

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
 - Hilary Moran, CEO, The Fintech Corridor
- 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, Assistant Director for Business & Economic 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

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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** Fireside Chat with Mark Hamill, Technical Director, ReCon Waste Management
- 13:30** Closing remarks by Hanna McDonnell, President, Dundalk Chamber followed by Lunch