

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL TRADE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MEETING

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES, ARMAGH, AND BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

21 APRIL 2021

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twenty first North South Ministerial Council Trade and Business Development meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh, and by videoconference on 21 April 2021. The meeting was attended by Leo Varadkar TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Diane Dodds MLA, Minister for the Economy, and Conor Murphy MLA, Minister of Finance. The Tánaiste chaired the meeting.

INTERTRADEIRELAND PROGRESS REPORT

2. The Council welcomed the overall achievements of InterTradeIreland for the year 2020 and from January to March in 2021 and recognised the valuable contribution that the Body has made through its trade and development programmes for small and medium-sized companies trading across the border and in both jurisdictions.
3. Ministers noted that InterTradeIreland engaged with over 3,148 companies through its trade and innovation activities and services and delivered a total jobs impact of 1,597 in 2020.
4. The Council commended InterTradeIreland for its work in helping businesses over the last year.

5. Ministers recognised the positive impact of the innovation and technology programmes run by InterTradelreland, and its support for building relationships between companies and researchers.

RESPONSE TO COVID-19

6. The Council noted the continued impact of the pandemic on society and on the economy, in both jurisdictions, and the measures put in place by both Administrations to support communities and businesses affected by the crisis and to assist economic recovery.
7. Ministers welcomed that both Administrations and InterTradelreland continue to work collaboratively in order to support businesses facing challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.
8. The Council noted the continued success of the InterTradelreland Covid-19 supports to date and the potential for further development of digital sales supports.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE MATTERS

9. The Council noted InterTradelreland's Annual Report and Accounts for 2019, which have been certified by the Comptrollers and Auditors General and will be laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly and both Houses of the Oireachtas shortly.
10. The Council noted the work ongoing in relation to InterTradelreland's staffing complement and asked Sponsor Departments to continue to progress the matter, with a view to bringing a recommendation to a future NSMC meeting.

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

11. Ministers noted the progress and current position of North/South collaboration in relation to the Horizon 2020 Programme.
12. The Council noted the achievements and current position of the US-Ireland R&D Partnership and the recent achievements of the InterTradelreland Synergy Programme.

APPOINTMENT OF CEO FOR INTERTRADEIRELAND

13. The Council appointed Margaret Hearty to the post of Chief Executive Officer of the Trade and Business Development Body (InterTradelreland).
14. Ministers acknowledged the valuable contribution to the work of InterTradelreland made by Aidan Gough, who served as Designated Officer from October 2017 to January 2021.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15. The Council agreed to hold its next NSMC Trade and Business Development meeting in late 2021.

Joint Secretariat
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Website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org