

# CROSS-BORDER TRADE & ECONOMIC CONFERENCE

**DATE:** Tuesday 3rd March 2026  
**TIME:** 8am - 1:30pm

**VENUE:** Carrickdale Hotel & Spa  
**COST:** FREE TO ATTEND

## PROGRAMME

**08:00** Registration, Tea/Coffee & Networking in Exhibition Area

**08:45** Introduction by MC, Mark Simpson, Broadcaster & Journalist

**08:50** Welcome by Cllr Sean Kelly, Cathaoirleach, Louth County Council

**08:55** Welcome by Cllr Philip Campbell, Chairperson, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

**09:00** Address by Niamh Smyth TD, Minister of State for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment

**09:15** Address by Caoimhe Archibald MLA, Minister for the Economy

**09:30** Q&A with Irish and NI Government Representatives

### THEME 1: THE ALL-ISLAND ECONOMY

**09:45** Presentation by John Fahey, Senior Economist, AIB  
Economic Outlook amid on-going Geopolitical Uncertainty

**10:00** Panel Discussion

- John Fahey, Senior Economist, AIB
- Stuart Mathieson, Research Manager, InterTradeIreland
- Ana Desmond, Senior Economist, Ulster University Economic Policy Centre

**10:30** Interactive Roundtable Discussion

**10:40** Slido Feedback Session

**10:45** Overview of Business Supports & Exhibitors by MC, Mark Simpson

**10:50** Tea/Coffee Break & Networking in Exhibition Area

### THEME 2: SKILLS & PEOPLE - A CROSS-BORDER PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

**11:20** Presentation by Dr Diarmuid O'Callaghan, President, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)  
Queen's University Belfast & DkIT Strategic Partnership: A Game Changer for the Region

**11:30**

- Dr Diarmuid O'Callaghan, President, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT)
- Tracy Rice, Head of Business Engagement, Southern Regional College
- Gerard Smith, Director, Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence (AMTCE)
- Martin Casey, Cross-Border Advisor, Cross-Border Solutions
- Annmarie O'Kane, Information Manager, The Centre for Cross-Border Cooperation
- Dr Fiona Lawless, Theme Lead, Southeast Cross-Border Alliance (SECBA)

**12:05** Interactive Roundtable Discussion

**12:15** Slido Feedback Session

# CROSS-BORDER TRADE & ECONOMIC CONFERENCE

**DATE:** Tuesday 3rd March 2026  
**TIME:** 8am - 1:30pm

**VENUE:** Carrickdale Hotel & Spa  
**COST:** FREE TO ATTEND

## THEME 3: COLLABORATION & INFRASTRUCTURE AT THE HEART OF THE ALL-ISLAND ECONOMY

12:20 Presentation by Professor Seamus McGuinness, Research Professor, ESRI  
The Role of Investment & Cooperation in Closing the Cross-Border Productivity Gap

12:30 Panel Discussion

- Professor Seamus McGuinness, Research Professor, ESRI
- Tommy Shryane, Regional Wastewater Technical Manager, Uisce Éireann
- Steve Blockwell, Head of Investment Management, NI Water
- Declan McGarrigle, Senior Manager, Program Delivery & Development, SEUPB
- Damien McConville, Program Manager, Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor

13:00 Interactive Roundtable Discussion

13:10 Slido Feedback Session

13:15 Testimony from Cross-Border Trading Business

13:30 Closing remarks by Hanna McDonnell, President, Dundalk Chamber  
followed by Lunch