

“The Joint Business Council played a critical role in more difficult days in representing the views of business in a very challenging environment. Now we face new challenges and we need to look forward to what we can achieve together in the years ahead.”

Taoiseach Brian Cowen in an address to the JBC on 2 October 2008 in Trinity College Dublin.



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Partnership in action

The IBEC/CBI Joint Business Council works in close partnership with InterTrade Ireland, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), Universities Ireland, the North South Ministerial Council as well as the local cross border groups. The JBC also works in partnership with EURES Cross Border Partnership.

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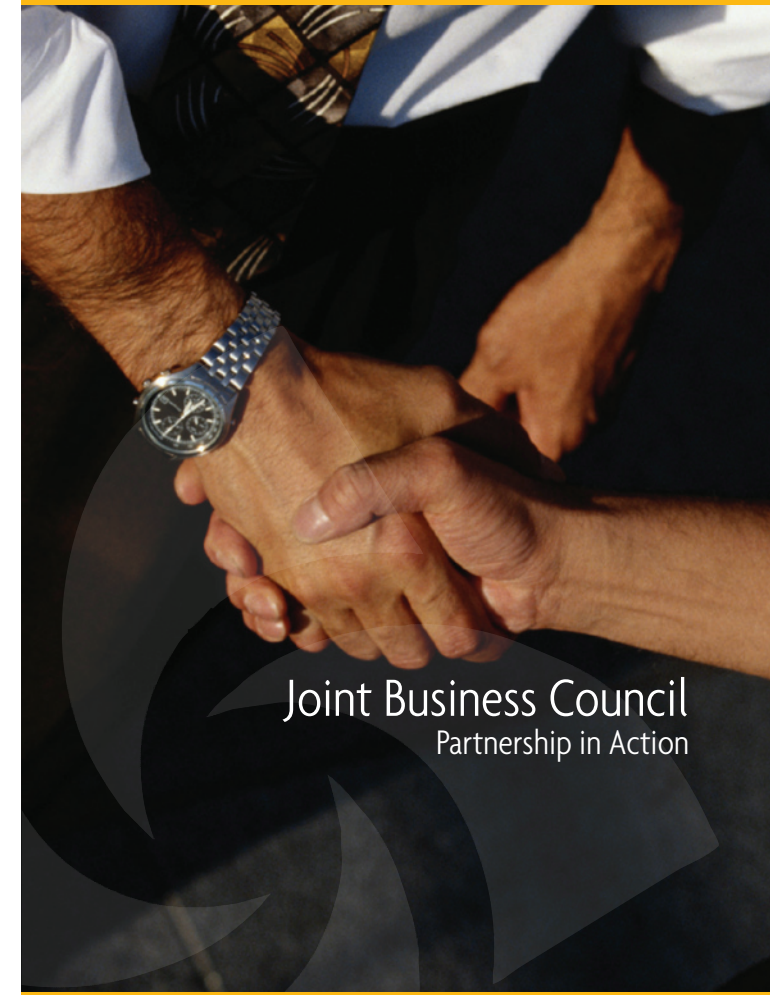
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The IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council (JBC) links the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) in Northern Ireland. Formed in 1991, the Council's primary role is to promote economic growth and development on the island of Ireland, based around the core business values of enterprise and innovation.

Mission

The JBC works in collaboration with its members and strategic partners such as Intertrade Ireland, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) and Universities Ireland to sustain and develop economic cooperation, advance international competitiveness and maximise the potential of all the people on the island of Ireland.

Role of the JBC

As the needs of companies have changed in the years since the Joint Business Council was established, the role of the JBC has adapted to address these needs.

Over time the role of the JBC has expanded to:

- Provide a single business voice for the island of Ireland in policy formulation
- Provide a high-level all-island business network and act as a bridge to greater mutual understanding as a means of increasing north south business flows.
- Provide a challenge function to public sector policy, including Government and state agencies, where there is an all-island dimension of interest to both business communities
- Provide strategic leadership around global business and competitiveness issues from an all-island perspective
- Engage with its Scottish partners on strengthening East-West linkages
- Facilitate the development of partnerships between small and medium enterprises north and south.

Key focus areas

The JBC influences political agendas throughout the island in order to help achieve benefits for members in relevant strategic areas such as infrastructure, energy, logistics, skills, education, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The JBC had identified the following themes as strategic priority areas in the period from 2007 to 2013.

Theme 1: People issues, including skills, training and education, employment, social cohesion and labour mobility

Theme 2: All island infrastructure including infrastructure accessibility, logistics, supply chain, enhancement of the environment, energy and telecommunications

Theme 3: Innovation, technology, entrepreneurship (including social entrepreneurship) and Research and Development

Developing the partnerships enjoyed by the JBC strengthens its work and influence on key all-island business issues. The three key strategic areas of people, infrastructure and innovation are complemented by our focus on partnership and network development.

Delivering all-island business

- Both the North and South of Ireland face an increasing challenge to provide a reliable, sustainable, secure and competitively priced energy supply on the island. Developing this supply will be crucial to maintaining and enhancing competitiveness and economic growth. The JBC plays an important role in supporting companies' understanding of the all-island Single Electricity Market and monitoring its implementation and effectiveness.
- Co-operation in developing infrastructure helps ensure more efficient planning and joined-up delivery of key infrastructure projects, resulting in better value for

money and economies of scale in public investment. JBC assisted in the development of the all-island freight study which aims to enhance connectivity and competitiveness, provide new opportunities for business collaboration and cooperation and bring benefits at both regional and sectoral level through route coordination.

- Recognising the importance of making the knowledge economy a reality on the island, the JBC works on strengthening business-university linkages. The JBC delivers a North-South postgraduate scholarship scheme. The aim of the scheme is to encourage outstanding students from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to cross the border to undertake postgraduate study and experience life in the other Irish jurisdiction. These scholarships are part-financed by Universities Ireland and individual companies.

Our structure

The JBC is made up of 80 senior business executives. All members of the Council of the CBI in Northern Ireland are members, together with nominated members from IBEC's National Council.

The JBC meets twice a year and is co-chaired by the Chairman of CBI Northern Ireland and the President of IBEC.

A Steering Committee meets four times a year and consists of forty members of the JBC.

The JBC Steering Committee provides guidance, support and leadership in the ongoing design and implementation of the work programme 2007 to 2013.