maximise the economic tourism potential of the City of Culture and the Gathering 2013. The Northern Ireland Executive has committed £12.6m, subject to completion and approval of appropriate business cases, to support the delivery of the City of Culture programme, including the hosting of the Turner Prize, Stirling Prize and All Ireland Fleadh; and
- the North West has been allocated £18.5m under Axis 3 of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme.

It was agreed to review progress on the North West Gateway Initiative again at the next NSMC Institutional meeting.

North South Bodies and Tourism Ireland Ltd Issues

There was also a discussion on matters relating to the North South Bodies, including progress on Corporate and Business Plans, implementation of cumulative efficiency savings and the ongoing review of the Bodies' Financial Memoranda.

The Ministers noted that Liam Nellis, Chief Executive of Inter *Tradel* Ireland, was due to retire and thanked him for his contribution to the work of Inter *Tradel* Ireland.

St Andrews Agreement Review

Ministers discussed progress on consideration at NSMC meetings of a number of proposals concerning the North South Bodies. They looked forward to further discussion on this and on the other elements of the St Andrews Agreement Review at the subsequent NSMC Plenary meetings.

CHAPTER THREE: NSMC SECTORAL MEETINGS

This chapter provides a summary of NSMC meetings in sectoral format in 2012. The Joint Communiqués from these meetings are available at www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org

Agriculture



NSMC Agriculture meetings took place on 8 February, 25 July and 31 October 2012. Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine attended all three meetings. Phil Hogan TD, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government attended the July and October meetings. Sammy Wilson MP MLA, Minister for Finance and Personnel attended the July meeting and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA, attended the February and October meetings. At the October meeting, Ministers exchanged views on the question of farm safety and expressed their sympathy to the bereaved families following tragic incidents during the year.

Co-operation on Animal Health

A Memorandum of Understanding in relation to protecting the island of Ireland from exotic animal disease incursion was agreed. The MOU underlines the commitment to key principles in the All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy. It sets out the principles to be followed throughout the island to help prevent the entry and spread of exotic animal diseases through either jurisdiction, and to provide assurance regarding the controls applied throughout the island.

Progress was welcomed on the delivery of the 2011/12 All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy Action Plan, including:

- achievement of Aujeszky's Disease free status throughout the island of Ireland, which will open up further export opportunities for the pig sector;
- the completion of a scoping paper on all-island animal disease surveillance priorities;
- continuing close liaison during negotiations with the EU Commission on the proposed new EU Animal Health Law;
- agreement by officials to seek to align dealer registration systems;
- the hosting of an international vaccination experts' scientific symposium in May 2012 in Belfast which considered the potential that vaccination could play in the eradication of bovine TB;
- a successful joint cross border mapping exercise "Exercise Mirrormap3" held on 29 February 2012;
- on-going co-operation between officials on industry-led initiatives on production diseases not subject to national control programmes such as BVD;
- the setting up of an industry led organisation, Animal Health and Welfare NI, which will take forward initiatives to deal with such diseases; and
- agreement on reciprocal arrangements between industry bodies north and south, which was signed by Animal Health Ireland and Animal Health and Welfare NI.

Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and International Trade Issues

Ministers discussed the significant issues in regard to negotiations on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The most significant issues include the distribution of the CAP budget to Member States, the movement to a flat rate payment within Member States or regions and the possible introduction of a greening component to the Pillar 1 budget.

The Council noted the possibility that an EU agreement may be reached during the Irish EU Presidency in the first half of 2013 and recognised the strong commonality between the Agriculture Departments on the main issues. Ministers and officials will maintain close contact with a view to maximising benefits for farmers and rural communities in both jurisdictions.

Ministers also noted developments in relation to climate change conferences. Developments and opportunities on international trade, including the agri-food industry's strong record of export-led growth was an important focus for the meetings. The Council also discussed prospects for developing agri-food links between China and Ireland in areas such as animal health, Equine studies, research and trade.

The pending reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was discussed and Ministers agreed that officials of the two Agriculture Departments will remain in close contact to ensure that shared aims for fisheries reform are represented to the greatest extent possible in the final agreement.

Education



Primary school pupils making use of digital technologies as part of their everyday learning is now commonplace.

There were three NSMC Education meetings during 2012 on 1 March, 15 June and 17 October. John O'Dowd MLA, Minister for Education, Ruairí Quinn TD, Minister for Education and Skills and Nelson McCausland MLA, Minister for Social Development attended all meetings.

Education Survey in Border Regions

Ministers recognised the importance of facilitating parental preference in participation in schools and in doing so noted the change in population on both sides of the border and how this might impact on schools. Taking account of these issues, Ministers discussed how those parents, who so wished, might be enabled to send their children to schools on the other side of the border. They agreed to undertake a joint attitudinal survey to inform cross border pupil movement and school planning. This would assist in determining the current and future schooling capacity and need in border regions, the level of demand from parents and young people for schools across the border and how obstacles may be removed. The Ministers agreed that a final report on the results and proposals on the way forward will be available for consideration no later than the first NSMC Education meeting of 2013.

Education for Children with Special Education Needs

Ministers agreed to a limited expansion of services delivered by the Middletown Centre for Autism with a focus on ensuring a sustainable future for the Centre and

supported joint efforts to ensure the agreed expansion is delivered as soon as possible.

The Council welcomed the recently published report on the joint inspection of the Centre by the Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate and the Education and Training Inspectorate.

Teacher Qualifications

The Council welcomed the ongoing liaison between the two Teaching Councils on issues relating to professional recognition and registration in both jurisdictions and that the Councils' work to date has focused on mobility, accreditation and recognition of teachers' qualifications in a cross border context. The overall objective is to facilitate full mobility of teachers across both jurisdictions.

Ongoing discussions also took place between Marino College of Education, Dublin, the University of Ulster and St Mary's University College, Belfast, concerning the possibility of delivering the Scrúdú Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (the Irish language qualification) and actions taken by the North South Teacher Qualifications Working Group to progress the matter.

Ministers noted the decision by Departments to extend the jointly funded collaborative programme of work in the Irish-medium sector for the 2012/13 academic year.

School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges

The Council noted the successful 10th Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (SCoTENS) Annual Conference which took place in Cavan on 11-12 October 2012 on the theme of 'Creative Teachers for Creative Learners: Implications for Teacher Education', and the follow-up evaluation report on the first 8 years of SCoTENS.

Ministers recognised the ongoing work to implement the recommendations outlined in the joint inspectorate evaluation report of the Dissolving Boundaries project.

The Council welcomed the continuing joint support for the Causeway Programme and the North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work in Ireland.

Ministers were briefed on discussions taking place between the Department of Education and Department of Education and Skills officials to progress with Part 2 of the study on North South cooperation in the education sector. They asked for a progress report to be made at the first NSMC meeting in 2013.

Educational Under-Achievement

At the October 2012 meeting, Ministers received a detailed presentation on the work being done by the Educational Underachievement Working Group (EUWG) in

the fields of Literacy and Numeracy. They noted that the Group met on 4 September 2012 to review and advance its work programme

Ministers also noted that both Departments supported Maths week in 2012 and that discussions between officials continue on the sharing of best practice on attendance and retention.

The Council welcomed the EUWG's consultation with Children's Books Ireland on the potential for a proposal encouraging young teenagers' involvement in reading.

Environment



There were three NSMC Environment meetings in 2012 on the 2 March, 15 June and the 31 October. Phil Hogan TD, Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government and Alex Attwood MLA, Minister of the Environment attended all three meetings. Danny Kennedy MLA, Minister for Regional Development attended the March and June meetings and OFMDFM Junior Minister, Jonathan Bell attended the October meeting.

EU Matters

Ministers discussed the environment sector priorities for Ireland's Presidency of the European Union in 2013 and looked forward to the informal meeting of the Council of EU Environment Ministers in Dublin in April 2013.

Waste Management

The ongoing co-operation between officials including the sharing of lessons learnt and best practice in delivering and administering the plastic bag levy in Ireland, had greatly facilitated the development of a carrier bag levy in Northern Ireland.

Ministers acknowledged the publication by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government of a new waste management policy for Ireland: *A Resource Opportunity – Waste Management Policy in Ireland*.

The new chairperson, David Surplus, of the North South Market Development Steering Group was welcomed by Ministers. He will be invited to provide Ministers with an update on progress at a future NSMC Environment meeting.

A presentation on the 'All Island Bulky Waste Reuse Best Practice Management Feasibility Study' was welcomed by Ministers. The Council also welcomed measures being taken to add value to the 'Irish Recycled Plastic Waste Arisings Study'. The Plastics Recycling Business Forum held in Dublin in January 2012 was a prime example of this work.

The reviews in both jurisdictions of policies on the management of waste tyres and the opportunity for greater engagement on an all-island basis with a view to maximising the environmental benefits and deterring illegal operators were welcomed by the Council. In addition, Ministers were advised that consultants appointed by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government are to conduct a review of the 'Producer Responsibility Initiative Model' in Ireland. This will examine the structural and environmental outcomes of the current system for dealing with used tyres and also examine areas for enhanced co-operation with Department of the Environment. A final report on an all-island tyre survey, led by the Department of the Environment, is expected to be completed by the end the year.

Cross Border Movements of Waste

It was reported that the removal of waste from a site at Ballymartin, Kilkeel, was successfully completed in October 2011 and that the total combined tonnage of waste removed from sites to date at Ballymartin, Slattinagh and Trillick was in the region of 49,000 tonnes. Two sites in Clogher County Tyrone, (Seskinore and Eskra), have been agreed for the 2012-2013 repatriation programme. Work has been completed at the Seskinore site and preliminary works have commenced at Eskra.

Dublin City Council has established a Framework Agreement for the Disposal of Repatriated Waste. The City Council has commenced the preparation of tender documents in advance of a public procurement process for the haulage of excavated waste to authorised disposal facilities from 2013 onwards.

The Council noted that joint enforcement action to deal with illegal operators is a priority for both Environment Ministers and Departments continue to target resources on this issue.

Water Quality

The North South Working Group on Water Quality will continue to drive and oversee coordinated implementation of the River Basin Management Plans under the EU Water Framework Directive. Ministers were informed that the Working Group will receive regular updates, as appropriate, on EU policy developments in the area of water quality which may arise during Ireland's Presidency of the European Union.

Ministers noted that discussions are underway, within the North South Working Group on Water Quality, on coordinating the timetable for preparations of the second-cycle river basin management plans under the EU Water Framework Directive.

Ministers welcomed the continued co-ordination in relation to the Blue Flag and Green Coast Schemes, in particular the role played by both jurisdictions to standardise and expand the running of the Green Coast scheme, and also welcomed the recent success of the respective awards ceremonies for Ireland and Northern Ireland organised by An Taisce and Tidy NI.

The Council received a presentation in March by the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland and the Geological Survey of Ireland on the £4 million (approximately €4.4 million) TELLUS BORDER project. The project is being carried out under the EU INTERREG IVA Programme and will provide invaluable data to support sustainable environmental management in both jurisdictions.

Environmental Protection

Officials have researched and considered further opportunities for mutually beneficial joint working to facilitate effective and efficient policy approaches in the context of EU Directives on Air Quality, Industrial Emissions and Noise.

Ministers agreed that officials should commission further research to examine the issue of airborne pollution from residential smoky coal combustion and provide an update to Ministers at the next NSMC to be held in 2013. The Council welcomed further engagement by officials to discuss the potential for mutually beneficial approaches when considering the 3rd round noise maps due in 2017.

Environmental Reporting and Research

The continued co-operation between both Agencies on identification of emerging research needs and strategic planning of research funding programmes was welcomed by Ministers. In addition, the Council noted the successful international symposium on domestic waste water treatment systems organised by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Trinity College, Dublin, which involved presentations from a number of leading researchers and included regulators from both EPA and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

Ministers were advised that following preliminary research into the environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in May 2012, a more comprehensive research study is planned before the end of 2012. An initial meeting of the research steering group was held on 5 July 2012.

The Council welcomed the latest Northern Ireland Environment Statistics Report published in January and the publication of the EPA's state of environment report "Ireland's Environment 2012" in June 2012. Ministers looked forward to inclusion of the joint environmental indicators in the next publication of the "Ireland North and South: A Statistical Profile" compiled and produced by the Central Statistics Office and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

It was reported that a successful FP7-Environment workshop organised jointly by InterTradeIreland, the NIEA, and EPA was attended by over 60 researchers and provided an update and guidance on the July call for research proposals.

Health



Left to right: Edwin Poots MLA, Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Bernie McCrory, CAWT, Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, James Reilly TD, Minister for Health, Frances Fitzgerald TD Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Mairead McAlinden and Tom Daly both of CAWT at the NSMC Health and Food Safety Meeting, 18 July 2012.

During 2012 there were three NSMC Health meetings on 2 February, 18 July and 21 November. James Reilly TD, Minister for Health, Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Edwin Poots MLA, Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development attended all three meetings.

Health Promotion

A successful North South conference on alcohol misuse was held in Armagh in January 2012. Over 130 delegates attended the conference, which included informative presentations from local and international speakers.

Ministers were briefed on the development of strategies in both jurisdictions on alcohol misuse. These included ongoing collaboration on minimum unit price for alcohol and proposals for a North/South Alcohol Forum. The initial scoping meeting for this forum took place in October. Key players in alcohol policy from both jurisdictions met then to share information and practice in dealing with alcohol misuse.

A new ten-year tobacco control strategy for Northern Ireland was launched in February 2012. Updates on progress were provided to Ministers at NSMC Health meetings including the establishment of a multi agency group to take the strategy forward.

Ministers noted that regulations to introduce text and photo warnings on tobacco products were introduced in Ireland in December 2011 and that legislation prohibiting smoking in cars where children are present is being developed in Ireland.

Both Health Ministers supported the publishing of the legislative proposal for the Tobacco Directive by the European Commission at the earliest opportunity.

Progress made by the Special Action Group on Obesity in Ireland was discussed by Ministers. They noted that the Caloriewise scheme, which aims to encourage consumers to make more informed choices when eating out or on-the-go, was being trialled by eight local businesses in Northern Ireland. The findings from the public consultation process in Ireland on calorie posting in restaurants which indicate a high level of support among the general public and within the food industry itself for calorie menu labeling was noted.

Cancer and Health Research Co-operation

The Council were briefed on progress with developments for the establishment of a radiotherapy unit at Altnagelvin and that construction will commence in 2013 with the unit being operational in 2016.

Ministers welcomed the rapid progression by the All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care in its work on education, research and the provision of care.

They also welcomed the continuing success in multi-national research through the US-Ireland R&D Partnership including:

- the development of common documentation and working procedures to deal with funding proposals involving health researchers from both jurisdictions and the US which were implemented and launched in August 2012; and
- the publication of major findings, which attracted significant international interest, on the identification of the genes that may cause some patients with diabetes to develop serious kidney disease.

Ministers discussed progress on implementation of the revised Memorandum of Understanding for the Ireland - Northern Ireland - National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium and noted that joint research projects undertaken through the previous MOU have indicated improved strategies for cancer prevention or treatment. The three jurisdictions agreed to focus on five workstreams:

- capacity building for clinical research;
- public health & wellbeing/prevention/health promotion (to include population-health research);

- nursing;
- palliative and end-of-life care; and
- survivorship.

Child Protection

The Council welcomed the proposed future work programme for the Child Protection Steering Group which is to be taken forward through five specific work streams focusing on:

- knowledge exchange;
- quality and effectiveness;
- deaths of children in care;
- cultural correspondence in safeguarding; and
- specialist services.

An All-Island Child Protection conference will be held in the first half of 2013. Conference delegates will share practice knowledge, research and learning amongst policy makers, practitioners and managers in relation to safeguarding and child protection practices.

Suicide Prevention

Ministers welcomed the publication of the refreshed Protect Life Strategy in Northern Ireland and noted progress on the review of the Reach Out Suicide Prevention strategy in Ireland.

The Council welcomed the commencement of Men's Health Forum pilot projects, one of which focuses on the Colin area in Belfast which has previously suffered from high levels of young male suicide and the second of which leverages social media to reach out to young men in Ireland.

A Registry of Self-Harm is now in place in all hospital trusts in Northern Ireland, which means that there is complete coverage across the island of Ireland. Ministers endorsed revised all-island media guidelines which seek to promote positive reporting of suicide and welcomed the Please Talk campaign which links students who are in distress with college supports and which is operational in campuses in both jurisdictions.

The ongoing co-operation and progress on the range of actions within the All-Island Action Plan on Suicide Prevention was noted by Ministers. In particular, the sharing of education and training programmes and the publication of the WorkOut online application (www.workoutapp.ie) designed to improve the mental fitness of young men

EU Matters

The Health Presidency Programme to be progressed during Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2013 was noted. Officials from the Department of Health were tasked with exploring areas of common interest with

officials from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in advance of the eHealth high level conference which Ireland will host in May 2013.

The hope was expressed that there will be continued North/South engagement during the Presidency and that, where appropriate, the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and his officials will attend key events.

CAWT

The Council received a presentation on the work of Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT), and Ministers congratulated CAWT on its work over the past 20 years on improving the health and well-being of border populations.

Ministers welcomed progress made in the implementation of the CAWT managed €30m EU INTERREG IVA project “Putting Patients, Clients and Families First”. Through this project there have been in excess of 20,000 patient and client beneficiaries resulting in improved patient welfare and the delivery of savings to the two health Departments.

Tourism



Left to right: Joe Byrne, Tourism Ireland, Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Michael and Collette Quinlan, BITA at a *Gathering Ireland 2013* event.

The NSMC met in Tourism format in Armagh on 25 January and 28 November 2012. Arlene Foster MLA, Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, and Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister of Culture Arts and Leisure attended both meetings. Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport attended the January meeting and Michael Ring TD, Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, attended the November meeting.

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

The performance overview for 2011 showed a growth in overseas visitors for the first time since 2007. While noting the decline in visitors to the island of Ireland from Great Britain in recent years, Ministers welcomed the work of the Tourism Recovery Taskforce, comprising of Tourism Ireland, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Fáilte Ireland and industry representatives, on the development of the GB Path to Growth Strategy to address this issue. Ministers noted the recommendations of this strategy which will be implemented by Tourism Ireland in 2013 and beyond.

The Chairperson and the CEO updated Ministers on the work of the Tourism Ireland Board including implementation of the 2011 and 2012 Business Plans and development of the 2013 Business Plan. Significant developments included:

- the roll out of a new global destination advertising campaign ‘Jump into Ireland’, the extensive ni2012 promotional campaign which has been underway across the world reaching 100 million people and the “greening” of major landmarks and iconic sites around the globe on St Patrick’s Day including the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Niagara Falls, the London Eye, Table Mountain in South Africa and the Prince’s Palace of Monaco;
- the Titanic Belfast Festival 2012, the opening of the new visitor centre at the Giant’s Causeway, the Irish Open Golf Championship at Royal Portrush Golf Club and the 50th Belfast Festival at Queens University;
- major tourism events and initiatives planned for 2013 including The Gathering Ireland 2013 Ireland’s biggest ever tourism initiative which will focus on a series of flagship festivals throughout the year, along with special interest spin-off events, and a community led programme; the inaugural UK City of Culture in 2013 which provides the perfect follow up to the ni2012 programme and the World Police and Fire Games 2013 which will be the biggest single sporting event ever hosted in Belfast. The role of Tourism Ireland in the overseas marketing of these two initiatives was outlined to the Council;
- the roll out of a new suite of websites designed to capitalise on the growing importance of the internet in travel and holiday planning and to harness the phenomenal growth in social media; and
- Ministers Foster and Ní Chuilín and relevant officials were invited to attend EU Presidency events relating to Tourism and Sport.



Left to right: Arlene Foster MLA, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, the Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA, First Minister and Martin McGuinness MLA, deputy First Minister at *northern ireland 2012 your time our place*.

Transport



Left to right: Alex Attwood MLA, Minister of the Environment, Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and Danny Kennedy MLA, Minister for Regional Development at the NSMC Transport Meeting 20 April 2012.

There were two NSMC Transport meetings on 20 April 2012 and on 5 October 2012. Minister Varadkar TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Minister Kennedy MLA, Minister for Regional Development and Minister Attwood MLA, Minister of the Environment attended both meetings.

Roads

In February 2012 the NI Executive Ministers announced an investment package of major roads projects including two sections of the A5 and A8 project. The Irish Government indicated that it remains committed to the completion of the co-funded A5 project which is of strategic importance to the North West Region and the island as a whole, but is not in a position to make funding commitments for the period post 2016 in advance of its consideration of the next Capital Review Framework (anticipated in 2015).

The Ministers noted that the necessary Orders have been made to facilitate construction on two sections of the A5. Ministers also noted that an updated project milestone and payment schedule, for the period to the end of 2016, will be prepared for agreement at a future NSMC Transport meeting. They also noted that the construction work has commenced on the A8 project and is expected to be completed by early 2015.

Road Safety

The Council welcomed the continued sharing of knowledge and experience between officials from both jurisdictions on the development and delivery of road safety strategies to ensure the best approach towards reducing the number and severity of injuries across the island. This included progress on the reduction of drink drive limits in each jurisdiction. The Council also shared progress on drafting of legislation to improve Northern Ireland's driver training, testing and post-test regime.

Ministers welcomed the continuing proactive co-operation to target a wide range of illegal activity within the goods haulage and passenger transport industries including:

- an increasingly targeted approach towards enforcement;
- continuing liaison on cross border enforcement operations in 2012 in both jurisdictions;
- co-operation in relation to vehicle standards including mutual recognition of vehicle type approval, which will allow simplification of the registration process; and
- exchange of data on and follow up of unroadworthy foreign vehicles in either jurisdiction.

The Council welcomed the excellent co-operation on enforcement of EU tachograph and drivers hours rules and the proposed training exchange for enforcement officers that will take place in 2013.

Mutual Recognition of Penalty Points

The terms of reference and membership of the steering and working groups have now been agreed to take forward work on mutual recognition of penalty points. Ministers agreed the timetable of key milestones for having the necessary primary and secondary legislation in place by 31 December 2014 and agreed that an update will be reported to the next NSMC transport meeting

Belfast Dublin Rail Link

The Council discussed progress by NIR and Irish Rail on improving the performance of the Enterprise service including:

- improvements in reliability and punctuality;
- the possibility of providing an hourly timetable; and
- planned short-term improvements for completion in 2012, including work to improve locomotive reliability and reduce fuel consumption and equipping Enterprise trains with Wi-Fi.

Ministers also noted that, subject to the availability of funding, NIR has plans in the medium term to improve existing track quality. The company are also developing a business case for a multi-modal transport hub in Belfast's Great Victoria Street, which would improve city centre access for Enterprise passengers and longer-term investment possibilities could be considered within the context of forthcoming EU decisions on the next TEN-T programme.

Sustainable Travel and Transport

Ministers welcomed continued co-operation between the National Sustainable Travel Office and the Travelwise Initiative in promoting walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing throughout the island.

Freight Forum

Ministers discussed the conclusion of the work of the All-Island Freight Forum and welcomed the relationships and cooperation which had been developed through the Freight Forum. They looked forward to these continuing.

HGV Charging and Cabotage

Ministers considered the Department for Transport's decision to introduce legislation which would lead to HGV road user charging in the UK. The Council noted that the European Commission had been asked for clarity on matters relating to bus cabotage. Ministers discussed the potential implications of the EU Roadworthiness Package.

Aquaculture and Marine



Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Nelson McCausland MLA, Minister for Social Development, Pat Rabbitte TD, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources on board the 'Derry~Londonderry Clipper' following the NSMC Loughs Agency meeting on 4 July.

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

During 2012 there were NSMC Aquaculture and Marine meetings on 1 March, 4 July and 12 December. Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, and Nelson McCausland MLA, Minister for Social Development, attended all three meetings. Pat Rabbitte TD, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources attended the meetings in July and December and Fergus O'Dowd TD, Minister of State, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources attended the meetings in March and July.

Progress Report

The Chairperson and the Chief Executive provided Ministers with Progress Reports on the work of the Loughs Agency. Key developments discussed included:

- attacks on the Loughs Agency's enforcement staff and volunteer River Watchers, including two serious assaults;
- the development of a formal operational plan with the PSNI and An Garda Síochána to deal with these assaults;
- a reduction of incidents of violence against Fisheries Officers was welcomed by Ministers at the December meeting and recent custodial sentences for such offences were noted;
- the success of the Agency's enforcement actions under the Oyster Fishing Regulations and the improvement in the oyster population of Lough Foyle and the reduction in incidents of Bonamia;
- the declaration suspending commercial fishing in Lough Foyle and the tidal Foyle to help improve the survival of Atlantic Salmon which is causing very significant concern with less than five per cent of the juveniles leaving the systems returning as adults;
- the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and the Agency and the positive impact this will have on shellfish hygiene;
- progress on Marine Tourism and Angling Development particularly the completion of the pontoon at Meadowbank, and the Agency's significant contribution to the very successful Clipper Round the World event;
- preparations for the sea and trout angling events of the 2013 World Fire and Police Games;
- in 2013 the Agency will be working with the City of Culture offices with a view to incorporating the River Foyle into the festivities;
- The Council noted that the Loughs Agency as Lead with partners from the University of Glasgow and Queen's University Belfast was successful in securing funding through INTERREG IVA for the project "Integrated Aquatic Resource Management Project between Ireland, N. Ireland and Scotland (IBIS) The overarching aim of this project is the development of a common approach to the delivery of high priority training, research and knowledge sharing, supporting freshwater and marine resource management and policy and the biodiversity that these ecosystems support. The total value of the programme is approximately £8 million which runs from August 2011 to June 2015.

NASCO 2013

At the December meeting Minister Rabbitte referred to Ireland hosting the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) annual meeting in June 2013 and invited Ministerial colleagues to participate in that meeting.

Legislation

The following Regulations required for the protection of the fisheries in Foyle and Carlingford were approved:

- The Foyle Area (Greenbraes Fishery Angling Permits) Regulations 2012;
- the Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Angling) (Amendment) Regulations 2012; and
- the subsequent Foyle Area (Control of Fishing) (Amendment) Regulations 2012.

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

Loughs Agency Pension Arrangements

The Loughs Agency has now finalised, in consultation with Sponsor Departments, an economic appraisal of the options to regularise its pay and pension arrangements. This appraisal recommended that the Agency take the necessary steps to join the North/South Pension Scheme. Sponsor and Finance Departments are considering the legal and financial implications of the Agency joining the Scheme and recommendations will be brought to a future NSMC Aquaculture and Marine meeting for approval.

Aquaculture Management Agreement

Ministers welcomed the progress to date on developing an Aquaculture Management Agreement and in particular the aim of the Loughs Agency and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine to have an overarching Management Agreement in place during 2013 to enable the progression of aquaculture licensing in Lough Foyle.

Board Membership

Ministers approved the appointment of Laurence Arbuckle to the Board of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission in succession to Tarlach O Crosain.

Food Safety



Campaign urging consumers to check the dates and cut food waste

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

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

During 2012 there were NSMC Food Safety meetings on 2 February, 18 July and 21 November. James Reilly TD, Minister for Health, Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Edwin Poots MLA, Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development attended all three meetings.

At these meetings Ministers received progress reports from the Chairperson and Chief Executive on the activities of *safefood*.

These reports included updates on scientific and promotional activities undertaken by the Body including:

- the success of the “Stop the Spread” obesity and overweight campaign which won the gold award in the healthcare sector at the 2012 An Post Integrated Direct Marketing Awards;
- work on developing an indicator for measuring food poverty; and
- work in a joint campaign with the Department of Environment and the Environment Protection Agency on improving customers’ understanding of “best before” and “use by dates”.

Ministers received a presentation on the work of Knowledge Networks. These networks help facilitate greater knowledge sharing by those involved in all parts of the food chain to support and enhance food safety.

The publication of the *safefood* report “Infectious Intestinal Diseases on the Island of Ireland 2000-2010” was welcomed by Ministers who acknowledged *safefood*’s ongoing work on such diseases.

A report on emerging food safety issues prepared by *safefood*’s Scientific Advisory Committee was welcomed by Ministers. This report contained a proposal on a new model of addressing emerging food safety issues on an all-island basis.

Martin Higgins was reappointed as *safefood* CEO until May 2015. Dr Mary Upton and Mr Robert Huey were appointed as Chair and Vice Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee and five new members were also appointed to the committee.

Inland Waterways



Left to right: OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA, Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister of Culture Arts and Leisure, Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Minister Dinny McGinley TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for Gaeltacht Affairs at the NSMC Waterways Ireland Meeting 9 July 2012.

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

The NSMC met in Inland Waterways sectoral format in Enniskillen on the 14 February and in Armagh on the 9 July and 12 December. Dinny McGinley TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for Gaeltacht Affairs, Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister of Culture Arts and Leisure and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA attended the meeting in Enniskillen. Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dinny McGinley TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for Gaeltacht Affairs, Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister of Culture Arts and Leisure and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA attended both meetings.

Key achievements for Waterways Ireland in 2012 included:

- the continued sponsorship programme by Waterways Ireland to promote the awareness of the waterways across all navigations with 94 events sponsored to date with an estimated attendance of almost 1.1m people and an estimated value to the economy of both jurisdictions of over €85 million;
- maintenance of the waterways with 99% of waterways remaining open from April to October;
- at the 31 October 2012 a total of 591 metres of additional moorings have been provided - 50m at Spencer Dock on the Royal Canal, Dublin and 541 m at Lough Key Forest Park, on the Shannon Navigation;
- 4 new publications, “A Taste of the Waterways”, “Guide to the Barrow”, “Good Boating Guide” & “What’s On 2012”;
- the continued involvement and engagement with the INTERREG IVC Waterways Forward Project; and
- the Waterways Ireland Education Programme which included the development of education packs for schools was launched in November by Minister Deenihan and Minister Quinn at the Waterways Ireland Visitor Centre in Dublin and at the meeting in Armagh on 12 December 2012 by Minister Ní Chuilín and Minister Deenihan.

At the December meeting a presentation on the negative effects of Invasive Species on the waterways was made by Dr Paula Treacy, Senior Environment Officer, Waterways Ireland. The presentation highlighted the types of invasive species which can be aquatic plants, riparian plants fish and invertebrates and the effect of each type of species on the waterway network. Measures in tackling problems associated with invasive species were also discussed.

The Council received a progress report on the restoration work for the Clones to Upper Lough Erne section of the Ulster Canal. Ministers noted the inaugural meeting of the Inter Agency Group on the Ulster Canal was held on the 20 September. The group will examine funding options for the project and the project is continuing to proceed through the planning process in both jurisdictions. Waterways Ireland has responded to all requests for clarification and to all objections to date and a decision is awaited from Monaghan County Council and the Department of the Environment Planning Service.

The Council consented to a number of property disposals throughout 2012

The CEO of Waterways Ireland John Martin is due to retire on the 31 March 2013. At the December meeting, Ministers thanked him for his contribution to the Body and noted the process for appointing a new CEO.

St Andrews Agreement Review – Waterways Ireland Recommendations

At the meeting on 14 February 2012 Ministers referred four recommendations for endorsement to the Plenary Meeting of June 2012. These recommendations were as follows:

- sponsor departments to consider options around the setting up of a Board comprising less than twelve members and to present proposals for consideration at a future NSMC Inland Waterways meeting;
- sponsor departments to implement as appropriate, through changes to the legislation or other administrative means, a de minimis provision for dealing with Waterways Ireland disposal of a waterway or part of a waterway;
- sponsor Departments to review the current provisions in relation to Waterways Ireland's commercial activities to ensure that these are adequate and to report to a future NSMC Inland Waterways meeting; and
- taking account of the current economic and fiscal circumstances, no further action is taken at this time to extend the remit of Waterways Ireland.

Language



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

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

There were three NSMC Language meetings in 2012 on 14 February, 9 July and 12 December. The meetings were attended by Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Dinny McGinley TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for Gaeltacht Affairs and OFMDFM Junior Minister Jonathan Bell MLA. Ministers received progress reports from the Chairpersons and CEOs of both agencies. Key developments discussed included:

- ongoing collaboration on governance and promotion issues, including revision of the Equality Scheme;
- participation in joint showcase events and in the Young Ambassadors Programme; and
- discussions on a schedule for joint Board meetings in order to focus on and progress joint projects.

Foras na Gaeilge developed an online training network for translators and editors (details at www.aistear.ie) and provided accredited translators and editors with a new edition of the translation memory resource, encompassing both public service terminology and general terminology. They continued to build links between Ireland and Scotland through both the Colmcille project and Tonnta which is preparing an inter-school link through podcasts between Belfast, Donegal and North Lanarkshire. They have also made available funding for the provision of specialised courses for the public service:

- with over 1,200 participants attending night classes;
- over 2,200 participating in online learning; and
- promoted the Irish language amongst young people through funding of almost €500,000 for 66 summer camps and 77 youth events.

Foras na Gaeilge is also working to promote the use of Irish in a business context in the small and medium enterprise sector with match-funding support provided to 125 businesses.

Ministers discussed recent developments in regard to the major new English/Irish dictionary and approved, within the existing budget, a revised timetable whereby the online electronic version will be published by end 2012 and the printed version will be published in 2015.

The Council was briefed on proposals being developed by the Ulster-Scots Agency to promote and support Ulster-Scots Hairshtan areas. The aim is to preserve, protect and present Ulster-Scots heritage through geographical designations.

Ministers also discussed progress on the development of a new funding model for Foras na Gaeilge's core funding to the Irish language voluntary sector, which will be the focus of the first Language Sector Meeting in 2013.

At the December meeting, Ministers noted that the 2008 and 2009 consolidated Language Body report and accounts were laid in the Assembly and in the Houses of the Oireachtas on 11 July 2012 and on 7 December 2012 respectively. They directed Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency to include, as a key priority in their 2013 business plans, the publication of the Language Body accounts for 2010, 2011 and 2012.



The Ulster-Scots Agency completed another very successful run of the 'Pat and Plain' drama series at 11 schools and launched the Ulster-Scots Foundation Certificate for Education in Highland Piping at Stormont in May, in conjunction with the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association. In conjunction with the Ulster-Scots Community Network, the Ulster-Scots Agency delivered Plantation Workshops to over 400 children at 17 schools in Ulster, 14 of which were held in the border counties of Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal. The Agency also advanced its Ulster-Scots flagship programme for primary schools, including agreement with schools on participation and organisation of an inaugural teachers' conference, and established the Ulster-Scots Language Forum with representation from language groups, the Ministerial Advisory Group on Ulster-Scots (MAGUS), the University of Ulster and BBC Northern Ireland.

Special EU Programmes



Delegates at the PEACE III Conference, which took place in Belfast City Hall on Tuesday 13 November 2012

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

The NSMC SEUPB meeting took place on 4 May 2012 in Armagh. The meeting was attended by Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Sammy Wilson MP MLA, Minister for Finance and Personnel, and OFMDFM Junior Minister Martina Anderson MLA. Minister Howlin chaired the meeting.

Key developments for the SEUPB in 2012 included:

- progress on the implementation of the PEACE III Programmes in terms of the assessment of applications and approval of projects. At the PEACE III Monitoring Committee in October 2012, it was reported that 194 projects worth €356 million had been approved representing a full commitment level of the allocated PEACE III funding;
- expenditure on the PEACE III Programme reported at the PEACE III Monitoring Committee in October was €140 million;

- progress on the implementation of the INTERREG IVA Programme in terms of the assessment of applications and approval of projects. At the INTERREG IVA Monitoring Committee in October 2012, it was reported that Commitments were worth €225.44 million or 88 % of the Programme;
- expenditure on the INTERREG IVA Programme reported at the INTERREG IVA Monitoring Committee in October 2012 was €78.28 million;
- by September 2012 Local authority-based groups had 35 INTERREG IVA projects approved worth €60.69 million;
- the work of the SEUPB to facilitate North South participation in the INTERREG IV transnational and interregional programmes. By September 2012, SEUPB secured 64 project partners across the relevant programmes;
- communication by the SEUPB of the positive impacts of the EU Programmes with two major conferences for the PEACE III and INTERREG Programmes. The INTERREG IVA conference took place in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk in September. The PEACE III conference took place in November in Belfast City Hall;
- the SEUPB supported a number of high profile launches including the PEACE III funded Castle Soundeson scouting project and the Clones Erne East Sports project and the INTERREG IV A funded Integrated Aquatic Resource Management; and
- the SEUPB commenced in Autumn 2012 public consultations on new EU Programmes.

St Andrews Agreement Review – SEUPB Recommendation

Ministers at the May 2012 NSMC meeting considered a recommendation concerning the establishment of a Board for the Special EU Programmes Body and agreed to refer the following recommendations for endorsement to the June 2012 NSMC Plenary:

- taking account of existing EU monitoring arrangements, the cost of a Board, to administer just 3% of the SEUPB budget, would be difficult to justify; and
- the two sponsor Departments will examine the governance arrangements for the SEUPB that are currently in place.

Trade and Business Development



Left to right: Arlene Foster MLA, Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, EU Commissioner for Innovation Maire Geoghegan Quinn, Martin Cronin, Chairperson of InterTradeIreland and Lucinda Creighton TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for European Affairs at the 'Collaborate to Innovate' Conference June 2012.

The Trade and Business Development Body, known as InterTradeIreland, 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. InterTradeIreland has a Board of 12 members appointed by the NSMC. The current Board members are listed in Annex Three. The Chief Executive of InterTradeIreland is Mr Thomas Hunter McGowan. Further details are available at www.intertradeireland.com

NSMC Trade and Business Development meetings were held in Armagh on 1 March 2012 and 28 November 2012. Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Arlene Foster MLA, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, and John O'Dowd MLA, Minister for Education attended the 1 March meeting and Richard Bruton, TD, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Arlene Foster, MLA, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, and Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure attended the 28 November meeting.

Ministers received progress reports from the Chairperson and Chief Executive on the activities of InterTradelreland. These included:

- the generation in 2011 of £119.8M/€146.1M of Business Value from companies participating on Trade and Innovation Programmes;
- 2,576 companies on InterTradelreland Trade and Innovation Programmes and accessed cross border Business Information and Advice Services;
- good progress was made in the first half of 2012 against end of year 2012 targets including 21 first time innovators against a full year target of 35, a jobs impact of 115 against a full year target of 150 and is on track to deliver efficiency savings of 6%;
- the work that InterTradelreland has undertaken to support companies including the piloting of two new programmes “Challenge” and “Elevate”. These programmes support SMEs and micro businesses to grow and develop through innovation and exporting against difficult market conditions in both jurisdictions;
- recommendations highlighted in an InterTradelreland report, *All Island Public Procurement: A Competitiveness Study* and the establishment of a North/South Working Group to take forward actions to improve visibility and accessibility to the £18 Billion/€ 21 Billion public procurement market, a key driver of demand in the economy and the capability of SMEs to win tenders on a cross border basis;
- ongoing and future initiatives developed by InterTradelreland to encourage and stimulate greater co-operation to increase applications to EU Framework Programmes. In the period from November 2011 to July 2012 there were an additional 63 North/South submissions, of which 19 were successful resulting in funding of €20.5M. This represents an increase of 51.2% in funding compared to the period from the start of the FP7 Programme to November 2011;
- the continued success and development of the US-Ireland Research & Development Partnership, including the extension to include Telecommunications and Energy and Sustainability and the latest collaborative proposal ‘WiPhyLoc8’ in the newly added area of telecommunications; and
- the findings of InterTradelreland’s cross border study on the innovation ecosystem, which reinforces the view that supporting innovation is a critical channel to foster growth. InterTradelreland’s programmes which support an open system of innovation across the island. Two specific Challenge programme participants were highlighted – the Clada Group and Fast Engineering – where both companies have reported significant benefits from participation in the programme.

CHAPTER FOUR: NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

In addition to the North South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat's core function of supporting the NSMC, personnel engage in various activities designed to engage with stakeholders and the local community. The Joint Secretariat aims to promote the Joint Secretariat Offices in Armagh and the work undertaken both by the Joint Secretariat and the NSMC. During the year the Joint Secretariat arranged a number of events to support this role.



Representatives of the 'Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement' on their visit to the NSMC JS Offices in Armagh on 12 January 2012.

On Thursday 12 January 2012, members of the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement visited the Joint Secretariat Offices in Armagh. The Joint Committee was established in the Oireachtas following the Good Friday Agreement/Belfast Agreement. This Committee plays an important role in informing debate on key areas of mutual interest such as North/South economic co-operation particularly in areas of tourism, transport and communications, infrastructure and agriculture, reconciliation and combating sectarianism, cross border co-operation in policing and Ireland/UK relations.

The Committee were particularly impressed by the volume and extent of the work carried out by the Joint Secretariat. They also recognised that initiatives on tourism, health and culture are central to improving the social and economic development in border areas and added value to the strategies set out in the Good

Friday Agreement/Belfast Agreement. They recognised that Armagh is a City of great historical significance and that the location of the NSMC Offices is a testament to the future role the City can play in developing cross border relations.



Delegates at the 'Induction for new Board Members' in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices in Armagh in January 2012

On 18 January the NSMC JS hosted a successful induction event at the offices in Armagh for the newly appointed Board members of the North South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland.

The session focussed on reinforcing the importance of governance within the North South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland. The programme included an overview from the Joint Secretaries on the work of the NSMC and the North South Bodies, as well as an outline of the responsibilities of Board members. A panel of guest speakers consisting of Dr David Dobbin CBE, (former Chairperson of InterTradeIreland and Managing Director of United Dairy Farmers Ltd), Padraic White, (former Managing Director of the Industrial Development Authority of Ireland) and Bernie McCrory and Tom Daly (Cooperation and Working Together) then offered their thoughts on the challenges and opportunities for North South Cooperation.



Participants at the Youth Programme in the Joint Secretariat offices on 22 March 2012

The Joint Secretariat recognised the importance of building links within the local community and in partnership with PSNI, Armagh City and District Council and Armagh Schools Forum, organised a Youth Programme involving fifty students from local post primary schools in the offices in Armagh on 12 March 2012.

The Programme included a presentation on the work of the NSMC and an interactive session where the students worked in groups to consider specific North/South areas of co-operation. Each group was facilitated by NSMC Joint Secretariat staff. Teachers and members of the PSNI Armagh Community Policing Team joined in. Participants were asked to “role play” as Ministers and report back to the group on what they thought would be suitable topics for practical North/South co-operation. This resulted in a lively and enjoyable debate and a number of future public representatives were identified! The Mayor of Armagh City and District, Councillor Freda Donnelly, addressed the group. Afterwards, the accompanying teachers remarked that it had presented the students with a number of valuable learning outcomes.



Pat Colgan CEO, SEUPB, Eamon McKee Ambassador of Ireland to the Republic of Korea, Thomas Hunter McGowan CEO, InterTradelreland, Ruth Parkin, Irish Embassy Seoul, Margaret Stanley, Deputy Joint Secretary (South) NSMC JS, Mary Bunting, former Joint Secretary (North) NSMC JS, Aidan Gough, Director, InterTradelreland, Rosa Chun, Irish Embassy Seoul and Dr Choi of the Ministry of Unification, Panmunjom, October 2012.

The work of the NSMC has generated interest outside the island of Ireland. In May 2012 there was a visit from representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). There was a very useful exchange of information on the work of ECOWAS and the NSMC.

Later in October 2012, as a result of a visit to the NSMC Joint Secretariat by the Ministry of Unification of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in December 2011, the Irish Embassy in Seoul arranged a visit to the Republic of Korea involving the former Joint Secretary (North) Mary Bunting, Deputy Joint Secretary (South) Margaret Stanley, Pat Colgan CEO, SEUPB, Thomas Hunter McGowan CEO, InterTradelreland and Aidan Gough, Director of Strategy, InterTradelreland. The focus of the visit was on the North South Ministerial Council, the work of the Joint Secretariat and the purpose and activities of the two Bodies represented. The visitors made a number of presentations to representatives of the Republic of Korea Ministry of Unification on the work of the NSMC and North South Bodies.

We are also pleased to report that the Joint Secretariat personnel engaged in a number of activities to support a local voluntary group. Activities included fundraising and devising a sustainability plan for the group which has enhanced their position and provided them with opportunities to develop the organisation.

CHAPTER FIVE: IRELAND'S PRESIDENCY OF THE EU



Ireland assumes the Presidency of the EU in January 2013. This is the first time an Irish EU Presidency will take place while the NSMC is in full operation. The NSMC Joint Secretariat has sought to minimise any problems which may arise in trying to match up Ministerial diaries during the Presidency. Consequently, the NSMC meeting schedule for the first half of 2013 was, to the fullest extent possible, put in place in advance of the end of 2012. Discussions on EU related matters and the EU Presidency was also a feature of a number of the NSMC meetings which took place in 2012.

At their Institutional meeting in April, the Tánaiste, First Minister and Deputy First Minister discussed the challenges and opportunities associated with the Irish EU Presidency in 2013. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to securing a further round of PEACE and INTERREG funding and stated that this is a priority for them. They also welcomed collaboration that had taken place to maximise the drawdown of EU funding, particularly for Research and Development and agreed that it was important that this collaboration continues.

At their June Plenary meeting, Ministers explored the potential for co-operative actions during the Presidency, including meetings of senior officials and the hosting of EU events. They also endorsed the discussion of EU Matters at relevant NSMC meetings in sectoral format. In addition, they welcomed continuing collaboration on innovation within the EU and noted a successful and well attended “Collaborate to Innovate” Conference on European research and innovation funding for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises which had taken place on 7 June 2012. It was addressed by EU Commissioner Máire Geoghegan Quinn, Minister Arlene Foster and Minister of State Lucinda Creighton.

At the November Plenary the Taoiseach set out his priorities for the EU Presidency. Ministers recognised that there are significant challenges associated with hosting the Presidency, but that it also provides many opportunities such as increasing engagement on EU matters at a time when major negotiations on new transnational programmes and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform are taking place in Brussels. Arrangements were put in place to enable Irish Government Ministers to

brief their Executive counterparts on Presidency related matters at NSMC meetings. Ministers also noted that, to assist with the demands of hosting the Presidency, several Northern Departments have made staff available via secondments. The Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels has also agreed to make available space for meetings during this period. It was also noted that consideration is being given to participation by Northern Ireland Executive Ministers at Presidency related events during 2013.

Ministers discussed sector specific related EU Presidency matters at individual sectoral meetings. This included Irish Ministers briefing, where appropriate, their Northern counterparts on the Presidency priorities in their sectors. Following up on the discussions in the Plenary, the Irish Ministers also used these sectoral meetings to invite their colleagues to participate in relevant Presidency events.

ANNEX ONE

LIST OF NSMC MEETINGS IN 2012

The following table shows the NSMC meetings which were held in 2012:

NSMC Meeting	Date	Location
Plenary	15 June	Dublin
	2 November	Armagh
Institutional	27 April	Dublin
Agriculture	8 February	Armagh
	25 July	Armagh
	31 October	Armagh
Education	1 February	Armagh
	15 June	Dublin
	17 October	Armagh
Environment	2 March	Armagh
	15 June	Dublin
	31 October	Armagh
Health and Food Safety	2 February	Armagh
	18 July	Armagh
	21 November	Armagh
Tourism	25 January	Armagh
	28 November	Armagh
Transport	20 April	Armagh
	5 October	Armagh
Aquaculture & Marine	1 March	Armagh
	4 July	Derry/Londonderry
	12 December	Armagh
Inland Waterways	14 February	Enniskillen
	9 July	Armagh
	12 December	Armagh
Language	14 February	Enniskillen
	9 July	Armagh
	12 December	Armagh
Special EU Programmes	4 May	Armagh
Trade & Business Development	1 March	Armagh
	28 November	Armagh

ANNEX TWO

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL JOINT SECRETARIAT

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

Colm Shannon is the Joint Secretary (North) and Shane O'Neill is the Joint Secretary (South). Donal Moran is the Deputy Joint Secretary (North) and Margaret Stanley who was acting Joint Secretary up to August 2012 is the Deputy Joint Secretary (South).

Functions

The functions of the Joint Secretariat include:

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

Funding

Staff Costs are met by OFMDFM and DFAT. All other costs associated with the Joint Secretariat and the NSMC are shared between the two administrations. The cost of running the Joint Secretariat in 2012 amounted to £1,508,055/€1,853,663.

ANNEX THREE

NORTH SOUTH BODIES' BOARD MEMBERS

Food Safety Promotion Board

Advisory Board

Lynn Ní Bhaoigheallain (Chairperson)

Darina Allen (Vice Chairperson)

Julie Andrews

Thomas Burns

Brendan Kehoe

Helen O'Donnell

Edward Spellman

Hannah Su

Campbell Tweedie

Mary Upton

Jane Wells

North South Language Body

Foras Na Gaeilge

Liam Ó Maoilmhichíl
(Chairperson of Foras na Gaelige/Joint Chairperson of An Foras Teanga)
Eoghain Mac Cormaic (Vice Chairperson)
Pol Callaghan
Colm Cavanagh
Áine Ní Chiaráin
Bríd Ní Chonghoile
Liam Kennedy
Seosamh Mac Donnchadha
Tomás Mac Eochagáin
Marcus Mac Ruairi
Seán Mícheal Ó Dómhnaill
Dónal Ó hAiniféin
Therese Ruane
Tomás Sharkey
Cáitríona Ní Shúilleabháin
Éamonn Ó Gribín (appointed 20 April 2012)

Tha Boord O Ulstèr Scotch

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

Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission

Winston Patterson (Chairperson)

Alan McCulla (Vice Chairperson)

Laurence Arbuckle

Andrew Duncan

Phil Mahon

Joe Millar

Michael J McCormick

Theresa McLaverty

Tarlach O'Crosain*

Seamus Rogers

Thomas Sloan (RIP)

Donal Tipping

Jim Wilson

(*Tarlach OCrossain's term of appointment expired on 12 December 2012 and was replaced by Laurence Arbuckle)

Trade and Business Development Body

Martin Cronin (Chairperson)
Joanne Spain (Vice Chairperson)
Brendan Butler
Philip Doherty
Jake Gallagher
Ray Hayden
Hubert Brown Kerr
Timothy Mayes
Bridget Meehan
Patricia McKeown
Kevin Norton
Mairead Sorensen

Tourism Ireland Limited

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