

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC TB 1 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TRADE & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

1 MARCH 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The fourteenth North South Ministerial Council Trade and Business Development meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on Thursday 1 March 2012. The meeting was attended by Arlene Foster, MLA, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Richard Bruton, TD, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and John O'Dowd, MLA, Minister for Education. Minister Foster chaired the meeting.

PROGRESS REPORT

2. Ministers welcomed the recently appointed Chairperson, Martin Cronin, and Vice-Chairperson, Joanne Spain, to their first NSMC meeting. The Council noted the planned retirement of the CEO, Liam Nellis and thanked him for his commitment and contribution to the work of InterTradeIreland.

3. The Chairperson and the CEO updated Ministers on InterTradelreland's performance and business activities. Of particular note in 2011 was the generation of £119.8M/€146.1M of Business Value from companies participating on Trade and Innovation Programmes and that 2,576 companies have participated on InterTradelreland Trade and Innovation Programmes and accessed cross-border Business Information and Advice Services.

CROSS BORDER TENDERING FOR PUBLIC CONTRACTS

4. Ministers discussed the recommendations highlighted in an InterTradelreland report, *All Island Public Procurement: A Competitiveness Study*. They noted 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.

CO-OPERATION ON INNOVATION

5. The Council noted ongoing and future initiatives developed by InterTradelreland to encourage and stimulate greater co-operation to increase applications to EU Framework Programmes, including enhanced levels of SME participation. InterTradelreland analysis shows that 137 collaborative applications have proved successful securing funding of €40M for 50 proposals.
6. Ministers welcomed the continued success and development of the US-Ireland Research & Development Partnership, including the recent extension to include Telecommunications and Energy and Sustainability.

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2011

7. The Council noted InterTradelreland's draft Annual Report and Accounts for 2011.

ADDITIONAL MATTERS

8. The Council approved Tourism Ireland's Business Plan 2012 and recommended that the budget provision for 2012 is €62.7m.

NEXT MEETING

9. The Council agreed to meet again in Trade and Business Development sectoral format in Autumn 2012.

**Joint Secretariat
1 March 2012**