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Centre for
Cross Border Cooperation

All-island Labour Market:

Challenges and Opportunities

Thursday 18th September 2025
The Ballymascanlon Hotel, Dundalk



Live, Work, Study, Retire

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SHAPING A CROSS BORDER
INVESTMENT CORRIDOR

DRIVING SUSTAINABLE
ECONOMIC GROWTH
THROUGH COLLABORATION



Our Current Areas of Focus



DBEC: An economic driver and world-leading corridor

Shape, launch, and evolve the DBEC Investment Opportunity.



Innovation-led Growth

Corridor-wide transformative innovation hubs – supporting productivity growth in SMEs.



Green Growth

Formation of collaborative, cross-border and connected circular economy hubs – driving innovation in the circular flow of waste.



Cluster Formation

Supporting the evolution of an economic corridor supply chain cluster dedicated to offshore wind investments.



Talent Creation

Collaborative opportunities to shape skills provision and find cross-border solutions for talent mobility and attraction.

The mission of the North West Tertiary Education Cluster in conjunction with key stakeholders is to create a *Shared North West*; a connected, high performing region achieved through the pursuit of the clear opportunities available via Smart Growth, Sustainable Growth, and Inclusive Growth.



The North West Digital Employment Pathway Training Hub (NW DEPTH) initiative will improve equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.



This project - supported by the PEACEPLUS Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body - will be delivered through the North West Tertiary Education Cluster.



The NW DEPTH project will run for a four-year period and will see close to investment of €10 million in digital skills in the North West.

Programme

8.00am NETWORKING BREAKFAST

9.30am WELCOME

Peter Osborne, Chair, Centre for Cross Border Cooperation

9.40am OPENING REMARKS – CO-HEADLINE SPONSORS

Cllr Seán Kelly, Cathaoirleach of Louth County Council, and representative of Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor

Paul Hannigan, Vice President for Cross Border Engagement at Atlantic Technological University, and representative of North West Tertiary Education Cluster

10.00am PANEL 1 – EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS

CHAIR: **Dr Rory O’Sullivan**, Adjunct Professor, Dublin City University

Kathleen O’Hare, Chair, Northern Ireland Skills Council

Rose Tierney, Principal, Tierney Tax Consultancy

Paddy Hannigan, Senior Lecturer for Strategy, Atlantic Technological University

Fergal O’Brien, Director of Lobbying and Influence, Ibec

11.00am REFRESHMENTS

11.30am REMOTE WORKING – THEORY AND PRACTICE

Aidan Campbell, Research Programme Development Manager, Centre for Cross Border Cooperation, in conversation with

Kate Clifford, Chief Executive, Rural Community Network, and

Sarah Daly, Executive Director, Creative Spark

12.00pm PANEL 2 – EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS

CHAIR: **Caitriona Mullan**, Senior Research Associate, Centre for Cross Border Cooperation

Prof Kristel Miller, EPIC Futures NI, Ulster University

Annmarie O’Kane, Border People project, Centre for Cross Border Cooperation

Manus Reid, Information Officer, North Connaught & Ulster Citizens’ Information Service

Owen Reidy, General Secretary, Irish Congress of Trade Unions



1.15pm LUNCH

2.15pm KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA, Minister for the Economy

2.45pm PANEL 3 – BUSINESS SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS AND STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS

CHAIR: **Maureen O'Reilly**, Senior Research Associate, Centre for Cross Border Cooperation

Christine Kelly, Tax Inspector, IDA Ireland

Joanne McMullan Chanyuka, Head of Labour Market Solutions, Invest NI

Elaine Patterson, Programme Manager for Innovation & Entrepreneurship, InterTradelreland

Kevin McShane, Senior Development Executive (Shared Island), Enterprise Ireland

3.45pm EXPLORING ACTIONABLE PATHWAYS FORWARDS

A conversation with

Colin McCabrey, Director of Trade, InterTradelreland

4.15pm CLOSING REMARKS

Dr Anthony Soares, Director, Centre for Cross Border Cooperation

6.00pm DRINKS RECEPTION

6.45pm CONFERENCE DINNER

Dr Ryan Feeney, CCBC Board Member, will introduce our After-Dinner Speaker
@BorderIrish, social media sensation and author of *I Am the Border, So I Am*

Conference Speakers



Peter Osborne

Peter is Chair of the Centre for Cross Border Cooperation. He has been involved in key civil and peacebuilding developments in Northern Ireland, including roles with significant political and government engagement, and has a thorough knowledge of central and local government across the island. He has

delivered programmes relevant to public policy on leadership, community cohesion, community support, open government and planning throughout Northern Ireland and the border counties. Peter is Chair of Remembering Srebrenica NI, Chair of the Integrated Education Fund, and a member of the NI Policing Board.



Rose Tierney

Rose is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Ireland and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, and an Associate of the Irish Tax Institute and the Chartered Institute of Taxation. She is a qualified Customs Clearance and Trade Facilitator. A former Director in EY, she set up her consultancy practice

with offices in Monaghan and Fermanagh in 2004. It provides advisory and compliance services to private clients, companies and individuals in Ireland and the UK, and advises professional accountancy and legal practices on cross-border tax and VAT queries.



Dr Rory O'Sullivan

Rory is an Adjunct Professor in the Further Education and Training Research Centre (FETRC), and School of Policy and Practice, in Dublin City University. His main research interests are tertiary education, skills development policy, work integrated learning, and inclusive pathways from education to work. Rory was

appointed as a Board Member of the Higher Education Authority in 2023. He is a member of Quality and Qualifications Ireland's Appeals Panel, and the Creating Pathways Advisory Group in SOLAS which is the state agency responsible for Further Education and Training in Ireland.



Dr Paddy Hannigan

Paddy has been employed at what is now Atlantic Technological University (ATU) since 1990. In his strategy role, he was involved in establishing the North West Tertiary Education Cluster (NWTEC), a cross-border collaboration involving ATU, Ulster University, North West Regional College, and Donegal Education and

Training Board. Paddy has been the Programme Manager for NWTEC since 2019, where he is now commencing work with partners on the PEACEPLUS-funded North West Digital Employment Pathways Training Hub to deliver employment-focussed digital skills training to 2,000 people. He teaches final year engineering students.



Kathleen O'Hare OBE

Appointed Chair of the Northern Ireland Skills Council in 2023, Kathleen is a member of the Department of Education Expert Panel on educational underachievement and is a panel member of the Teachers' Regulation Agency in England and Wales. From 2002-18, she was Headteacher of St

Cecilia's College (Derry) and Hazelwood Integrated College (Belfast). Since her retirement, Kathleen has worked on leadership and research projects in Taiwan, Brazil, Middle East and Africa for the British Council. She was involved in writing textbooks for the new shared curriculum in the early 1990s.



Fergal O'Brien

Fergal is Executive Director of Lobbying and Influence at the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (Ibec) where he coordinates business policy issues and public affairs activity. Fergal represents Irish business on a number of fora at both national and EU level and is currently a member of

the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council and a council member of the Foundation for Fiscal Studies. Prior to joining Ibec in 2005, Fergal worked for five years in the private sector, and he has worked as an economist with the Irish Dairy Board.



Aidan Campbell

Aidan Campbell was appointed to the post of Research Programme Development Manager in April 2024. He manages the strategy to support the Centre's mission to strengthen cross-border cooperation and engagement. He is responsible for increasing the centre's research profile by commissioning and, when

required, undertaking unique and relevant pieces of research. Before joining the Centre, Aidan was previously employed as Policy and Public Affairs Officer with Rural Community Network where he coordinated the Network's work on policy and research and delivered training. He studied at Queen's University and NUI Maynooth.



Caitriona Mullan

Caitriona is a cross-border cooperation and governance specialist working across the EU. She is a senior Expert with European Commission DG REGIO where she advises on the design of cross-border health systems in Central and Eastern European countries. Caitriona also works with the Council of Europe's

Centre of Expertise in Multilevel Governance, with recent missions supporting the Government of Armenia and the Finnish Government. She advises on the EU b-Solutions initiative delivered for the European Commission by the Association of European Border Regions. She has authored a number of publications.



Kate Clifford MBE

Kate Clifford is Chief Executive of Rural Community Network, an organisation representing rural communities across Northern Ireland. She has worked extensively on rural development, equality of access to services and rural proofing in public policy. Kate is an advocate for rural voices in policymaking,

ensuring that the needs of dispersed and marginalised communities are reflected in government decisions. She was awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours List 2025 for services to Rural Communities and Peace Building. Kate holds a Master's Degree in rural development from Queen's University Belfast.



Prof Kristel Miller

As Professor of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development at Ulster University, Kristel's expertise is in innovation, entrepreneurship, strategy and regional competitiveness. She is the principal investigator of a £4.8 million UKRI-funded Local Policy Innovation Partnership "EPIC Futures NI", which

seeks to provide an evidence base for policy and programmes to help individuals access fair and inclusive employment across Northern Ireland.

She is a co-investigator on the €4 million Shared Island cross-border project, Atlantic Futures, which explores how to enhance regional development on the west coast of the Island of Ireland.



Sarah Daly

Sarah Daly is the Executive Director at Creative Spark, Centre for Creativity and Innovation, where she leads a team providing workspace and training solutions for small businesses, startups, and learners in the creative industries. She oversees operations and strategy, delivering entrepreneurship support to clients.

The Centre's FabLab, Print Studio and collaborative spaces empower businesses in a creative environment. Passionate about community development through creative practice, Sarah creates initiatives that connect creatives, entrepreneurs and communities to transform shared spaces. She holds a Master's Degree in Social Practice for the Creative Environment.



Annmarie O'Kane

Annmarie O'Kane joined the Centre for Cross Border Cooperation over 16 years ago. As Information Manager she manages its flagship project, the Border People project – www.borderpeople.info – which provides cross-border information and support for people living and working in Ireland and Northern

Ireland. Through the project she fosters cross-border cooperation, capacity building and knowledge sharing between advice sectors and strategic stakeholders in both jurisdictions. Prior to working with the Centre, Annmarie worked in business support organisations a number of Chambers of Commerce, Meath Leader, and Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency.

ALL-ISLAND LABOUR MARKET



Manus Reid

As Information Officer/Advocate with North Connaught & Ulster Citizens' Information Service (CIS) and a member of the CIS Social Policy Advisory Group, Manus specialises in social welfare, employment, immigration, housing, and cross-border issues. He helps individuals and communities navigate complex

and overlapping systems. Manus began his career with Citizens Advice in Derry/Strabane and is extremely knowledgeable in the challenges of cross-border living and working. Involved in the Border People project for over ten years, he has contributed to publications and resources that improve the lives of mobile workers and families.



Maureen O'Reilly

Maureen is a respected independent economist providing applied economic research, policy evaluation and strategic analysis across public, private and non profit sectors. She delivers evidence-based economic insight to support policy development, strategic planning, and

investment decisions across the island. Maureen is a member of the Northern Ireland Fiscal Council which scrutinises public finances. She serves as a Board Member of Enterprise Northern Ireland, shaping the enterprise support landscape across the region, and as a Non-Executive Director with Mutual Energy which owns and manages key gas and electricity assets in Northern Ireland.



Owen Reidy

Owen has been General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) since October 2022. It represents the interests of 760,000 workers across the island of Ireland through 46 affiliate unions. Prior to this, Owen was Assistant General Secretary for six years with responsibility for Northern Ireland

during which time he represented unions on issues such as Brexit and engaged with the UK Government and NI Executive. He started his trade union career working in a number of capacities, and has represented workers in the public and private sector.



Christine Kelly

Christine Kelly joined IDA Ireland as Internal Tax Advisor in 2001 and is currently located within its Strategic Policy Division, in the Dublin Headquarters. IDA Ireland is the Irish non-commercial, semi-state agency responsible for the attraction and development of foreign direct investment into Ireland for its

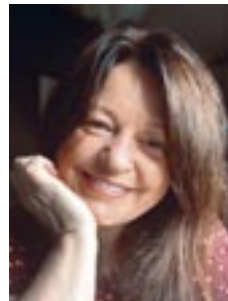
economic and social benefit. It operates under the aegis of the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment and works as a strategic partner to assist multinational companies to set up and grow in Ireland. IDA Ireland works with client companies across several key sectors.



Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA

Dr Archibald was appointed Economy Minister on 3 February 2025, and had previously served as Finance Minister from February 2024. She is the former Chair of the Assembly's Economy and Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs committees. She completed a PhD in

Molecular Biology at Queen's University, Belfast, with a Department of Agriculture and Rural Development studentship. Caoimhe holds a postgraduate diploma in Management and Corporate Governance from Ulster University. Prior to being elected as MLA for East Derry in May 2016, she worked in applied horticulture and plant pathology research.



Joanne McMullan Chanyuka

As Head of Labour Market Solutions at Invest NI, Joanne leads efforts to increase business engagement with alternative talent pools, particularly among economically inactive individuals and refugee communities. She works with businesses, business support organisations, government

departments and community groups to foster inclusive growth. Her focus is on supporting businesses to remove barriers to workforce participation and to create pathways that enable underrepresented groups to contribute meaningfully to the economy. She joined Invest NI in 2013, initially working on cluster development initiatives, before taking up her current role in 2021.



Elaine Patterson

Elaine joined InterTradelreland as Innovation and Entrepreneurship Manager in 2024. She leads the Shared Island Enterprise Scheme, with a particular focus on women's entrepreneurship through targeted programmes, funding opportunities, and strategic collaborations. Elaine has a wealth of experience in managing global teams, establishing international offices, and developing market-specific strategies. As a French and German linguist, she also brings a deep understanding of international trade. Elaine is a respected industry speaker and has presented at the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce's Learn Grow Excel Programme and Invest NI's Explore Export event.



Dr Anthony Soares

As Director of the Centre for Cross Border Cooperation, Anthony oversees the development and advocacy of policies at regional, national and European levels that support sustainable cross-border and transnational cooperation. He submits evidence to parliamentary committees in Westminster and Dublin, and consults with a range of political representatives and organisations on the island of Ireland, Great Britain and in Europe. He is Secretary to Universities Ireland, Secretary to the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (SCoTENS), and Convenor of the Ad-Hoc Group for North-South and East-West Cooperation.



Kevin McShane

Kevin has over 25 years' experience across public, private and social enterprise sectors. In his current role as Senior Development Executive for the Shared Island initiative at Enterprise Ireland, Kevin leads strategic efforts to foster cross-border collaboration, drive regional innovation, and support high-potential enterprises. He combines strong commercial acumen with a passion for entrepreneurship and technology. Kevin is committed to enhancing regional impact through innovation hubs, stakeholder engagement and ecosystem development. He assists small and medium enterprises in the North West to scale and grow exports through inclusive, collaborative development.



Dr Ryan Feeney

Ryan Feeney is Vice-President for Governance and External Affairs and Registrar at Queen's University Belfast. He holds a Doctorate in Governance from the National University of Ireland with a specific focus on the operations and functions of the Strand Two structures of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Ryan was Executive Producer for a major documentary, RTE's "The Agreement", a two-part series on the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement negotiations which was also broadcast on BBC One. He is Executive Producer of a major international documentary chronicling the life of Senator George J Mitchell.



Colin McCabrey

Colin is InterTradelreland's Director of Trade where he leads cross-border trade, innovation, and investor readiness. Since InterTradelreland was established, cross-border trade has grown from €2 bn in 1998 to a record €15 bn in 2024. Colin's team is building on this momentum by driving initiatives to boost business capability, productivity, and export growth, while helping firms navigate evolving trade challenges and strengthening their supply chain resilience. With over two decades in senior economic development roles, including at Belfast City Council, he has led transformative projects in regeneration, investment, and entrepreneurship.



@BorderIrish

AKA The Irish Border, @BorderIrish began tweeting about Brexit in 2018, amassing an embarrassingly large number of followers, being interviewed in newspapers in Ireland, the UK, Germany and France, and writing the book *I Am the Border, So I Am*. Described by The Guardian as "whimsical, sometimes surreal and always pointed", the Financial Times named it one of the best audiobooks in 2019. Having retired from Twitter once Brexit was kind of solved, @BorderIrish comes out of a second retirement to make a very rare in-person appearance at the Conference.

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