

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



North South Ministerial Council
An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas

Front Cover: Foyle Maritime Festival (July 2016)

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FOREWORD

During the year progress was made in a number of key areas of North/South co-operation and through the North South Implementation Bodies.

The new Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin Area Hospital opened on 28 November and when fully operational will have the capacity to treat just over 1500 new patients, with up to 385 of these patients from Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim.

The Irish Government and the Executive reaffirmed their commitment to work closely together to deliver a world class proposal for hosting the 2023 Rugby World Cup tournament.

Tourism Ireland helped deliver an exceptional year for Tourism, North and South. Figures for overseas visitors to Ireland in 2016 show that numbers were up 10% when compared with 2015. For Northern Ireland, overseas visitors show an increase of 8% when compared to the same period in 2015.

In response to the outcome of the UK referendum to leave the EU of 23 June the NSMC, at its Plenary meeting in Dublin on 4 July, agreed to work to ensure that the interests of the island of Ireland and its people are protected and that the benefits of North/South co-operation are fully recognised in any new arrangements which emerge in the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union.

In particular NSMC noted that there are a number of priority areas where the changing relationship between the UK and the EU will have significant implications, including:

- The Economy and Trade;
- Northern Ireland and British/Irish Relations;
- The Common Travel Area; and
- The EU

Ministers agreed to conduct a full audit in all sectors to identify the possible impacts, risks, opportunities and contingencies arising in the phases preceding and following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. This work was in turn discussed at ministerial sectoral meetings and it was agreed that it will continue to be a key discussion item at future meetings. The Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government agreed to be guided by a number of common principles in taking forward their decisions.

The continuing importance of European funding, in particular the PEACE and INTERREG programmes, to co-operation and regional development was re-iterated with confirmation that €89.8m had been drawn down under the 2007-2013 PEACE III and INTERREG IVA. The Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive continue to work together to ensure that Northern Ireland's interests are protected and advanced and the benefits of North/South co-operation are fully recognised in any new arrangements which emerge from the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union.

Both jurisdictions have agreed an approach to maximise the drawdown and impact of the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA 2014-2020 programmes. They have committed to continue to work together with a view to securing funding for successor Programmes and the matter will be kept under review at future NSMC meetings in this sector.

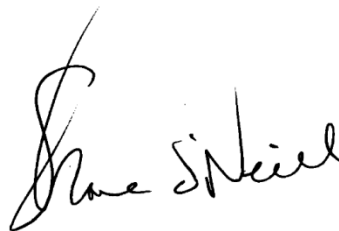
Ferdie Mac an Fhailigh retired as Chief Executive of Foras Na Gaeilge in 2016. During his time as Chief Executive Ferdie made an important contribution to North/South Co-operation. We wish Ferdie well in his retirement and his successor, Seán Ó Coinn, every success in his new appointment.

In December the Boards of the North South Bodies and Tourism Ireland were re-constituted. We would like to thank all those who served and to offer our best wishes to the new Board members.

Finally we would like to thank officials in the Departments of the Irish Government and Northern Ireland Executive, the North/South Bodies, the agencies that support our work and, in particular our colleagues in the Secretariat, for their support and co-operation during 2016.



COLM SHANNON
Joint Secretary (North)



SHANE O'NEILL
Joint Secretary (South)

CHAPTER 1

NSMC PLENARY MEETINGS

NSMC Plenary meetings involve Northern Ireland Executive and Irish Government Ministers meeting to take an overview of co-operation on the island and of the North South institutions.



Ministers attending the NSMC Plenary in Dublin Castle on 4 July 2016

Two NSMC Plenary meetings were held in 2016, on 4 July in Dublin Castle and on 18 November at the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices in Armagh.

The Irish Government delegation was led by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD; the Northern Ireland Executive delegation was led by First Minister, Arlene Foster MLA, and the deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MLA. The focus of both Plenary meetings centred on the implications of the outcome of the UK Referendum on EU membership which was held on 23 June 2016.

The Joint Communiqués issued after these meetings are available at www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/publications.

Implications of the UK Referendum

The July Plenary meeting provided the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive with an opportunity to meet formally for the first time following the recent elections in each jurisdiction.

A detailed discussion took place on the potential impact that the decision of the UK to leave the EU would have on Northern Ireland and on relations between both jurisdictions. Ministers noted a number of priority areas where implications arise, in particular the Economy and Trade, Northern Ireland and British Irish Relations, the Common Travel Area and the EU. The Council re-affirmed the joint commitment of the Irish Government and the Executive to the successful implementation of the PEACE and INTERREG programmes.

The Council agreed that a full audit would be undertaken across all sectors to identify the possible impacts, risks, opportunities and contingencies arising in the phases preceding and following the UK's withdrawal from the EU and that a report would be brought to the next Plenary meeting.

At the subsequent Plenary, in November, the Council noted the completion of the sectoral audits. It was agreed that in taking forward their discussions, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government will be guided by a number of common principles. It was also agreed that Ministers and officials would continue their discussions at NSMC and sectoral level and that bilateral discussions would continue, as required.

Furthermore it was noted that senior officials from the Executive Office, the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade would continue to meet regularly to review developments, serving as a high-level working group on Brexit issues.

Financial and Economic Matters

The performance of the economies in each jurisdiction was discussed at the Plenary meetings when Ministers outlined various initiatives under way to support economic growth.

Fresh Start Agreement - Section E Commitments

The Council received updates at both Plenary meetings on the progress made on the implementation of the various commitments under Section E of the *Fresh Start: Stormont House Agreement Implementation Plan* ('Fresh Start').

It was noted that a Public Inquiry into the A5 Western Transport Corridor road scheme had commenced and that the Inspectors report is expected in 2017 after which a decision can then be made regarding progression to the construction stage which remains programmed for late 2017. The Irish Government's commitment of £75 million to the project was noted.

Ministers welcomed the on-going engagement with key stakeholders on the possible options for the Narrow Water Bridge Project with further discussions planned for 2017.

The Council noted progress made on Phase 1 of the re-opening of the Ulster Canal (Lough Erne to Castle Saunderson) and that the tender for the final stage of this phase was expected to issue by the end of 2016 and work to commence on site in 2017. Ministers welcomed the establishment of the Ulster Canal Advisory Forum, comprising key stakeholders, which met for the first time in September 2016.

Senior Officials from both jurisdictions continue to meet to take forward the various commitments under *Fresh Start* and Ministers agreed that further progress updates will be brought to future NSMC meetings.



Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MLA, Taoiseach Enda Kenny TD, First Minister Rt Hon Arlene Foster MLA and Charles Flanagan TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade arriving for the NSMC Plenary meeting in Armagh on 18 November 2016

North West Gateway Initiative

Progress made on the *North West Gateway Initiative* was considered by the Council. Ministers noted the continued engagement of officials with regional stakeholders regarding the direction and priorities for the North West region. They noted the establishment of a *North West Development Fund* under *Fresh Start*, the Irish Government's contribution of €2.5 million and the commitment of match funding from the Northern Ireland Executive.

The NSMC acknowledged that Donegal County Council and Derry City & Strabane District Council were implementing the arrangements contained in their *North West Strategic Growth Plan* and welcomed that the formal governance, financial management and

administrative arrangements for oversight and delivery of the associated *North West Development Fund* had been agreed.

Ministers agreed that senior officials from the relevant Departments would meet with the two Councils and noted the continuing commitment to a meeting of Ministers from both jurisdictions to take place in the North West.

Other Matters

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to work together to deliver a world class proposal to host the Rugby World Cup 2023.

Ministers noted that building and maintaining relationships between both jurisdictions featured in the Irish Government's Programme for Government and in the Northern Ireland Executive's draft Programme for Government Framework.

At the July meeting the Ministers for Health committed to further scope opportunities for all-island co-operation in health and social care. Following this meeting the Ministers for Health jointly opened the cardiac catheterisation laboratory in Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin and outlined the future path for the *All-Island Congenital Heart Disease Network*.

CHAPTER 2

NSMC SECTORS

The North South Ministerial Council meets in sectoral format to oversee co-operation in 12 agreed Areas of Co-operation or Sectors. In six of these Sectors, co-operation is taken forward by means of North South Implementation Bodies and in the six Areas of Co-operation by means of existing mechanisms in each jurisdiction.

The six North South Implementation Bodies comprise Waterways Ireland, the Food Safety Promotion Board, the Trade and Business Development Body, the Special European Union Programmes Body, the Language Body and the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission. Further details on the North South Bodies can be found in Annex 3.

Co-operation is also advanced in the agreed areas of Agriculture, Education, Environment, Health, Tourism (including Tourism Ireland) and Transport.

At NSMC sectoral meetings, the Irish Government is represented by the Minister, or the Minister of State, responsible for that Sector, and the Northern Ireland Executive is represented by two Ministers, usually being the Minister with responsibility for that Sector within the Executive and another nominated by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on a cross-community basis.

The Joint Communiqués from these meetings are available at www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org/publications.

AGRICULTURE

NSMC Agriculture meetings were held on 20 January and 26 October 2016. Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Simon Hamilton MLA, Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Simon Coveney TD, Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine and Ann Phelan TD, Minister of State, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government attended the January meeting.



The October meeting was attended by Michael Creed TD, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Ring TD, Minister of State, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Michelle McIlveen MLA, Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and Chris Hazzard MLA, Minister for Infrastructure.

Price Volatility

Ministers discussed various price volatility issues in the agricultural industry and measures to help farmers and the food industry to cope with these challenges.

Review of Work Programme

The Council noted the current NSMC Agriculture Sector Work Programme and agreed that its scope enables practical and effective co-operation for mutual benefit in the Agriculture sector and that it will be kept under review.

Funding Update

Ministers welcomed the ongoing collaboration between the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) aimed at maximising the drawdown of EU funding under *Horizon 2020 - Societal Challenge 2*, the EU's competitive programme for research and innovation. They also welcomed funding secured to date by successful applicants in the Agriculture, Forestry,

Food and Marine sectors and in the Bioeconomy, some of which were North-South collaborative applications.

Ministers noted the progress made in funding research projects in both jurisdictions under the *DAFM National Competitive Call*. Ministers were told that Research Partners in seven collaborative projects under the DAFM 2015 call in Ireland and Northern Ireland had received letters of offer from either DAFM or DAERA, to the value of €10.2 million (£8.7 million). Ministers also welcomed the recent extension of the *US-Ireland R&D Partnership* to include agriculture research themes.

Common Agricultural Policy

The Council noted the progress made by DAFM and DAERA on the implementation of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms. The continuing close contacts between officials on the 'Area of Natural Constraints' (ANC) provisions was noted. Ministers were also provided with an update on the situation regarding the implementation of the *Rural Development Programmes* in both jurisdictions.

The potential implications that the UK's decision to leave the EU could have on future CAP funding and the wider agri-food and fisheries sectors, North and South, were noted. Ministers also acknowledged the continuing close contact between their officials on a range of issues including European Commission proposals for CAP simplification.

Animal Health

The NSMC welcomed a presentation outlining co-operation on dairy product certification which underpins and facilitates market access for dairy products from across the island.

The Council welcomed on-going co-operation on the delivery of the '*All-Island Animal Health & Welfare Strategy Action Plan*' and the continuation of practical and effective co-operation on animal health and welfare, and disease control.

They noted, in particular that Northern Ireland had been granted '*Officially Brucellosis Free*' (OBF) status by the European Commission and that DAERA had introduced on 1 March 2016 a compulsory *Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD)* eradication programme similar to that introduced by DAFM in 2013.

Ministers noted the submission of an application to the *World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)* for *Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Negligible Risk (NR)* status for Northern Ireland.

Ministers noted also the agreement reached at a March 2016 meeting of the North/South Disease Control & Trade Working Group on ways to enhance trade between the two jurisdictions.

The NSMC noted the establishment in June of a 3 year shared contract for the emergency supply of CO₂ for whole-house gassing of poultry.

Ministers noted the signing in June 2016, by the Chief Veterinary Officers, of a Memorandum of Understanding for sharing livestock culling teams in the event of an exotic disease outbreak and ongoing co-operation on contingency planning, liaison on national and EU animal welfare legislation, animal identification and the progress made on a data sharing project.

Plant Health and Pesticides

Ministers welcomed the continued cross-border co-operation in dealing with tree and plant health and the collaborative approach to regulation and to the sharing of science and diagnostic capability.

Ministers noted the progress made on the review of the '*All Ireland Chalara Control Strategy*' in response to ongoing scientific and surveillance evidence; the research being undertaken to develop a population of Irish planting stock tolerant to the (*Chalara*) *Ash Dieback* disease and the ongoing commitment to continue to work towards the shared objective of achieving and maintaining good plant health status on the island.

Farm Safety

The Council noted its shared commitment to improve farm safety, in support of the Irish *Health and Safety Authority* and the *Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland*, with a view to minimising the risk to those working on farms and thereby reducing the incidence of injury and death. Ministers welcomed the success achieved in raising public awareness to the inherent dangers to health and safety during International Farm Week 2016.

Ministers also welcomed the on-going sharing of information on farm safety and the formation of the North South Farm Safety Group. The Group will meet bi-annually to discuss areas of collaboration regarding farm safety and will seek opportunities to develop new joint initiatives.

Rural Development

North and South *Rural Development Programmes*, worth £80m and €250m respectively, provide for investments in general rural development activities, under the EU's social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development priority. The Council welcomed the good progress made in both jurisdictions in implementing the *LEADER* element of the Rural Development Programme. Ministers noted that DAERA and the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs had held a LEADER Co-operation event in Newry in November 2016 to launch co-operation between Local Action Groups from the UK and Ireland.

Ministers also welcomed a new *Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme* which had opened in Northern Ireland. They noted the progress made on the CEDRA (Commission for Economic Development of Rural Areas) Social Farming grant scheme and Ireland's new *Town and Village Scheme* and agreed that officials should explore opportunities to share experience at sustaining rural settlements.

EDUCATION

An NSMC Education meeting took place, in Armagh on 21 September 2016 attended by Peter Weir, MLA, Minister for Education, Richard Bruton, TD, Minister for Education and Skills and Megan Fearon, MLA, Junior Minister.

Educational Underachievement

The Council noted that Co-operation Ireland had been appointed to lead a project aimed at progressing teacher professional development in the area of educational achievement in both jurisdictions with the objective of having all work completed and a final report submitted by July 2017.

Special Education Needs

Ministers welcomed the progress made by the Departments and the Middletown Centre for Autism on the facilitation and delivery of the Centre's services following completion of an expansion project in March 2015 and the positive findings from the joint inspection of the Centre carried out during 2016.



Ministers also noted the appointment of Directors to the Board of the Centre and that the Centre has considered the potential implications of the outcome of the UK referendum on EU membership.

School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges

The Council noted the ongoing activities of the North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work in the professional endorsement of Higher Education Programmes in youth work.

Ministers noted the commitment of the National Youth Council of Ireland and the Youth Council for Northern Ireland to the optimisation of ICT for effective youth work in a rapidly changing environment. The determination of the Bodies to implement the recommendations of an international research report [Screenagers] which explores the use of ICT, digital and social media in youth work was also noted.

Teacher Mobility

Ministers welcomed a joint update report from the two Teaching Councils and the continued co-operation between both organisations on measures adopted to reduce obstacles to the mobility of teachers. They noted that the Teaching Council (Ireland) is introducing mechanisms to address qualification shortfalls which arise as a result of the introduction of the two year Professional Master of Education.

Ministers also noted that the North South Teacher Qualifications Working Group, in conjunction with the two Teaching Councils, had considered the impact of the outcome of the UK referendum on EU membership would have on teacher mobility.

Irish Language Requirement

The Council welcomed the proposal received from St Mary's University College, Belfast, and the Marino Institute to collaborate to support access to an *Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge (SCG)* by applicants accredited by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland. They also welcomed the decision by the Department of Education (NI) to fund the upfront cost of training tutors and, where necessary, to give consideration on an annual basis to funding the costs of invigilators/supervisors.

North/South Project: History and Digital Storytelling

The Council welcomed the continuing commitment to a cross-border professional learning collaboration between the Professional Development Service for Teachers and the School Development Service. The successful completion of the first year of the three year *History and Digital Storytelling Project* was noted which had culminated in a showcase of films made by the 12 schools involved in the Irish Film Centre, Dublin in May 2016. The recommendation of the North South Teacher Qualifications Working Group that the second year of the project should proceed was also noted.

Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS)

The Council was advised that the 14th Annual *SCoTENS* conference on the theme of '*Communities of Practice: Learning Together to Teach Together*' took place in Armagh in October 2016.

Co-operation between Education Inspectorates

Ministers welcomed the continuing collaborative work of the Inspectorates including on capacity building for the Education and Training Inspectorate's inspection of Irish-medium education and the ongoing programme of inspection exchanges and joint working on inspections.

ENVIRONMENT

An NSMC Environment meeting held on 14 September in Armagh was attended by Denis Naughten TD, Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Michelle McIlveen MLA, Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and Chris Hazzard MLA, Minister for Infrastructure.



Update on EU Funding

The main sources of EU Funding in the Environment sector are Horizon 2020, INTERREG VA and LIFE. Ministers welcomed the continuing co-operation that is taking place between both jurisdictions to highlight opportunities for funding under these programmes. They noted that joint training and information events, including cross-border road shows, had taken place and that there had been reciprocal access to partner search databases.

Ongoing co-operation between both jurisdictions in the development of a package of joint projects, with a value in excess of €70 million, covering the terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments within the INTERREG VA programme and the opening of the LIFE 2016 call, were also noted by Ministers.

Review of Work Programme

The Council noted that the NSMC Environment Work Programme would be kept under review at future NSMC Environment meetings having regard in particular to matters arising from the outcome of the UK Referendum on EU membership.

Ministers agreed that consideration should be given to co-operation on water and sewerage services, opportunities for co-operation on wider environmental issues within the current

Work Programme and that a proposed updated Work Programme would be considered at a future NSMC Plenary meeting.

Environmental Impact of Fuel Laundering

The Council noted the decline in the reporting of fly tipping incidents involving waste arising from fuel laundering since the introduction of a fuel marker in both jurisdictions in April 2015.

Ministers stressed the need to continue to work jointly with all the relevant agencies in order to tackle the problem of fuel laundering and its links to organised crime.

Cross Border Movements of Waste

The Council noted that the Repatriation Programme agreed for 2015-2016 had been completed with the removal and repatriation of waste from two illegal sites (located at Altnamackan and Mayobridge) and that officials from the relevant Departments were in discussions with a view to agreeing a Work Programme to complete the remaining repatriation sites.

Ministers reaffirmed that they are continuing to target resources into joint enforcement action against those involved in illegal waste activity, including the exchanging of intelligence and information on problem areas and the carrying out of co-ordinated inspections.

Waste Management

The Council noted that three regional waste management plans covering the Connacht-Ulster, Eastern-Midlands and Southern Regions for the period 2015-2021 had been published in Ireland. It was reported that in developing these regional plans there had been an extensive consultation process to ensure that the views of relevant stakeholders were taken into account. This included transboundary consultation undertaken with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in the context of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process associated with the development of the plans.

Ministers noted that there had been continued investment in recycling in Northern Ireland and were provided with the most recent statistics on the recycling rate. The introduction of legislative measures, in Northern Ireland, to reduce the amount of food waste sent to landfill and the introduction of further legislation to discourage criminality in the waste industry was noted by the Council.

Environmental Protection, Reporting and Research

Ministers noted that a report commissioned by the NSMC on all-island air quality research study had been finalised and presented to relevant Ministers and was accessible through the DAERA and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAIE) websites. It was noted that this project was an example of how research can support policy development.

The Council also received an update on the ShARE collaborative evidence programme (Shared Agency Regulatory Evidence) which had 10 projects underway.

Water Quality

Ministers noted the closure of the public consultation on *Significant Water Management Issues* closed in Ireland and the publication of the *River Basin Management Plans* for Northern Ireland in December 2015. They also noted that a new Local Authority Waters and Communities Office had been established by the Irish Government and that it would focus on community engagement and public participation including cross-border collaboration.

Ministers acknowledged the cross-border co-operation work on development of River Trusts, including promotion, awareness and community engagement in the cross-border River Blackwater Catchment. They also recognised the continued co-ordination on the Clean Coast and Coastcare Schemes and welcomed the level of beach awards in both jurisdictions for 2016.

The Council noted the continued engagement between the Department for Infrastructure, DCCAIE, Irish Water and Northern Ireland Water on exploring opportunities for co-operation, including on applications to access INTERREG VA Funds.

HEALTH

NSMC Health meetings were held on 20 January and 9 November 2016. The January meeting was attended by Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for Health, Dr. James Reilly TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Simon Hamilton MLA, Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and Michelle O’Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. The meeting in November was attended by Michelle O’Neill MLA, Minister for Health, Simon Harris TD, Minister for Health, Katherine Zappone TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, and Junior Minister Alasdair Ross MLA.

Review of Work Programme

Ministers agreed that the current NSMC Health Work Programme remains relevant, enabling practical and effective co-operation for mutual benefit and welcomed the progress that had been made. They noted a number of areas that had the potential for further development and collaboration. They also agreed that Departments would liaise with a view to agreeing a joint approach to the identification of additional areas for future collaboration for consideration at the next NSMC Health meeting.

Ministers also noted that a review of the current Child Protection Work Programme is underway and a draft revised all-island Work Programme would be presented at a future NSMC Health sectoral meeting for approval.

Update on EU Funding

The Council received an update on the ongoing collaboration to maximize drawdown of EU funding in the Health sector and noted that officials continued to seek to identify opportunities for further collaboration

Ministers welcomed the successful delivery of the twelve strands of the Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT) project under INTERREG IVA. They also welcomed the presentation from the Health Research Board on Horizon 2020 funding streams in the Health Sector.

Health Promotion

The Council received an update on the work of the North/South Alcohol Policy Advisory Group and the North/South Hidden Harm Group which is facilitated by CAWT. It noted that following a joint review, the North/South Alcohol Policy Advisory Group renewed its existing Terms of Reference. Ministers also welcomed the plan to host a knowledge exchange seminar in 2017 on the link between alcohol, self-harm and suicide and noted the continued progress on strategies to prevent the harm related to alcohol misuse.

The Council noted that both jurisdictions were considering the implications of the European Court of Justice decision in the Scottish Minimum Unit Pricing case.

Ministers noted that an all-island conference, *‘A tobacco-free island – how are we doing?’* organised by the Institute of Public Health, had been held in Belfast in June and that both jurisdictions had introduced legislation to transpose the EU Tobacco Products Directive,

which had come into force in May. They also noted that standardised packaging for tobacco products had been introduced in Northern Ireland in May 2016 and that standardised packaging measures were to be introduced in Ireland in the near future.

Ministers welcomed the update on suicide prevention initiatives in both jurisdictions including the decision by all four major Christian churches to include the inter-church suicide prevention initiative '*Flourish!*' within clergy training.

The NSMC also welcomed the '*Mental Health First Aid Training Programme*' (an Australian initiative), adapted for Northern Ireland, which has been delivered to more than 4,500 people since 2009. The continued collaboration between the Public Health Agency and the National Office for Suicide Prevention in working with the GAA on a health and well-being project, including the holding of a '*National Health and Wellbeing Day*' on 22 October was also welcomed.

At the November meeting Ministers launched a '*Concerned About Suicide Leaflet*' which will help raise awareness and put people in contact with sources of support.

The Council noted the launch of Ireland's first ever '*National Physical Activity Plan*' and the launch of '*A Healthy Weight for Ireland - Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016-2025*' in 2016, and that the Public Health Agency, Food Standards Agency and *safefood* are consulting on nutrition standards for staff and visitors in health and social care settings.

Cancer and Health Research Co-Operation

At their 9 November meeting, Ministers noted progress made on the development of the Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin Area Hospital. The new Unit, which subsequently opened on 28 November, when fully operational, has the capacity to treat just over 1500 new patients, with up to 385 of these patients from Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim.

The Council also noted that five new submissions had been made to the National Institutes of Health involving researchers from both jurisdictions, under the *US-Ireland R&D Partnership*.

Ministers welcomed the update on the ongoing work of the All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care including the launch of the '*The Palliative Hub – Professional*', the holding of a workshop on improving transition from children's to adult services for young adults with life-limiting conditions; and the hosting of an international Palliative Care Conference in October 2016.



New Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin Area Hospital

Child Protection

It was noted that the Work Programme agreed at the NSMC Health and Food Safety meeting in July 2012 continues to be progressed through the cross-border Steering Group of officials, co-chaired by the Department of Health (NI) and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Updates were also provided in the various workstreams relating to Knowledge Exchange Forum, Quality and Effectiveness, Deaths of Children in Care, Cultural Competence in Safeguarding and other Specialist Services.

TOURISM

Tourism Ireland Ltd. is responsible for promoting the island of Ireland as a leading holiday destination in overseas markets. Tourism is the island of Ireland's largest indigenous industry and contributes in excess of 4% of GDP in the South and 5.2% GDP in the North. In terms of employment, at least 222,000 jobs in the South and 43,000 jobs in the North are supported by the industry.



Niall Gibbons, CEO of Tourism Ireland; Enterprise, Trade and Investment Minister, Jonathan Bell; and John McGrillen, CEO of Tourism NI, at the launch of Tourism Ireland's 2016 Game of Thrones campaign.

Review of 2016 Season and look forward to 2017 Season

The 2016 season was an exceptional one for the industry. Figures for overseas visitors to Ireland in 2016 show that numbers were up 10% when compared with 2015. For Northern Ireland, figures overseas visitors show an increase of 8% when compared to the same period in 2015.

Market diversification into Europe, the US and Asia has been a key element in this success. The Mainland Europe market, for example, had been the largest contributor of tourism revenue in 2016. In the US, Tourism Ireland's campaign to create 'stand out' is well under way. In order to maximise benefit provided by social and digital media, these campaigns focussed resources on target audiences around key promotional themes such as the Wild Atlantic Way, the Causeway Coastal Route, Ireland's Ancient East and Belfast and Dublin.

Additional interest has been generated by the film industry and from sports events which has contributed to increased visitor numbers. Screen tourism connections, including Star Wars

and Game of Thrones, and major international sports events, such as the Irish Open at Portstewart, will be maximised by Tourism Ireland to promote Ireland as a unique and exceptional visitor destination.

A strong programme of promotions for Northern Ireland highlighting iconic experiences like Titanic Belfast, which was voted the world's leading visitor attraction at the World Travel Awards, is ongoing.

Rugby World Cups

Preparations are continuing for the hosting of the Women's Rugby World Cup in August 2017. The Pool Draw for this tournament took place at Belfast City Hall in November 2016. The competition will take place in Belfast and Dublin. Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland are also involved in the preparations.

Work by relevant Departments in Ireland and Northern Ireland in preparing a joint bid to host the Rugby World Cup (RWC) in 2023 continued through the year. The Candidate Phase documentation was received from World Rugby in November 2016 ahead of a bid visit by World Rugby in March 2017. An intensive programme of work is now in train to ensure that the strongest possible bid is submitted by 1 June 2017.

TRANSPORT

An NSMC Transport meeting was held in Armagh on 12 December 2016. The meeting was attended by Shane Ross TD, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Chris Hazzard, MLA, Minister for Infrastructure and Junior Minister, Alastair Ross MLA.



Carlingford Lough Greenway

Update on EU Funding

Continued co-operation between the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department for Infrastructure on EU related Transport issues was welcomed by Ministers who noted that both jurisdictions have been successful in securing Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)/Trans European Transport Network (TEN-T) co-financing.

Ministers noted the position with regard to the CEF/TEN-T programmes and acknowledged support for the potential projects, including:

- Rail track upgrading and refurbishment on Belfast to Dublin Line;
- Remediation and enabling works (Phase 1) Belfast Great Victoria Station;
- Feasibility and design studies – Newry Southern Relief Road;
- Road safety and design studies – A1;
- A number of Single European Sky ATM Research (SESAR) applications; and
- Possible Motorways of the Sea and Innovation application.

A co-operation statement template for CEF transport related projects was agreed by Ministers for use for future endorsement of applications for EU Funding. In this regard Ministers signed a co-operation statement relating to candidate CEF/TEN-T projects in both jurisdictions.

Strategic Transport Priorities including Major Road Projects

Continued co-operation between the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department for Infrastructure on Strategic Transport Priorities and opportunities for co-operation were noted by Ministers. These opportunities include developing the strategic road network, enhancing East West and North South connections on the island and supporting modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport, particularly the potential for shared cross border public transport services in border areas.

Ministers were briefed on the proposal to commission a feasibility study into long-term options to enhance the Enterprise rail service, between Dublin and Belfast, and noted that the Public Inquiry into the A5 road scheme opened on 4 October 2016 with the Inspectors' report expected in the first half of 2017.

Ministers noted the continued shared commitment to the A5 scheme and the re-affirmation of the Irish Government's commitment of £75 million to Phase 1 of the Scheme which will be provided in three tranches of £25 million in the years 2017, 2018 and 2019. Ministers also noted that, as in the Fresh Start Agreement, the Irish Government's Capital Plan allowed for an ongoing review of the scope for building on the current commitment.

The proposed further engagement with key stakeholders to identify a preferred option for the Narrow Water Bridge and the expected completion of the Stage 1 assessment to confirm the preferred corridor(s) for the Newry Southern Relief Road, which is expected to be complete in early 2017, was noted by Ministers

Cycling/Cross-border Greenways

Continued investment by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department for Infrastructure on the promotion and development of sustainable transport options, including cycling was welcomed by Ministers as was the Department for Infrastructure publication of '*Exercise – Explore – Enjoy: a Strategic Plan for Greenways*'.

The Council welcomed EU funding awards for three cross-border Greenway projects, recognising the benefits of collaboration in developing Greenway networks and the allocation of €47m to support a range of sustainable transport projects under INTERREG VA.

Road User and Vehicle Safety

Ministers welcomed the continued sharing of knowledge and experience between officials on the delivery of road safety measures and while acknowledging the considerable difficulties being encountered in relation to the Mutual Recognition of Penalty Points Project, they noted that mutual recognition of driving disqualifications between the two jurisdictions is expected to recommence early in 2017.

They also noted the enactment of Northern Ireland’s Road Traffic (Amendment) Act 2016 which includes provisions to tackle drink driving and to reform the learner and restricted driver regime, Graduated Driver Licensing and mandatory wearing of helmets when riding a quad bike on public roads.

Ministers noted the continuing co-operation targeting a wide range of illegal activity within the goods haulage and passenger transport industries, including continuing liaison on successful cross border enforcement operations.

Ministers welcomed the continued exchange between enforcement officers and the successful cross-border enforcement initiative ‘*Operation Trivium*’ which had taken place in the run up to Christmas that focused on targeting higher risk transport operators .

AQUACULTURE AND MARINE

An NSMC Aquaculture and Marine meeting was held on 14 September 2016 in Armagh. The meeting was attended by Denis Naughten TD, Minister for Communications, Climate Act and Environment, Michelle McIlveen MLA, Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Seán Kyne TD, Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs and Natural Resources and Chris Hazzard MLA, Minister for Infrastructure.



Primary school pupils pond dipping at Loughs Agency

Overview of the Loughs Agency and Progress Report

The Council welcomed the Loughs Agency's presentation on its work and noted that the key functions of the Agency in the Foyle and Carlingford sea loughs and catchment areas are to:

- Conserve and protect fisheries;
- License and develop aquaculture and shell fisheries;
- Develop marine tourism and angling; and
- Effectively and efficiently deliver on its statutory mandate and responsibilities.

Ministers welcomed a progress report from the Loughs Agency's CEO, John Pollock, on the recent activities of the Agency and noted, in particular, the position of the survival of the Native Lough Foyle Flat Oyster; the nomination of the Agency for tourism and visitor attraction awards; the Agency's participation on the North/South Fisheries Liaison Group, a collaborative forum comprising the Loughs Agency, Inland Fisheries Ireland and DAERA.

The Council also noted the report on the Foyle Ferry service and acknowledged the Loughs Agency's role in facilitating discussions with interested parties and undertaking a feasibility study which had led to the resumption of the Foyle Service in July 2016.

On corporate governance matters, the Council noted progress in relation to the preparation of the Agency's draft Corporate Plan 2017-19, its draft Business Plan 2017, and the position with regard to the Annual Report and draft financial statements for 2015.

Marketing the resources of the Loughs Agency

The Council welcomed the report on the activities of the Loughs Agency in promoting and marketing the Foyle and Carlingford Lough areas. These activities included angling development initiatives such as events, competitions and promotional editorial coverage in prestigious angling publications; marine tourism initiatives such as the Foyle Maritime Festival and the Beach Activity Centre (The Ark) at Benone Strand and various education and outreach activities, including the Maritime Ambassador Programme and the Foyle Ambassador Project.

External Funding Opportunities

Ministers noted the success of the Loughs Agency in securing external funding. They were briefed on various external funding opportunities which the Loughs Agency is exploring including the European Social Fund, the Heritage Lottery, INTERREG VA and the Rural Development Programme.

The Carlingford Area (Definition of the mouth of the Clanrye River) Regulations 2016

The Council considered and approved these Regulations defining the mouth of the Clanrye river.

FOOD SAFETY

Two NSMC Food Safety meetings were held in 2016 in Armagh. The first, on 20 January, was attended by Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for Health, Dr. James Reilly TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Simon Hamilton MLA, Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and Michelle O’Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. The second meeting, on 9 November, was attended by Ministers for Health, Michelle O’Neill MLA, and Simon Harris TD. Also in attendance were Katherine Zappone TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and Junior Minister Alastair Ross MLA.



The Resurgam Trust project in Lisburn, one of 13 projects to receive funding from the Community Food Initiatives Programme 2016-18.

Progress Report including Overview of safefood

Ministers were provided with an overview of the work of the Food Safety Promotion Board ('safefood') together with a progress report on its current work by the CEO of safefood, Ray Dolan. The Council noted the report documenting safefood's high level achievements which included the following:

Campaigns

Childhood Obesity

2016 was the final year of safefood's three year 'Childhood Obesity Campaign'. This public awareness campaign, which aired in April and August, focused on the 'Saying no to Treats' message and encouraged parents to reduce their child's portion size.

Operation Transformation

Ministers noted the launch of *safefood*'s 'weight-mate', a weight loss app, in early January 2016 to coincide with the airing of the RTE series 'Operation Transformation'. *Safefood* also continued its sponsorship of the programme which this year had featured advice on healthy lunchboxes and ran a 'healthy lunchbox challenge.' *Safefood* was able to use this as an opportunity to promote its Healthy lunchbox leaflet for parents of primary school-aged children.

Folic Acid

The second phase of *safefood*'s 'Babies know the Facts about Folic' campaign was launched in June and ran for four weeks. The campaign, planned to air again, was awarded a Bronze medal at the IAPI Advertising Effectiveness Awards.

Food Safety

In November 2015 *safefood* launched a new two-year food safety campaign 'Listen to the Voice of Food Safety'. The second phase of this campaign, which had an emphasis on the target group of those aged over 65 years, ran from the end of July until August and was to air again in December.

The Council also noted that *safefood* had engaged with customers on digital media, developing various networks such as the 'Community Food Initiative'. A new three year (2016-2018) 'CFI Programme' focussing on family participation and the development of cooking skills such as shopping, meal planning, basic preparation skills and traditional cooking methods commenced in 2016. It was also noted that Knowledge Networks, first established by *safefood* in 2011 to create and augment linkages across the island between food safety professionals, are now being further developed, which will focus on the dairy, poultry and white meat, animal feed, red meat, fresh produce, fish and shellfish sectors over the next 3 years.

With regard to research commissioned by *safefood*, the Council noted the 'Cost of a Healthy Food Basket' survey and report; research conducted into energy drinks; and the 'All-Island Obesity Action Forum'.

Safefood also reported on their attendance at the Balmoral Show highlighting the Childhood Obesity Campaign. Ministers also noted the progress of the tripartite initiative between *safefood*, the Public Health Agency and the Food Standards Agency in developing minimum nutritional standards for catering for staff and visitors in Health and Social Care settings.

Appointments to *safefood* Advisory Committee

At the January NSMC Food Safety meeting the Council approved the appointment of new members to the *safefood* Advisory Committee as well as approving the re-appointment of Professor Margaret Patterson as Chair. Further appointments were approved by the Council at the November meeting.

Corporate Issues

The 2014 and 2015 *safefood* Annual Report and Accounts were noted by the Council. Ministers also noted that *safefood*'s draft 2017 Business and 2017-2019 Corporate Plans would be considered by both Sponsor Departments before being brought before a future NSMC meeting for approval.

INLAND WATERWAYS

An NSMC Inland Waterways meeting took place in Armagh on 24 June. Chris Hazzard MLA, Minister for Infrastructure, Paul Givan, MLA, Minister for Communities and Sean Kyne TD, Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs and Natural Resources attended the meeting.



Tullamore Time Trial, Grand Canal, October 2016

The Chief Executive Office of Waterways Ireland, Dawn Livingstone, provided a high level overview of the operation of the Body.

The Council noted the key achievements of Waterways Ireland throughout 2016 which included:

- Management and maintenance of the 1,000 km of navigation in its care, with over 90% of waterways open for navigation for the period April to October;
- Continued development of Blueways in partnership with local authorities alongside programmes to build capacity and marketing activity to bring visitors to the Blueways;
- Year 1 of the Waterways Ireland Heritage Plan has been completed with over 3,000 people from communities along the waterways volunteering and taking part in projects;
- Appointment of two Dublin Docklands Action Plan staff to progress animation of Grand Canal Dock and Spencer Dock;
- 9 operating licenses issued in 2016 for new businesses on the waterways. These include boat tours; barge and boar hire and water taxis; and
- Waterways Ireland 2016 sponsorship programme which provided support to 118 events yielding over €5.5m to the local economies.

Update on the restoration of the Ulster Canal from Upper Lough Erne to Clones.

The final phase to develop the navigation channel to Castle Saunderson is progressing well with the tender assessment ongoing. Work is expected to commence on site in spring 2017.

In the context of the commitment contained in *Fresh Start* to review the Ulster Canal project, the co-sponsoring Ministers, Minister Heather Humphreys, TD, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs and Minister Chris Hazzard, MLA, Department for Infrastructure established the Ulster Canal Advisory Forum, which subsequently met for the first time on 23 September 2016.

The Advisory Forum will look at options for advancing the Ulster Canal project and examine potential funding mechanisms for the project, including existing funding streams and the leveraging of funding from other sources

EU Funding Opportunities/Development of a Greenway along the route of the Ulster Canal

Waterways Ireland had been successful under the INTERREG VA - Sustainable Transport Call and had been awarded €4.9m funding to take forward development of 22 km of Greenway towpath along the route of the Ulster Canal from Smithborough, Co Monaghan to Charlemont, Co Armagh providing new off-road facilities to support cross-border commuting.

NORTH SOUTH LANGUAGE BODY

An NSMC Language Body meeting was held in Armagh on 24 June 2016. The meeting was attended by Paul Givan MLA, Minister for Communities, Chris Hazzard MLA, Minister for Infrastructure and Seán Kyne TD, Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs and Natural Resources.

Ministers acknowledged the contribution made by Joe McDonagh (Seosamh Mac Donncha), former Chair of Foras na Gaeilge, who had passed away in May 2016 and expressed their condolences to his family and colleagues.

The Chairs and Chief Executive Officers provided Ministers with overviews and progress reports on the operational activities of the Agencies of the North South Language Body. The Council noted the following achievements:

Foras na Gaeilge



Foras na Gaeilge portal site launch June 2016

- Completion of the online version of the New English Irish Dictionary with 130,000 sense units and growing the number of visitors to its dictionary and terminology sites (www.focloir.ie, www.tearma.ie and www.teanglann.ie);
- Development of a website for the Irish language and Foras na Gaeilge's new corporate website which were launched on 29 June 2016;
- Approval of grants to the value of €158,417 for 69 summer camps which were attended by more than of 3,000 children;

- Receipt of the SWiFT 3000 award, for the second time, and also the Gold Standard Award from the NSAI (National Standards of Ireland). Both awards acknowledge excellence in Corporate Governance; and
- The presentation, by Foras na Gaeilge, of the results of the all-island survey on attitudes to the Irish language.

Ulster-Scots Agency



Soldiers of the King – Bruce Medieval Festival June 2016

- A Burns Night Concert in the Ulster Hall on January 2016, headlined by leading Scots traditional musicians, the Ulster Orchestra and a host of local talent;
- Staging of a Primary Schools' WWI Drama Project which involved 32 schools and over 1,400 students attending performances of Phillip Orr's play 'Wae a Hairt an a Hauf' at Fort Dunree (Co Donegal), Cavan County Museum; The Somme Heritage Centre (Co Down), and Mossley Mill (Co Antrim);
- The inaugural Ulster-Scots Science Week from 23-27 May 2016, with pupils from 5 primary schools participating in science workshops based around the Ulster-Scots innovators Harry Ferguson, Frank Pantridge and Lord Kelvin; and
- The Bruce Medieval Festival in Carrickfergus over the weekend of 4-5 June 2016 which attracted more than 3,000 visitors.

Collaboration between the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge

Ministers noted the progress made as a result of the collaboration between the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge on:

- Examining the possibility of taking part in the ‘*United Youth Programme*’ as laid out in OFMDFM’s Strategy ‘*Together Building a United Community*’ in order to provide an outlet for 10,000 young people who are not in training, education or employment;
- Engaging in year three of a programme designed to inform pupils and raise their awareness of Irish language and linguistic heritage, and Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language;
- Exploring the feasibility of publishing a trilingual version (Irish, Ulster-Scots and English) of Philip Robinson’s book on the ‘*Flora and Fauna of Northern Ireland*’; and
- Considering the development of a poetry/singing project for primary school children which would include the works of Robbie Burns and others.

North South Business Plans and Budgets 2016

Ministers noted that previous Sponsor and Finance Ministers had approved the 2016 Business Plans and Budgets for Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency, which included the agreed efficiency savings in accordance with the guidance issued by the Finance Departments.

The Council approved the 2016 Business Plans with budgets of €14,782,911 (£10,348,038) for Foras na Gaeilge and £2,342,933 (€3,347,048) for the Ulster-Scots Agency.

Appointment of Board Members to the North South Language Body

Ministers approved the appointments to the Board of the North South Language Body.

Update on EU Funding

The Council noted that both Agencies of the Language Body continue to engage in the identification of opportunities to maximise the benefits of EU funding.

North South Language Body Annual Reports and Accounts

Ministers noted that the 2014 consolidated Language Body Annual Report and Accounts were laid in the Houses of the Oireachtas and in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 23 June 2016 and the field audits for the 2015 accounts had commenced in both Agencies.

CEO Appointment

Ministers noted the appointment of Mr Seán Ó Coinn as Chief Executive of Foras na Gaeilge at an NSMC meeting held on 2 December 2016 following the retirement of Ferdie Mac an Fhailigh.

SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES

Two NSMC Special EU Programmes meetings were held in 2016, on 7 July in Dublin and on 2 December in Armagh. Both meetings were attended by Paschal Donohoe TD, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA, Minister for Finance and Junior Minister Alastair Ross MLA.



Ministers Paschal Donohoe TD, and Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA, visit the Nerve Centre, which was responsible for the delivery of the PEACE III funded 'Teaching Divided Histories' and 'Fab Lab' projects

The importance of the PEACE and INTERREG programmes to co-operation and regional development was noted by Ministers who reiterated the joint commitment of the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to work together to ensure that Northern Ireland's interests are protected and advanced and that the benefits of North/South co-operation are fully recognised in any new arrangements which emerge from the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union.

The Council noted that the Departments had agreed an approach to maximise the drawdown and impact of the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA programmes and would continue to work together with a view to securing funding for successor Programmes with the matter to be kept under review at future NSMC meetings.

The Council noted that both Departments, having examined the governance arrangements within the SEUPB, had agreed that the existing arrangements provide appropriate oversight for the Body.

At the July meeting Ministers received a presentation on the *HATCH* project (*Higher Attainment through Training Cross Border Hubs*) which delivered accredited courses to

individuals while providing support to SME's in the construction and engineering sectors. The project, supported by €1,000,000 under INTERREG IVA, was a cross-border initiative involving Cavan Innovation Technology Centre, Cavan Enterprise Board, Cavan County Council, South West College and the University of Ulster.

Ministers also received a presentation at the December meeting on the '*Castle Saunderson International Scout Centre*' project which received €3,675,345 from PEACE III and which has delivered a cross-community, thirty acre, multi-activity adventure centre in Co. Cavan. The project partners on this occasion were Cavan County Council, the Scouting Association for Northern Ireland and Scouting Ireland.

The Council received a detailed progress report on the activities of the SEUPB which included the following:

Closure of 2007-2013 Programmes

- The final commitment achieved for the **PEACE III** Programme, from a budget of €32.9m, was 99.1% (€29.9m). The **INTERREG IVA** Programme achieved commitment of 101.5% (€259.9m) from an allocation of €256m. Final interim claims reflecting these values had been submitted to the EU Commission; and
- SEUPB would undertake the steps required to close the **PEACE III** and **INTERREG IVA** Programmes in accordance with EU Commission deadlines.

2014– 2020 Programmes

- Project calls for all themes of the **INTERREG VA** Programme were under assessment. Ministers were told that 23 projects worth €151.3 million had been approved and 6 further projects were under assessment
- Calls for applications had opened for all themes of the **PEACE IV** Programme; 10 projects had been approved to the value of €0.1m; 31 projects were under assessment and 2 programme objectives are open for applications.
- SEUPB confirmed that the assessment of projects under both **PEACE IV** and **INTERREG VA** would continue into 2017.

Transnational and Interregional

- SEUPB continues to facilitate North/South participation in the **INTERREG IV Transnational and Inter-regional Programmes**. During the 2007-2013 Programme period 53 projects were funded across the four relevant programmes resulting in an additional ERDF contribution of approximately €1.3m (£9m).
- Under the 2014-2020 Programmes, 19 projects with a value of €4m had been approved, 12 of these across both jurisdictions.

Annual Report and Accounts 2015

The Council noted that the SEUPB Annual Report and Accounts for 2015 had been certified by the Comptrollers and Auditors General in both jurisdictions and would be laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas.

TRADE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

InterTradeIreland's programme of activities continued throughout 2016 exceeding its targets and delivering a 16.6 : 1 return on investment. The Body assisted 79 first time innovators, 88 first time exporters, delivered 4% efficiency savings and delivered a total business value of £100.6m / €143.7m.



Minister Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD, Thomas Hunter McGowan CEO InterTradeIreland, and Minister Simon Hamilton MLA, attend the Bio Pharma Conference 2016 in Dublin Castle

Business research and policy development activities carried out by InterTradeIreland included continued production of the Body's quarterly '*Business Monitor*' report. This quarterly report has assembled almost 10 years of data tracking all-island economic indicators such as sales, employment, business outlook and engagement in cross-border trade and exporting. Recent surveys have provided in-depth views of the initial response of firms to the potential implications for the business sector across the island of the UK's exit from the European Union.

A research report '*Funding for Growth: The Business Angels Market on the Island of Ireland*' was published which details the characteristics, investment patterns, behaviours and attitudes to Business Angels and their investments, concluding with strategic recommendations to improve the market for Business Angel investing on the island of Ireland. A second research project '*Key Characteristics of an innovative SME on the Island of Ireland*' has been undertaken by InterTradeIreland.

EU Horizon 2020 Programme

During 2016, InterTradeIreland continued its expansion of activities under the Horizon 2020 programme with a view to increasing joint North South participation in the programme. During the period January-June 2016 48 successful North South projects secured funding to the value of €7.3m, representing 32.7% of the agreed €75m joint drawdown target under Horizon 2020.

US-Ireland R&D Partnership

InterTradeIreland continued to act as the Secretariat for the US-Ireland R&D Partnership which continues to grow with over 35 projects awarded funding to date.

CHAPTER 3

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The NSMC Joint Secretariat (as part of our Corporate Social Responsibility objectives) hosted a seminar in the NSMC JS Offices in Armagh on Tuesday 20 January 2016 focusing on the subject of road safety.

The interactive seminar, aimed at 16 to 17 year old pupils from schools across the Border Area, included an overview of the work of the North South Ministerial Council followed by Armagh PSNI and An Garda Síochána, Monaghan, delivering presentations on road safety. The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service provided a physical demonstration on extracting casualties from a vehicle following a road traffic collision.

After the presentations pupils from the participating schools had the opportunity to play the role of Ministers from the Executive and Irish Government by taking part in a mock North South Ministerial Council meeting to discuss road safety issues and agree future policies.



Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service personnel at the NSMC JS student outreach event in January 2016

Work Experience

Throughout 2016 the Joint Secretariat continued its engagement with Lisanally Special School in Armagh. This initiative offers pupils the opportunity to assist with the organisation and delivery of NSMC meetings and includes greeting Ministers on arrival and assisting with a range of preparatory duties including catering.

The programme gives Lisanally pupils the opportunity to meet new people, to undertake practical tasks and apply their skills in a busy workplace environment.



Junior Minister Alastair Ross MLA, Minister Máirtín Ó Muilleoir MLA, Gina McIntyre, CEO, SEUPB, and Minister Paschal Donohoe TD, with pupils from Lisanally Special School, December 2016

ANNEX 1

NSMC Meeting	Date	Location
Plenary	04/07/2016	Dublin Castle
	18/11/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building
Agriculture	20/1/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building
	26/10/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building
Education	21/9/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building
Environment	14/09/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building
Health and Food Safety	20/1/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building
	09/11/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building
Transport	12/12/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building
Aquaculture & Marine	14/9/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building
Inland Waterways	24/06/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building
Language	24/06/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building
Special EU Programmes	07/07/2016	Iveagh House, Dublin
	02/12/2016	NSMC Joint Secretariat Building

ANNEX 2

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL JOINT SECRETARIAT

The North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) is supported by a standing Joint Secretariat staffed by members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Irish Civil Service. The Executive Office TEO (previously the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is the parent Department of the Northern Ireland civil servants and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is the parent Department of the Irish civil servants.

FUNCTIONS

The functions of the Joint Secretariat include:

- arranging the schedule of Council meetings in different formats;
- securing prior political agreement to agendas for meetings of the Council;
- preparing or commissioning papers for meetings of the Council, including in relation to its work programme;
- drafting Joint Communiqués and Records of Decisions of the Council;
- communicating decisions of the Council and monitoring their implementation;
- drafting an annual report on the proceedings of the Council;
- acting as a channel of communication with Implementation Bodies;
- liaising, where appropriate, through the designated Department or Office in either jurisdiction, with the Secretariat of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, the Secretariat of the British-Irish Council and with the North/South joint parliamentary forum and independent consultative forum when established; and
- carrying out such other tasks as the Council may direct.

FUNDING

Staff costs are met by TEO and DFAT. All other costs associated with the Joint Secretariat and the NSMC are shared between the two administrations. The cost of running the Joint Secretariat in 2016 amounted to Stg £1,464,011.08 / €1,794,483.94

ANNEX 3

NORTH SOUTH IMPLEMENTATION BODIES

Each of the six North South Bodies operates on an all-island basis. All have a clear operational remit and all operate under the overall policy direction of the North South Ministerial Council, with clear accountability lines back to the Council, to the Oireachtas and to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The functions of three of the Bodies, InterTradeIreland, the North South Language Body and the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission, are exercised by Boards of Management appointed by the NSMC. The Food Safety Promotion Board has an Advisory Board, also appointed by the NSMC, and the functions of the Body are exercised by the Chief Executive. The remaining two Bodies, Waterways Ireland and the Special European Union Programmes Body, do not have Boards, and the functions of the Body are exercised by the Chief Executive.

A brief summary of the Bodies and their main functions and contact details are below.

Waterways Ireland



www.waterwaysireland.org

Waterways Ireland's primary function is the management, maintenance, development and restoration of the inland navigable waterway system throughout the island, principally for recreational purposes. Waterways Ireland is responsible for the following navigation systems:

- The Shannon-Erne Waterway
- The Erne System
- The Grand Canal
- The Barrow Navigation System
- The Lower Bann Navigation System
- The Royal Canal
- The Shannon Navigation System
-

The Chief Executive of Waterways Ireland is Dawn Livingstone. Waterways Ireland's Headquarters is in Enniskillen with Regional Offices in Scarriff, Co Clare, Carrick on Shannon, Co Leitrim and Dublin.

Food Safety Promotion Board



www.safefood.eu

The Food Safety Promotion Board is principally charged with tasks involving food safety awareness - through public campaigns, conferences, training and advising professionals and the general public. It is also involved in supporting North South scientific co-operation, and links between institutions working in the field of food safety - laboratories, statutory food safety enforcement agencies, international and domestic research bodies. Its remit also includes the promotion of specialised laboratory services, North and South. Cross-border co-operation in all of these areas, between organisations working in these fields, is central to the work of the Body.

The Chief Executive of The Food Safety Promotion Board is Ray Dolan. The Body operates from its offices in Cork and Dublin.

Trade and Business Development Body (InterTradeIreland)



www.intertradeireland.com

InterTradeIreland exercises a valuable range of functions in the trade and business sector. Under the overall policy direction of the NSMC, InterTradeIreland works in close collaboration with the Department for the Economy, Belfast, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Dublin, and with the existing development agencies, North and South. It has a focus on promoting North South trade and business co-operation by building enterprise capability, competitiveness and developing networks. InterTradeIreland aims to add value to the work being carried out by the existing trade and business development agencies.

The Chief Executive of InterTradeIreland is Thomas Hunter McGowan. InterTradeIreland is located in Newry.

Special European Union Programmes Body



www.seupb.eu

The principal responsibility of the SEUPB is as Managing Authority for various EU Programmes. The managerial functions of the SEUPB hold provide for administration, grant-making and oversight roles in relation to the Community Initiatives under the European Structural Funds. Previous and current fund titles include the INTERREG I, II, III, IVA and VA; LEADER+, URBAN II, EQUAL; the EU Programmes for Peace and Reconciliation, PEACE I, II, III and IV and the Territorial Co-operation Programme.

The Body's Chief Executive is Ms Gina McIntyre. The majority of the Body's staff are based in the Belfast Headquarters, with offices also in Monaghan town and in Omagh, Co Tyrone.

Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission



www.loughs-agency.org

The Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission consists of two Agencies - The Loughs Agency and The Lights Agency. The Loughs Agency has responsibility for the promotion and development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough for commercial and recreational purposes in respect of marine, fishery and aquaculture matters. It was intended that the Lights Agency, when established, would replace the Commissioners of Irish Lights as the General Lighthouse Authority for Ireland. However, given the complexities that have arisen in terms of pursuing such a transfer of functions, the matter is under review at present. The Chief Executive Officer of the Loughs Agency in 2016 was John Pollock. The Agency's HQ is located in Derry~Londonderry.

The Language Body/An Foras Teanga/North-South Body o Leid



www.forasnagaeilge.ie

www.ulsterscotsagency.com

The Language Body is a single Body composed of two agencies - Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch. Foras na Gaeilge is responsible for the promotion of the Irish Language throughout the island and Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch is responsible for promoting the study, conservation, development, and use of the Ulster-Scots as a living language: to encourage and develop the full range of its attendant culture; and to promote an understanding of the history of the Ulster-Scots.

Seán Ó Coinn was appointed Chief Executive of Foras na Gaeilge in 2016 following the retirement of Ferdie Mac an Fhailigh. The Agency has established its main office in Dublin and has subsidiary offices in Belfast and Donegal.

Ian Crozier is the Chief Executive of the Ulster-Scots Agency. The Agency has established its main office in Belfast and has a subsidiary office in Donegal.

ANNEX 4

TOURISM IRELAND LIMITED



<https://www.tourismireland.com>

Tourism is one of the “six areas of co-operation” under the framework of the Belfast Agreement of Good Friday 1998 and co-operation in this area is taken forward by Tourism Ireland Limited, a publicly owned limited company established to promote the island of Ireland overseas as a tourist destination. Its remit is to increase tourism to the island of Ireland and to support Northern Ireland to realise its tourism potential.

Tourism Ireland operates under the auspices of the North/South Ministerial Council through the Department of the Economy in Northern Ireland and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in Ireland. Its functions are exercised by a Board of Management appointed by the NSMC.

Tourism Ireland works closely with Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland in strategic partnership. Each agency has a distinct role and remit, and each complements the work of the other to support the tourism industry in both jurisdictions.

The Chief Executive is Niall Gibbons. The Body operates from its Headquarters in Dublin and a regional office in Coleraine.