

PAPER NSMC (99) 3

NORTH SOUTH CO-OPERATION

1. In accordance with paragraph 8 of Strand 2 of the Multi-Party Agreement, the North/South Ministerial Council in transitional form agreed, on 1 December 1999, six areas for initial consideration where existing bodies will be the appropriate mechanism in each jurisdiction - Transport, Agriculture, Education, Health, Environment and Tourism - as set out in Appendix A.
2. It appears appropriate that decisions on policies in regard to these matters for subsequent implementation by existing bodies in each jurisdiction separately should be taken, in each case, in the appropriate sectoral format of the Council, subject to appropriate involvement of the other agreed formats of the Council. The purpose of this paper is to set out an outline programme of work in regard to the identified areas for consideration at the first plenary meeting of the Council; and to propose that, subsequently, proposals for decisions on initial activity in regard to the areas in question should be tabled at the first meeting of the Council in each appropriate sectoral format.
3. The relevant Departments, North and South, have prepared a draft outline programme of work for consideration, this incorporates outline programmes, for each agreed area, which are set out in Appendices B-G.
4. The Council is invited:
 - (i) to agree the outline programme of work in regard to the areas for co-operation identified on 18 December 1998, as a basis for follow-up in the appropriate sectoral formats; and
 - (ii) to agree that the relevant proposals in the outline programme of work should be tabled at the first meetings of the North-South Ministerial Council in each appropriate sectoral format.

It would subsequently be for the relevant Departments, North and South, in conjunction with the Standing Joint Secretariat, to bring forward to the Council, in the appropriate sectoral format, in each case, detailed proposals for policies in these areas for subsequent implementation by existing bodies in each jurisdiction separately.

APPENDIX A

NORTH/SOUTH CO-OPERATION 18 DECEMBER STATEMENT (Annex 3)

“MATTERS FOR CO-OPERATION

In accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9(i) of Strand Two of the Agreement, at least six matters are to be identified and agreed for co-operation through the mechanism of existing bodies in each separate jurisdiction.

The matters below have been identified as suitable for initial consideration by the NSMC in this regard. It would be open to the NSMC, by agreement between the two sides, to consider other matters.

(i) Transport

Strategic planning and development of cross-border co-operation in transport: while co-operation would primarily arise in respect of road and rail planning, it would take account of issues arising in the port and airport sectors; road and rail safety.

(ii) Agriculture

Discussion of CAP issues; Animal and Plant Health Policy and Research; Rural Development.

(iii) Education

Education for Children with Special Needs (eg autism, hearing impairment); Educational Underachievement; Teacher Qualifications; School, Youth and Teacher Exchanges.

(iv) Health

Accident and emergency planning; co-operation on high technology equipment; cancer research; health promotion.

(v) Environment

Research into environmental protection; water quality management and waste management in cross-border context.

(vi) Tourism

Establishment of publicly-owned limited company as set out below.

TOURISM

A publicly owned limited company will be established by Bord Failte and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to provide the following services:

- planning and delivering international tourism marketing programmes, including programmes in partnership with the industry North and South;
- publication and dissemination in overseas markets of information of a balanced and comprehensive nature on the island of Ireland as a tourist destination, which must reflect the diverse traditions, forms of cultural expression, and identities within the island;
- market research, provision of information and other appropriate assistance to help the industry develop international marketing expertise;
- co-operation with, consulting, and assisting other bodies or associations in carrying out such activities;
- carrying out surveys and collecting relevant statistics and information.

The new company would subsume the existing Overseas Tourism Marketing Initiative. It would carry out overseas marketing and promotion activity for Bord Failte and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, and would establish overseas offices for that purpose.

The company's Articles of Association and Memorandum, which would establish its overall strategic objectives, would be agreed by the two administrations.

The board of the new company would be appointed by the two administrations after consultation with the existing tourist boards and relevant industry interests and with their involvement.

The operations of the new company would be monitored by the existing tourist boards, and by the relevant Northern Ireland and Irish Government Ministers meeting as appropriate under the auspices of the NSMC.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board would continue to have access to the services of the British Tourist Authority. There would be clear guidance to the company that its promotional efforts should take account of the need to develop tourism in Northern Ireland against the background of the particular problems faced by the industry there over the past thirty years."

PROPOSED NORTH/SOUTH CO-OPERATION ON TRANSPORT

Strategic Transport Planning

- Review and updating of transport policy for the island of Ireland taking account of the requirements of the Trans-European Network and covering
 - * the national road network
 - * the mainline rail network
 - * cross border bus services
 - * sustainable transport management
 - * co-ordination of transport aspects of EU cross-border programmes
 - * development of plans for specific cross-border projects.

Road and Rail Safety

- Experience of road and rail safety programmes
- Road and rail safety targets and priorities
- The possibility of harmonisation of road and rail safety reporting and information systems and mutual recognition of driving disqualifications, penalty points, etc
- The possibility of joint road safety campaigns and educational initiatives where this would lead to economies of scale
- The development of common rail safety standards and criteria and a common regulatory framework for rail safety
- Co-operation between the Railway Inspectorates North and South.

PROPOSED NORTH/SOUTH CO-OPERATION ON AGRICULTURE

Discussion of CAP issues

- The annual price review, the World Trade Organisation, etc, in accordance with critical events in the CAP timetable and without prejudice to the UK and Irish negotiating positions
- Liaison with the Commission and other EU institutions on issues of mutual interest
- Common problems in the administration of CAP schemes and programmes and co-ordination of the implementation of support measures.

Animal and Plant Health, Policy & Research

- Policy on the range of animal and plant health and welfare issues
- (Where applicable) operational aspects of such policies and of associated research.

Rural Development

The role of the existing steering committee on cross-border rural development will be extended to

- promote maximum co-operation in the implementation of rural development programmes and on EU programmes
- exchange information on experience and best practice in both jurisdictions in relation to rural development
- examine the scope for a common approach to the feasibility of developing cross-border area based strategies and rural development research.

The steering committee will operate in consultation as appropriate with the North/South Implementation Body on Special EU programmes.

APPENDIX D

PROPOSED NORTH/SOUTH CO-OPERATION ON EDUCATION

Education for Children with Special needs (for example autism, hearing impairment)

- The exchange of information and expertise on meeting educational needs
- Closer collaboration in the development of policy responses across the range of special needs
- The scope for collaboration in the provision of highly specialised services
- Areas where joint surveys or research would be beneficial in assessing needs.

Educational Under achievement

- The exchange of expertise and experience in catering for children who are educationally disadvantaged
- The scope for collaboration in the development of initiatives to address disadvantage
- The scope for sharing information on research into disadvantage and the scope for joint research or pilot initiatives
- Links between schools and educational organisations in both jurisdictions to facilitate co-operation on operational issues
- Specific issues relevant to both Departments such as the needs of traveller children

Teacher Qualifications

- Barriers to the movement of teachers between North and South at both primary and post-primary level, including the Irish language requirement, superannuation entitlements and approval of qualifications, and the scope for removing or ameliorating these
- The development of General Teaching Councils in both jurisdictions and co-operation between them, with a view to rationalising approaches to teacher qualifications
- Collaboration in teacher education in areas of mutual benefit such as training of teachers for Irish-medium education.

School, Youth & Teaching Exchanges

- A more integrated and coherent approach to exchanges, including the clarification of policy objectives, targets and common criteria for the assessment of exchanges
- The scope for the further development of exchanges in areas or sectors which have not previously participated
- Issues of concern in both jurisdictions such as child protection arrangements, measures focused on disadvantaged children and young

people, evaluation and research, conflict resolution and cross-community activity

- Mechanisms for facilitating co-operation in the area of Youth Exchanges, including the need for linkages between the Youth Council for Northern Ireland and the Irish National Youth Council.

The existing mechanism for collaboration between the Western and Southern Health Boards in Northern Ireland and the North Western and North Eastern Health Boards in the ROI (known as Co-operation and Working Together) will be extended and developed to improve co-ordination and co-operation between health boards in the border areas in relation to:

- mutual support in ambulance cover and joint working
- sharing emergency admissions where hospitals are under pressure

Major Incidents

- Planning for major incidents

Co-operation on High Technology Equipment

- The scope for co-operation on the procurement, funding and use of high technology equipment

Cancer Research

- Sharing information on cancer research
- Collaboration in research
- Participation in multi-centred trials

Health Promotion

- Sharing information and discussing opportunities for co-operation in relation to health promotion on an all Ireland basis
- Collaboration on public information campaigns, particularly major media campaigns, to maximise impact and achieve economies of scale
- Sharing information on research and good practice for mutual benefit, including, in particular, the identification of potential joint campaigns following the recent survey of health and lifestyle well being in Northern Ireland and the proposed health and lifestyle survey in the South
- Scope for research and public information/education in the areas of heart disease, cancer and smoking

PROPOSED NORTH/SOUTH CO-OPERATION ON HEALTH

Accident & Emergency Planning

The existing mechanism for collaboration between the Western and Southern Health Boards in Northern Ireland and the North Western and North Eastern Health Boards in the ROI (known as Co-operation and Working Together) will be extended and developed to improve co-ordination and co-operation between health boards in the border areas in relation to

- mutual support in ambulance cover and joint training
- sharing emergency admissions where hospitals are under pressure.

Major emergencies

- Planning for major emergencies

Co-operation on High Technology Equipment

- The scope for co-operation on the procurement, funding and use of high technology equipment

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APPENDIX F

PROPOSED NORTH/SOUTH CO-OPERATION ON ENVIRONMENT

Research into Environmental Protection

- Information on environmental research activities North and South, information on best practice and sources of information
- The establishment of a data base of environmental information
- Current problems and issues in relation to environmental protection and mutually beneficial ways to address these
- Identification of strategies and activities which would contribute to a coherent all-island approach to the achievement of sustainable development

Water Quality Management & Waste Management in a Cross-Border context

- The development of catchment-based strategies in relation to water quality
- The environmental impact of agricultural activities and related issues
- The scope for improved waste management in a cross-border context taking account of waste policy in the EU, the UK and ROI.

PROPOSED NORTH/SOUTH CO-OPERATION ON TOURISM

Agree the attached Memorandum and Articles of Association for the tourism company, taking decisions, in particular on:-

- whether the company should be established under Northern Ireland or Irish company law
- the location of the Headquarters of the company
- the membership of the company
- whether the chairperson should have a casting vote
- the name of the company
- the number of directors to be appointed to the company by NSMC and the basis for appointment
- the quorum
- the voting arrangements
- the geographical coverage of the company's overseas marketing and promotion activity, in particular in the GB market
- funding for the company.