

REQUEST TO DETI FROM THE ETI COMMITTEE

At its meeting on 30 May 2013 the ETI Committee discussed briefing received from Dr John Bradley on his report into '**Cross Border Economic Renewal: Rethinking Regional Policy in Ireland**'.

Members asked the Department:

- a. **what action is being undertaken to facilitate local centres of excellence to support enterprises in the border region; and**
- b. **for its views on, and any consideration that has been given to, the development of sub-regional clusters to facilitate economic development at sub-regional level post RPA**

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE

The Department has read the report 'Cross Border Economic Renewal: Rethinking Regional Policy in Ireland' by Dr John Bradley and Mr Michael Best and noted the authors' comments on the current state and economic future of the cross border region.

This report is a contribution to the ongoing consideration of what more can be done to help businesses that have opportunities to engage in cross border trade. The Committee may also wish to note that as part of its recent strategic review Inter Trade Ireland conducted a wide-ranging stakeholder consultation with key stakeholders. The outcome from this review has been discussed at a North South Ministerial Council Trade and Business Development sectoral meeting.

The review was used to inform the development of its Corporate Plan, which was approved by NSMC on 22 January, 2014. The overarching theme is to ***support businesses, through their innovation and trade initiatives, to take advantage of North South co-operative opportunities to improve capability and drive competitiveness, jobs and growth. Furthermore, InterTradeIreland will also seek to create an environment in which Northern Ireland and Ireland co-operate to ensure businesses are making full use of cross border opportunities to drive competition, growth and jobs.***

ITI intends to carry out further research on all island clusters as part of its 2014 Business Plan.

The report will also need to be considered within the wider context of other ongoing issues. These include the Review of Public Administration where there will be a rationalisation of local councils, alongside a transfer of economic development functions. In addition under the UK Government's 'Building a Prosperous and United Community' initiative announced last year, involves consideration being given to the development of new pilot enterprise zones in Northern Ireland.

Reply prepared by: Economic Policy Division

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