

CCBS – LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

30/10/2015 - 06/11/2015



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Monday 2 November 2015

Farming: Cross-border Collaborative Work

Summary: Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the extent of the collaborative work that takes place between and among farmers across the island of Ireland. Minister O'Neill provided the Member with a brief outline of existing cross border collaboration within the farming sector.

Mrs O'Neill: We work collectively on a range of areas. We deal with a lot of issues at North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) meetings. Even outside those, we continually address a number of issues, particularly CAP, mapping exercises and areas of natural constraint (ANC) designation. We have been working together on the development of the all-Island animal health and welfare strategy; the plant health strategy; the Loughs Agency; country-of-origin labelling; fish diseases; fisheries; research and development cooperation; the equine industry; pillar 2 knowledge transfer groups; the all-Island rural innovation awards; the Forest Service; veterinary medicines; agricultural emissions; and multi-agency livestock crime liaison and legislation enforcement issues. A range of issues are taken forward on an ongoing and daily basis not only at official level but between Minister Coveney and me.

Source: <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-02-11-2015.pdf>

Rural Development Programme: Cross-border Opportunities

Summary: Ms McCorley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline what cross-border opportunities will be developed through the roll-out of the new rural development programme. Minister O'Neill advised the Member that the LEADER scheme contains a 7 per cent focus on cross border cooperation.

Mrs O'Neill: The LEADER scheme of the new rural development programme, which will be delivered by the newly formed local action groups (LAGs), contains a 7% focus on cross border cooperation.

My Department will be working closely with the new LAGs to develop cross-border projects that may focus on tourism, recreation and the development of social enterprises.

Source: <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-02-11-2015.pdf>

Tuesday 3 November 2015

Summary: Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education to indicate whether he is willing to engage with his counterpart in the South, Jan O'Sullivan, who has commenced the process of trying to develop guidance for transgender students, and whether he accept that there is merit in not only surveying students in Northern Ireland but taking the view of the maximum number of people across the island of Ireland in order to develop the best possible practice. Minister O'Dowd advised the Member that he would be happy to address this issue with his counterpart during the next NSMC meeting.

Mr O'Dowd: I am due to meet Minister O'Sullivan as part of an North/South Ministerial Council meeting later this month and am more than happy to raise that issue with her to see what information she can give or assistance she can be to my Department.

Source: <http://data.niassembly.gov.uk/HansardXml/plenary-03-11-2015.pdf>



Tuesday, 3 November 2015

Written Question: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform – Cross Border Cooperation

Summary: Peadar Tóibín asked for Public Expenditure and Reform if the Common Chapter still exists, and if so, how is it managed and implemented. Minister Howlin outlined the Government's support for investing in infrastructure to support North-South co-operation to unlock the full potential of the island economy.

Peadar Tóibín: To ask the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if the common chapter which formed part of the national development plan for the south of Ireland and the structural funds plan for the north of Ireland still exists; and, if so, the extent to which it is managed and implemented.

Brendan Howlin: Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021 outlines how the Irish Government has reaffirmed its support for investing in infrastructure to support North South co-operation to help unlock the full potential of the island economy. In particular, support for the EU PEACE and INTERREG programmes will continue to ensure that funding opportunities are maximised under these programmes.

In February this year the European Commission formally adopted the new INTERREG Programme for the border counties of Ireland, Northern Ireland and the West of Scotland, and the first calls under the Programme have now been launched. The Programme has a total value, including Member State contributions, of more than €280 million for the period 2014-2020. The INTERREG programme has four key priority areas for investment, namely research and innovation, the environment, sustainable transport, and health.

In addition, I am pleased that the Irish Government was able to secure the approval of the European Council for €150 million of EU funding towards a new cross-border PEACE Programme for the same period, and that the UK Government subsequently decided to allocate an additional €50 million of ERDF funding from its European Territorial Cooperation allocation to the Programme, bringing the total amount of EU funding to €200 million. Along with match funding from the two Member States, the programme will have a total value of almost €270 million. The focus of the PEACE IV programme will be on social inclusion and combating poverty, with investment proposed in a number of areas, including shared education, children and young people, shared spaces and services, and building positive relations at a local level. I look forward to the new Programme being adopted by the Commission before the end of the year.

Together the two programmes represent more than half a billion Euro of investment in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland over the next seven years. The programmes are managed on behalf of the two Member States by the Special EU Programmes Body, operating under the aegis of the North South Ministerial Council and the Monitoring Committees established under the relevant EU legislation.

Source: <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2015-11-03a.689&s=cross-border>