

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC TB 1 (15) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TRADE & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

5 MARCH 2015

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The eighteenth North South Ministerial Council Trade and Business Development meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on Thursday 5 March 2015. The meeting was attended by Richard Bruton, TD, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Arlene Foster, MLA, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, and John O'Dowd, MLA, Minister of Education. Minister Foster chaired the meeting.

PROGRESS REPORT

2. The Council received a presentation from Martin Cronin, Chairperson and Thomas Hunter Mc Gowan CEO, on InterTradelreland's performance and business activities including information on performance against its 2014 Business Plan Target. The Council noted that during 2014 InterTradelreland had exceeded its targets and:
 - delivered a 10:1 return on investment;
 - assisted 64 first time innovators;

- assisted 127 first time exporters;
 - delivered 4% efficiency savings; and
 - delivered a total business value of £67M/ €78M.
3. The Council noted that there was strong demand across all InterTradelreland's Programmes during 2014. It was also noted that InterTradelreland had continued to carry out business and economic research activities including production of a report entitled *SMEs, Credit Constraints and Growth: A Cross Border Study*, the production of InterTradelreland's *Quarterly Business Monitor Survey*, and undertaking research into the issue of *Mapping the Potential for Cross Border Clusters and Clustering*

INTERTRADEIRELAND 2015 BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET

4. The Council approved InterTradelreland's 2015 Business Plan and recommended that the 2015 budget/grant provision for InterTradelreland should be £8,746,440 / €10,798,074.

HORIZON 2020

5. The Council noted that both jurisdictions had agreed a joint target of €175m for drawdown under Horizon 2020 and welcomed the support structures that have been put in place to deliver on this target including:
- the continued work of the All-Island Horizon 2020 Steering Group, which is chaired by InterTradelreland;
 - the Launch of the Horizon 2020 Strategic Action Plan; and
 - the work of the contact point networks in each jurisdiction.
6. The Council was advised that InterTradelreland has identified and will be taking forward additional activities in conjunction with the All-Island Steering Group to deliver on this target.
7. The Council also noted the early results from Horizon 2020 , including:
- 45 cross border applications were made to the Programme, 7 of which were successful;
 - an economic value of €8.8m for successful cross border Horizon 2020 collaboration; and
 - that the success rate for cross border proposals (16%) was higher than the average EU rate (14%).

EU MATTERS/FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

8. The Council noted that officials were continuing to investigate opportunities for cooperation on EU Business and Enterprise funding including under Horizon 2020, INTERREG VA, and possibly the Juncker initiative and COSME. It was noted that €71m of the INTERREG VA programme is to be allocated to Research and Innovation and that officials are looking closely at opportunities for cooperation in this area.

9. Ministers welcomed the collaboration between bodies and officials in each jurisdiction to maximise drawdown of EU funding and encouraged officials to continue to seek new opportunities for potential projects.

US IRELAND R&D PARTNERSHIP

10. The Council received a presentation on the US Ireland R&D Partnership. It was noted that up to January 2015 a total of 19 projects had been awarded 23.7m/€31.5m and had brought together over 60 investigators from Universities and Institutes in Northern Ireland, Ireland and the US. Ministers noted that the research undertaken through the Partnership meets the gold standard of the US's National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Health Peer Review System.
11. Ministers welcomed the work being undertaken by the Partnership to expand its scope to include Agri-Food research.

INTERTRADEIRELAND FORWARD LOOK 2015

12. The Council received an update on InterTradeIreland's strategic priorities and planned key activities for 2015 which include:
 - increasing joint applications to Horizon 2020;
 - assisting SMEs to access finance for growth;
 - exploring the use of additional funding streams to increase the capacity of SMEs; and
 - assisting SMEs to access the Public Procurement Market.

INTERTRADEIRELAND 2013 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

13. The Council noted InterTradeIreland's Annual Report and Accounts for 2013, which had been certified by the Comptrollers and Auditors General and laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas.

NEXT MEETING

14. The Council agreed that the next Trade and Business Development meeting should be held in Autumn 2015.

**Joint Secretariat
5 March 2015**