

PRESS RELEASE

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IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council launches new €1.7m Programme in Armagh

Today, the IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council (JBC) launched its new Programme to 2013. The Council has attracted €1.7m European funding for the programme over 4 years from the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) through INTERREG IVA.

Working to deliver an ambitious Action Plan, the Council will drive all-island strategic collaboration in 3 key areas for business: infrastructure, skills and innovation.

Lobbying on infrastructure priorities, it will seek to improve road, rail, freight and port accessibility within and to the island and progress the agenda for a sustainable energy supply through initiatives such as the all-island Single Electricity Market. The Council will facilitate a coordinated all-island voice for business on skills, training, employment and labour mobility and champion joint business priorities in research & development, entrepreneurship and innovation across the island.

Launching the programme in Armagh, Regional Development Minister, Conor Murphy said:

"My Department is fully committed to playing its full part in developing the regions' economy through continued investment in our public transport, water and sewerage and roads infrastructure.

I recognise the important work of the IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council as the voice for business on an All-Ireland basis. I applaud their continued efforts to maximise the economic benefits for the island of Ireland and welcome this programme launched here in Armagh this evening."

Outlining the new Programme at the event, the JBC Chief Executive, Reg McCabe, emphasised the importance of a single business voice for the island of Ireland:

"We will continue to influence the two governments on our priority agenda items of cross border infrastructure, innovation and skills. We recognize in the context of the current adverse economic climate that more than ever, leadership and a coherent vision and commonality of purpose are required from the JBC and other business organizations."

Supported by the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC), the event in Armagh advised SMEs of cross border business opportunities and support available through the Joint Business Council and partners such as InterTradeIreland.



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At the event, the JBC also took the opportunity to highlight to government the obstacles preventing the optimal functioning of an integrated single island economy.

Mr McCabe emphasised that “changing the mindset and approach will take a determined effort on the part of the two governments working in partnership with business organisations. JBC has already stepped up to the plate, as have our two sponsor organisations, CBI and IBEC”.

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