

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC TB 2 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

TRADE & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH

28 NOVEMBER 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The fifteenth North South Ministerial Council Trade and Business Development meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat offices, Armagh on Wednesday 28 November 2012. The meeting was attended by 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. Minister Bruton chaired the meeting.

CO-OPERATION ON RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

2. The Council noted 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. Ministers welcomed 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.

3. Ministers welcomed 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.
4. Ministers welcomed the continued success and development of the US-Ireland Research & Development Partnership, including the latest collaborative proposal 'WiPhyLoc8' in the newly added area of telecommunications.

EU MATTERS

5. The Council noted proposals for the Irish Presidency of the EU in 2013 in the trade, research and innovation, employment regulations and competitiveness areas. It was also noted that Ireland will host a number of conferences and events to progress science, technology and research issues during the Presidency.
6. Ministers also noted that, over the coming months, officials will liaise on the potential for Northern Ireland Executive Ministers or their representatives to attend events that are relevant to the Trade and Business area during the EU Presidency. Participation could include involvement at relevant events associated with Trade and Competitiveness informal councils, and at InterTradelreland's Collaborate to Innovate conference, and the Week of Innovative Regions in Europe (WIRE) and EUROSME conferences.

PROGRESS REPORT

7. The Chairperson and the CEO updated Ministers on InterTradelreland's half year performance against the 2012 Business Plan Targets. InterTradelreland has made good progress in the first half of the year against its 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%.
8. Ministers also noted 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.

NEXT MEETING

9. The Council agreed that the next Trade and Business Development meeting should be held in early Summer 2013

**Joint Secretariat
28 November 2012**