

InterTradelreland

**Maximising Economic Opportunities
across the island of Ireland**

CORPORATE PLAN 2026-2028



 **InterTradelreland**



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InterTradelreland has the expertise, connections and networks to support indigenous businesses to build their export, innovation and entrepreneurship capability to scale and grow.

Margaret Hearty
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Chief Executive Introduction

I am delighted to introduce InterTradelreland's ninth Corporate Plan, setting out our ambition over the next three years to maximise economic growth across the island of Ireland. Our plan and approach are strategically aligned to support the delivery of Programme for Government commitments in both jurisdictions.

Over the past 25 years InterTradelreland has clearly demonstrated the economic benefit of greater cross-border economic co-operation. Our track record of supporting over sixty-one thousand businesses leaves a lasting footprint. Many of these businesses have grown into global players.

Our research shows that businesses that trade cross-border enjoy stronger growth, are more profitable, innovate more, and are better able to withstand economic shocks. Over 70% of businesses who begin their export journey in the cross-border market, go on to export off the island. This is a crucial first step in building off-island export capability particularly in this period of geopolitical uncertainty. InterTradelreland has the expertise, connections and networks to support indigenous businesses to build their export, innovation and entrepreneurship capability to scale and grow.

InterTradelreland occupies a unique and trusted position connecting business, government, and academia, actively facilitating collaboration and driving sustainable economic growth across both jurisdictions. With a direct legislative mandate to lead economic collaboration across the island, we are proud to have contributed to a more connected and resilient economy. Today, with cross-border trade at a record level of almost €15bn, the potential opportunity for collaboration and economic growth has never been greater.

Our people, our stakeholders, our partners, and our Board have all informed and shaped this Corporate Plan. It reflects a deep understanding of both the opportunities and challenges facing our economies, and it leverages our unique position to convene policymakers and empower businesses to fully capitalise on these prospects.

InterTradelreland has a strong track record as a business focused, agile and responsive organisation. Our 'always on' approach allows us to pivot quickly to meet emerging needs, with targeted interventions and rapid roll-out of support. The launch of our Trade Hub which supported over 14,000 businesses in its first year, is a clear example of this agility in practice. We will continue to apply this flexibility to ensure our business supports remain responsive in a fast-changing economic environment.

We will lead collaboration, boost competitiveness, drive cross-border trade, and accelerate entrepreneurship, investor readiness and enterprise growth, continuing to support businesses in every county on the island of Ireland. We are not just a funder or programme provider, but a trusted, impartial, evidence-led partner. Our role is to connect and convene the right people, deliver the right support, and turn policy into action, increasing indigenous firm-level productivity and unlocking opportunity across the island.

With the right resources, skills, and an enhanced presence across the island, we can extend our reach, increase SME participation, and deliver even greater impact. This is a unique opportunity, and one we are ready to seize. I look forward to continuing to collaborate with businesses, policymakers, and partners on the island to realise our shared vision: a more connected, competitive, and resilient economy.



Margaret Hearty
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Global Economic Context and the Cross-border Opportunity

The global economy continues to face strong headwinds. The OECD expects global GDP growth to slow from 3.2% in 2024 to 3.0% by 2026, driven by rising trade barriers and policy uncertainty. The World Bank similarly forecasts subdued global growth of 2.7% for 2026.

In relative terms, Ireland's outlook remains strong, with real GDP growth projected at around 4% annually. However, Modified Domestic Demand, the best indicator of domestic economic activity, will grow more modestly at 2.5–2.7%. Northern Ireland's economy is expected to expand by 0.9–1% in 2025, rising to 1.5–1.7% in 2026 and potentially reaching 2% by 2027, in line with UK trends.

Businesses across the island continue to adapt to rising costs, skills shortages, new tariffs and ongoing geopolitical uncertainty. Geopolitical conflict is adding further stress to global supply chains, increasing the cost of energy, fuel, and critical materials. Governments are responding with higher levels of spending on security and resilience, not only in defence, but also in areas such as cybersecurity, physical infrastructure, renewable energy, and sustainable materials. These trends reinforce the need for SMEs on the island to build resilience and adaptability, ensuring they can withstand shocks, and also to capture new opportunities in emerging sectors.

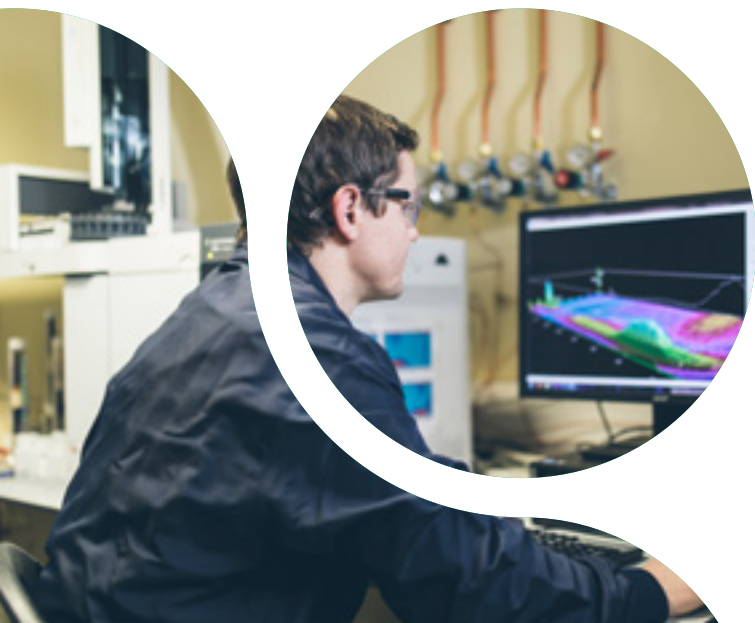
Alongside these headwinds, the wider trading environment has shifted markedly with new tariff regimes, regulatory divergence, and other barriers creating both risks and opportunities. Diversifying markets is now a core policy priority reflected in the Programme for Government commitments North and South and in the Irish Government's Market Diversification Action Plan.

Cross-border trade sits at a record €15bn, demonstrating the resilience of collaboration and the scale of future opportunity across the island of Ireland. However, challenges persist, most notably productivity. Output per Northern Ireland worker is 11–13% below the UK average and up to 40% below Ireland. In Ireland, indigenous firms remain significantly less productive than multinationals, averaging just one-fifth of their per-worker output.

Closing this productivity gap is essential. Indigenous SMEs account for 99% of all firms, and higher export intensity is strongly linked to improved productivity and innovation. Cluster participation further accelerates productivity.

For many SMEs, the cross-border market provides the safest and most accessible first step towards diversification and export-led growth. InterTradeIreland supports not only create new first-time exporters, but our innovation and clustering supports also build the wider capability of our indigenous firms to scale and compete internationally.

Both governments have made productivity, exports, and SME innovation central priorities. This Corporate Plan sets out our aligned response: to lead collaboration, boost competitiveness, drive trade, and accelerate enterprise growth, unlocking the full potential of economic cooperation across the island of Ireland.



OUR STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

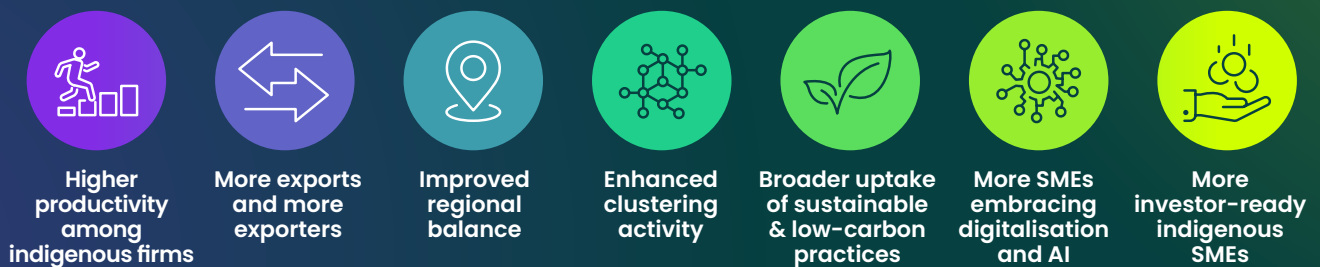
**MAXIMISING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES
ACROSS THE ISLAND OF IRELAND BY**



DELIVERED THROUGH

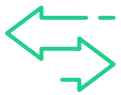


WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE



Delivering Real Economic Impact (2023–25)

In 2024, InterTradeIreland marked 25 years of economic collaboration across the island defined by impactful delivery. We provided practical, evidence-based supports aligned to the economic priorities of both governments, helping SMEs to trade, innovate, and grow. Against a backdrop of shifting regulatory conditions and economic uncertainty, we responded with agility, by turning policy into action and delivering real impact for indigenous businesses across the island.



TRADE & MARKET ACCESS

To support government priorities of increasing indigenous exports and reduced trade friction, we delivered targeted interventions to improve cross-border market access for SMEs:

- Cross-border trade reached a record **€15 billion**, supported by our practical interventions.
- **61,000** businesses benefitted from **Trade supports**.
- **890** new **First Time Exporters** supported.
- Launched a **new digital Trade Hub** in 2023 to help businesses adapt to the Windsor Framework. The Hub supported over **14,000** users with guidance on customs, VAT, regulation, and cross-border employment in its first year.
- Convened the **first All-Island Trade Conference**, connecting SMEs, economic development partners, policymakers, and investors to share knowledge and address barriers to trade.

This work sits alongside our broader efforts to support first-time exporters and deepen cross-border supply chain integration.



INNOVATION & CLUSTERING

In line with government priorities to improve SME productivity and foster innovation in strategically important sectors, we supported businesses to adopt new technologies and strengthen cluster activity:

- Supported **collaborative innovation projects** between businesses and academia focused on Industry 4.0, automation, sustainability, and digitalisation to improve productivity.
- **2,425** businesses benefited from Innovation supports.
- Delivered **cluster development supports** through the **Synergy** programme in sectors such as fintech, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and precision oncology, driving collaboration across the island.
- Hosted the **2025 TCI Global Conference** with Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland, bringing together international cluster experts and practitioners to share best practice and strengthening the island's position in global innovation networks.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INVESTMENT

To address persistent barriers to scaling and finance identified in both jurisdictions, we enhanced early-stage supports and grew the investor readiness ecosystem:

- Delivered equity advisory, mentoring, and early-stage finance supports through **HBAN** and the **Awaken Angels Network**.
- **2,975** businesses benefitted from **Investor Readiness supports**.
- Through the **Seedcorn Investor Readiness Competition** and **Venture Capital Conference**, we connected thousands of businesses with funding and investor networks.
- Piloted a **Shared Island initiative** focused on **women-led entrepreneurship**, identifying specific opportunities to improve access to finance, networks, and support across the island.



RESEARCH & POLICY INSIGHT

To ensure our work remained aligned to economic policy priorities and emerging business needs, we commissioned targeted research to inform both programme delivery and wider policy development:

- Completed studies on the **circular economy**, **offshore wind**, business support **ecosystems**, and cross-border **trade dynamics**.
- Used our research findings to **convene** departments and business **support** organisations across **both jurisdictions** to collaborate to support business growth.
- Consolidated the All-Island Business Monitor as a unique, authoritative indicator of business sentiment and operational challenges, providing evidence to inform policy responses.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

We worked with national and international partners to deliver strategic projects that aligned with government priorities on innovation, regional development, and sectoral resilience:

- Led a successful joint bid with Enterprise Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland, securing €30 million from the Shared Island Enterprise Fund.
- Partnered with the **Royal Academy** and **Irish Academy of Engineering** to deliver the first full **map** of the **engineering economy** at county and island of Ireland level, strengthening the evidence base for investment and policy targeting.
- Through the **Ireland–Northern Ireland–NCI Cancer Consortium**, supported **clinical trials** for over **35,000 patients** and provided **training** for **500+** clinicians.
- Funded cross-border collaborations between SMEs, researchers, and domain experts, and brokered global links via Horizon Europe and the US–Ireland R&D Partnership, demonstrating the global reach of collaboration.

Performance against Corporate Plan targets 2023–2025

CORPORATE KPI	2023–2025 TARGET	2023–2025 PROJECTED OUTTURN
Business Development Value to Expenditure Ratio	12.5:1	10.5:1
Business Development Value	£320m	£320m
Businesses benefitting from Innovation Supports	2,700	2,425
Businesses benefitting from Trade Supports	9,000	61,500
Businesses benefitting from Investor Readiness Supports	2,400	2,975
First Time Cross-Border Exporters	500	890

InterTradeIreland is set to achieve most of its corporate plan targets and KPIs by the end of December 2025, despite the challenging economic conditions faced by businesses during this period. The Business Development Value is projected to be 10.5:1 rather than

12.5:1 which reflects the changed mix of supports and online information that InterTradeIreland now provides. The projected Trade figure reflects the introduction of the Trade Hub online engagements during 2023 and were not included in the original target.

Strategic Alignment

InterTradelreland's Corporate Plan (2026–2028) aligns closely with the core economic and enterprise priorities set out by both governments. These include the Irish Programme for Government, *"Securing Ireland's Future"*, and the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment's Action Plans on Competitiveness & Productivity and Market Diversification and the Northern Ireland Programme for Government *"Doing What Matters Most"*, and the Minister for the Economy's Economic Vision.

Both Governments have recognised the need to grow a high productivity indigenous industrial base, that exporting is vital for small, open economies, and that cross-border trade provides a de-risked first step towards wider diversification. InterTradelreland's role in helping SMEs adapt, build resilience, and expand their export capability is therefore central to delivering these policy priorities.

Our strategic direction directly supports shared commitments to enhance competitiveness, grow exports and innovation, strengthen indigenous SMEs, drive sustainable growth, and deepen cross-border economic collaboration.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2026–2028

Strategically aligned to the priorities of both Governments and informed by our research and extensive stakeholder consultation, our strategic priorities reflect our vision to build a globally competitive business ecosystem across the island of Ireland.

This will fulfil our mission to lead collaboration that drives trade, strengthens competitiveness and accelerates business growth. We are focused on scaling SME growth, accelerating the green and digital transitions, and deepening cross-border partnership to realise our collective potential.

OUR FOUR INTERCONNECTED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ARE:



Lead economic collaboration

**Boost competitiveness
and productivity**



Drive cross-border trade

**Accelerate entrepreneurship
and enterprise growth**





Lead Economic Collaboration across the island

Collaboration, trust, and shared knowledge are essential to long-term economic success. Leading and developing strategic partnerships across the island of Ireland has been central to InterTradelreland's impact to date and it will remain the foundation of everything we do to boost competitiveness, accelerate trade, and foster entrepreneurship.

Collaboration is not a by-product of our work; it is our core method and mission.

By co-working on projects, including through Shared Island, we will lead in the delivery of women-led entrepreneurship supports, strategically important sectoral clusters, and sustainable infrastructure, accelerating the delivery of shared policy objectives and unlocking growth.

As the only organisation with a legislative mandate for economic cooperation across the island, InterTradelreland plays a unique role in connecting entrepreneurs, businesses, academics, support organisations and policymakers North and South.

We create the conditions for cross-border collaboration to flourish, building the trust, alignment, shared ambition and joined-up action needed to deliver lasting economic value.

WE WILL:



Connect:

Act as an impartial, trusted broker, linking SMEs to the networks, knowledge, insights and opportunities that unlock growth.



Convene:

Bring businesses, policymakers, and experts together to solve common challenges and shape solutions for the island of Ireland.



Collaborate:

Deliver projects with partners that turn shared ambition into practical, evidence-led support.

From expanding clusters, to driving innovation through industry-research collaboration and supporting start-ups; from scaling indigenous enterprise to delivering the green and digital transitions, we align all our activity with shared policy goals.

Our role is to turn policy into action: building firm-level capability, strengthening productivity, and enabling SMEs to compete and grow in an uncertain and fast-changing world.



Convening Economic Policy Dialogue

We will leverage our unique mandate, trusted position, and extensive networks to drive strategic collaboration between policymakers and business support providers across both jurisdictions. By building relationships, sharing best practice, and supporting joint action, InterTradelreland will strengthen the island's enterprise ecosystem.

Many of the island's most pressing challenges, including low productivity, skills gaps, and the green transition, are too complex for any single agency or jurisdiction to address alone. Yet policy decisions often lack joined-up, timely evidence, mitigating the impact of public investment.

To address this, InterTradelreland is convening a new **Economic Research Forum**, bringing together researchers, policy makers and domain experts to build a robust evidence base to identify emerging challenges and opportunities and generate practical recommendations to address shared challenges and support business growth.

The Strategic Priority to lead collaboration across the island of Ireland will directly support Programme for Government commitments in both jurisdictions by enhancing firm-level productivity, accelerating the green and digital transitions, and maximising the impact of public investment in research and development and innovation.





Boost Competitiveness and Productivity

For small, open economies like ours, long-term productivity and competitiveness depend on a strong base of innovative, resilient, and growth-oriented SMEs. Yet many firms struggle to access the partnerships, expertise, and technologies needed to adapt and scale, particularly in an increasingly digital and low-carbon economy. Without better support to innovate, collaborate, and respond to shifting market demands, too many SMEs risk being left behind.

InterTradelreland will **strengthen SME performance** by equipping firms with the insight, networks, capability and targeted supports they need to innovate faster, adopt digital tools, and scale smarter. We will deepen cross-border and cross-sectoral collaboration between businesses, researchers, and policymakers to build an **integrated innovation ecosystem** across the island of Ireland that unlocks knowledge, technology, and commercial opportunity.

This includes enabling better access to talent and skills. Labour mobility across the island presents both challenges and opportunities for SMEs and sub-regions. We will work with partners in education, training, and government to support mutual recognition of qualifications, cross-border skills alignment, and seamless access to the talent needed to compete in high-growth sectors.

Our supports are designed to **help indigenous firms embrace sustainability**, build leadership and innovation capacity, and prepare for investment and internationalisation. We will prioritise high-potential sectors identified in both Programmes for Government such as advanced manufacturing, agri-food, fintech, green technologies, life and health sciences, and ICT.



Building Resilience & Competitiveness through Sustainability

Many SMEs are under pressure from rising energy costs, supply chain disruptions, and growing demands, especially from larger firms and public buyers, to demonstrate environmental performance.

InterTradelreland will **embed sustainability across all our activities**, not as a standalone agenda, but as a core business capability. We are setting a clear and ambitious target:

40% of our supports will deliver measurable sustainability outcomes.

We will provide practical, evidence-based supports that help SMEs lower energy costs, improve resource efficiency, access green finance, and win business in low-carbon supply chains. We will also continue to invest in research and innovation that drives green growth and supports decarbonisation across key sectors.



Collaborative Innovation

Innovation enables businesses to grow, adapt, and stay competitive, whether through new or improved products and services, smarter processes, digital tools, or agile business models. For small, open economies, a strong base of innovation-driven enterprises is essential to productivity, resilience, and sustainable growth.

Through our **Innovation Pathway**, InterTradelreland will guide businesses at every stage of their innovation journey from initial exploration to strategic planning and implementation. For SMEs unsure where to begin, we offer expert insight to assess the value of innovation and unlock practical opportunities to reduce costs, improve services, and build competitive edge.

We will provide tailored, evidence-based support to help firms adopt new technologies (including AI), develop improved products and services, and embed innovation within their business models.

This work contributes directly to Programme for Government priorities by supporting the growth of innovation-driven enterprises, advancing green and digital transitions, and embedding long-term capability within the SME base.



Leading Clustering & Networking Across the Island of Ireland

Across the island, cluster activity remains fragmented, underdeveloped in some regions and sectors, and often difficult for SMEs to access without targeted coordination and support.

InterTradelreland is spearheading the development of **high-impact, cross-border clusters and networks** that connect firms, researchers, and policymakers in strategically important sectors including semiconductors, cyber security, and fintech. We are working directly with regional cluster initiatives to build structured cross-border collaboration, build capability, unlock commercial opportunities, and help more SMEs engage in cluster activity, integrate into supply chains, and access new markets.

This approach directly advances Programme for Government objectives in both jurisdictions by supporting the transition to a more resilient, low-carbon, and competitive economy. Aligned with the Irish Government Clustering Policy and Northern Ireland's Economic Vision, it reinforces shared ambitions for innovation, regional development, and sustainability. By leveraging its unique mandate, InterTradelreland will play a pivotal role in developing globally competitive clusters, attracting high-quality investment, fostering innovation-led growth, creating good jobs, and delivering lasting economic impact across the island.





Drive Cross-Border Trade

Cross-border trade offers the most accessible and de-risked route to international markets for indigenous SMEs, particularly in an era of global uncertainty, rising trade tensions, and regulatory divergence. For many businesses, it provides the first step towards export growth and market diversification, enabling them to build confidence and export capability, scale incrementally, and strengthen supply chains. Our quarterly All-Island Business Monitor consistently shows that cross-border traders are more likely to report higher growth, stronger profit margins and greater resilience and confidence.

Through our integrated **Trade Pathway**, we will support first-time exporters with expert advice and market insights, while helping experienced traders scale their activity and impact. Our tailored supports will unlock new cross-border sales, deepen supply chain integration, and build the export capabilities SMEs need to compete internationally.

In a challenging geopolitical trade landscape, InterTradelreland will continue to provide stability and clarity for SMEs.

We will actively monitor regulatory developments, provide early insights to businesses and policymakers, and work closely with trade and regulatory authorities to minimise disruption. Our Trade Hub will equip firms with clear, up-to-date guidance, provide practical support and help reduce the frictions that impact trade across the island.



Trade Information and Advice

InterTradelreland will expand its **Trade Hub** into a comprehensive, user-focused service that delivers timely, accurate trade information and expert guidance tailored to SME needs. We will continue to offer one-to-one consultancy and practical resources to help businesses navigate the trading environment across the island – including VAT, customs, regulation, and cross-border employment.

As new trade agreements and policy developments emerge, InterTradelreland will remain a trusted source of technical insight, helping SMEs reduce complexity, manage risk, and trade with confidence.



Growing Cross-Border Sales

InterTradeIreland will offer a suite of **sales capability and market development** supports to help SMEs grow their customer base and secure new cross-border opportunities. Our tailored programmes will focus on strengthening lead generation and conversion, connecting businesses to public and private buyers, and helping indigenous first-time exporters to enter the cross-border market with confidence.



Supply Chain Integration

Despite current trade uncertainty, there is significant opportunity to **build stronger, more resilient supply chains** across the island of Ireland. By connecting SMEs with large indigenous and multinational firms, we can create a more cohesive supply chain ecosystem, supporting job creation, value retention, and decarbonisation. Sector specific supports will focus on nearshoring and import substitution, helping SMEs meet supplier standards, and building capability to scale and compete for contracts in both jurisdictions.

Through tailored supports, training, and market engagement initiatives, we will enhance SME supply chain integration and ensure more firms benefit from collaborative procurement and sourcing strategies.

Our trade supports will directly contribute to shared Programme for Government priorities to strengthen SME export capability across the island, expand the base of indigenous exporters and drive sustained export growth. The cross-border market will serve as a key first step to wider market diversification, creating a pipeline of indigenous businesses with the confidence and know-how to export off the island.





Accelerate Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Growth

The economy in both jurisdictions is characterised by a long tail of small and micro firms, many of which lack the capability and resources to achieve scale. Yet indigenous entrepreneurs are often best placed to identify new market needs, pioneer business models, and create high-value employment. With the right support, they play a vital role in boosting productivity, advancing technological adoption, and driving inclusive regional growth.

We will also recognise the contribution of the social economy and social enterprises, which play a critical role in delivering inclusive economic growth, creating quality jobs, and addressing societal challenges. By supporting their cross-border development and intergration into wider enterprise ecosystems, we will help maximise their economic and social impact.

Significant barriers remain for indigenous businesses North and South, especially around scaling capability, investment readiness, and access to networks. These challenges are especially acute for women founders and entrepreneurs outside major urban centres. Many growth-oriented firms struggle to navigate fragmented supports, access funding, or tap into cross-border market opportunities.

InterTradelreland will expand and enhance its entrepreneurship offering to address these gaps. Our focus will include:

- **Equity advisory and investor readiness programmes**
- **Targeted interventions for scaling firms in high-growth sectors**
- **Improved access to cross-border and international networks**
- **Stronger connections to innovation and cluster ecosystems**



Champion Women-Led Entrepreneurship

InterTradelreland is committed to unlocking the untapped economic potential of women-led businesses. Our 2024 All-Island Women's Entrepreneurship Feasibility Study confirms real progress across both jurisdictions, but also exposes persistent structural, cultural, and financial barriers. Women entrepreneurs remain under-represented in export markets and disproportionately excluded from equity investment.

InterTradelreland will lead efforts to address these challenges. We will expand access to equity finance, cross-border networks, and tailored supports that help women entrepreneurs connect, launch, and scale.



Indigenous Business Growth & Scaling

Our comprehensive **Investor Readiness Pathway** will combine capability-building workshops, tailored mentoring, and bespoke advice to help high-potential firms build strong leadership teams, refine scalable business models, and secure growth finance.

We will strengthen strategic partnerships with funders across the island and internationally, connecting SMEs with angel investors, venture capital, and institutional finance. Flagship initiatives such as the Seedcorn Investor Readiness Competition and All-Island Venture Capital Conference will continue to provide powerful platforms for visibility, connections, investment and growth.

This work delivers directly on Programme for Government commitments, supporting the growth of indigenous enterprise, strengthening innovation capacity, expanding equitable access to finance, and driving regional entrepreneurship and economic development across the island.



Research and Evidence-Based Working

InterTradelreland's work is grounded in rigorous, independent, and ongoing research, including through the established quarterly All-Island Business Monitor, which tracks business sentiment and informs responsive support strategies.

From 2023–2025, major research projects shaped our strategic direction and policy advocacy, with a focus on evolving SME needs in trade and sustainability. Key findings include challenges around regulatory divergence and administrative burdens in cross-border trade, the untapped potential of services exports, and the vast opportunity in offshore renewable energy. In response to research findings, we are expanding our Trade Hub and fostering offshore wind clusters to enable SME participation in green and export-led growth.

Our research also revealed the need for a more coordinated, outcome-driven business support ecosystem.

We are addressing this through initiatives like the **Economic Research Forum** and deeper collaboration with education and industry to address productivity challenges.

Going forward, we will maintain a forward-looking research agenda focused on tradeable services, emerging clusters, offshore wind supply chains, micro firm support models, and transformative technologies like AI. These insights will continue to inform all our programmes, reinforcing InterTradelreland's leadership in cross-border economic development.



Shared Island

The Irish Government's Shared Island initiative has delivered tangible benefits across the island since its launch in 2020, with a further €1bn committed under the current Programme for Government. InterTradelreland will continue to build on the success of our flagship Shared Island Enterprise Scheme, deepening collaboration with Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland, and other partners to develop innovative supports that strengthen collaboration and accelerate economic growth across the island.

Measuring Success: 2026–2028 Targets & KPIs

10:1
**Impact of
Expenditure Ratio ¹**
40%
**projects supporting
sustainability ²**
800
**First Time Exporters
Supported ³**
95,000
**businesses benefitting
from Trade Supports ⁴**
2,500
**businesses benefitting from
Competitiveness Supports ⁵**
5,000
**businesses benefitting from
Entrepreneurship Supports ⁶**

STRATEGIC PILLARS


Organisation

Trade

Competitiveness

Entrepreneurship

¹ Impact of Expenditure (formerly Business Development Value to Expenditure) is the ratio of Business Development Value generated by InterTradelreland programmes against the cost of delivering those programmes.

² Percentage of businesses and projects that benefit from InterTradelreland support that contribute directly to sustainability outcomes.

³ Businesses benefitting from the range of InterTradelreland supports that assist them to export to a new NI/IE market

⁴ Businesses benefitting from the range of InterTradelreland Trade supports and engaging on the cross-border export pathway. This includes businesses participating in trade programmes, attending trade-related events, receiving advice and guidance to assist on their export journey and businesses benefitting from online trade knowledge provided by the Trade Hub.

⁵ Businesses benefitting from the range of InterTradelreland competitiveness supports and engaging on the collaborative innovation pathway. This includes businesses participating in innovation programmes, benefiting from InterTradelreland facilitated cluster initiatives and attending Innovation focused events.

⁶ Businesses benefitting from the suite of InterTradelreland Entrepreneurship supports, including Investor Readiness and Women's Entrepreneurship supports, engaging in programmes, events and activities to help them access key sources of finance to aid business growth.

HOW WE DELIVER

Our ambition must be matched by the strength of our organisation. InterTradelreland will continue to invest in its people, culture, systems, and infrastructure to ensure we remain agile, accountable, and ready to lead.

HOW WE DELIVER



People

Our people are our greatest asset, essential to our success and ability to respond to evolving economic and operational challenges.

Our current People strategy includes a number of key pillars to ensure we are optimally resourced, that we maintain an engaging and enabling culture and we maximise and develop the capability and skills of our people.

Central to this strategy is ensuring that we have a positive, inclusive work environment promoting equality, diversity, and wellbeing, with initiatives like our internal Happy Healthy People team to support our staff on a personal level with their health and wellbeing. This will help us attract, retain, and empower talent across the organisation, with the right people in the right roles, motivated and equipped to deliver high-quality, impactful programmes.

Organisational Values

Our core values reflect our ethos and underpin how we work with businesses and stakeholders.

FLEXIBILITY

We are approachable, proactive and resourceful

SUPPORTIVE

We believe in better outcomes from collaboration

HONESTY

We strive for integrity in being fair, consistent, transparent and informed

We will continue to nurture a culture of continuous learning, innovation, and cross-functional collaboration to ensure the organisation and staff are appropriately skilled to deliver on the priorities within this Plan. We will continue to invest in professional development, leadership, and future-focused skills. We will strive to upskill our staff in many areas including cyber security, use of artificial Intelligence, data insights and sustainability both for the benefit of the organisation and to identify and deliver solutions in these areas for the businesses we support.

InterTradelreland's wider corporate responsibilities include a focus on making a positive impact on the workplace, the community, the environment, and the marketplace to ensure that we promote inclusiveness and sustainability inside our organisation, our community and with all our stakeholders.





HOW WE DELIVER



Processes

As demand for our services continues to grow, we have automated and streamlined our operations to deliver with greater speed, impact, and reach across the island.

Our digitalisation strategy will continue to modernise our digital infrastructure by enhancing our relationship management systems, data analytics, and programme delivery tools. This will underpin smarter engagement, provide more responsive service delivery and enable us to tailor our supports to SME needs and track outcomes more effectively.

Harnessing the internal and external opportunities presented by emerging digital solutions, including AI, will be key to improving the user and customer experiences and how we interact with our stakeholders in an agile way.

This will improve our understanding of our customers and provide real time insights and data to inform our future supports and share with relevant policy and other stakeholders.

The development of our Trade Hub is an example of how our supports can evolve to reach larger audiences and we will continue to expand the provision of digital content and knowledge alongside our traditional supports which will be delivered with digital tools to enhance their effectiveness.

HOW WE DELIVER



Place

A strong and visible regional presence across the island is central to our mission. We will enhance our footprint across every county, ensuring that our programmes are accessible, relevant, and impactful at a local level.

Through deeper engagement with regional enterprise offices, chambers of commerce, business networks, and economic partnerships, we will align delivery with local needs and opportunities. A targeted, place-based approach, supported by robust regional promotion and on the ground activity, will ensure that the benefits of collaboration across the island of Ireland are felt widely and equitably.



HOW WE DELIVER

Resourcing, Monitoring and Evaluation

Funding and Resources

InterTradelreland is funded by DETE in Ireland and DfE in Northern Ireland with funding provided on the basis of approved annual Business Plans.

InterTradelreland anticipates a core Business Plan budget, excluding Shared Island funded supports, of £17.5m in 2026, £18.7m in 2027 and £20m in 2028. This will be required to efficiently meet the identified needs of businesses during the Corporate Plan period.

Both departments are currently able to meet their share of funding of annual Business Plans from their current core allocation, and that is expected that will continue during this period.

To effectively deliver the objectives of this Corporate Plan, sustainable resourcing is essential. We will actively engage with departments and stakeholders to articulate clear cases for investment, demonstrating the measurable impacts and value-for-money of our programmes. Ensuring robust governance and transparency, we will optimise resource allocation and maximise impact.

Governance

As a cross-border agency, InterTradelreland adheres to a very specific governance model. Overall policy direction from sponsor/partner department Ministers, meeting through the North South Ministerial Council, directs the implementation of our strategies and work programmes.

All strategies and work programmes are presented to the InterTradelreland Board for approval and authorisation, and appropriate consultations take place with DETE and DfE. InterTradelreland is committed to the highest standards of governance.

The Organisation's robust governance procedures cover:

- financial affairs;
- strategic planning and performance measurement;
- the management and security of information and data;
- codes of conduct;
- the management and development of staff; and
- compliance with statutory legislative requirements.

InterTradelreland is the subject of a joint annual External Audit by the offices of the Comptrollers and Auditors General in Ireland and Northern Ireland. In addition, InterTradelreland has an outsourced Internal Audit function that delivers an annual Internal Audit Plan approved by the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee. InterTradelreland's audited Annual Accounts are published within the organisation's Annual Review of Activities.





Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

The delivery of the InterTradelreland 2026–2028 Corporate Plan will be overseen by the Board, with reports produced by the Senior Leadership Team and discussed at its monthly meetings. These reports will record progress against the delivery of the annual Business Plan as subsets of the Corporate Plan. In addition, the reports will include an update on funding, expenditure, and variance against calendarised budgets. These reports will be copied to the sponsor/partner departments, DETE and DfE.

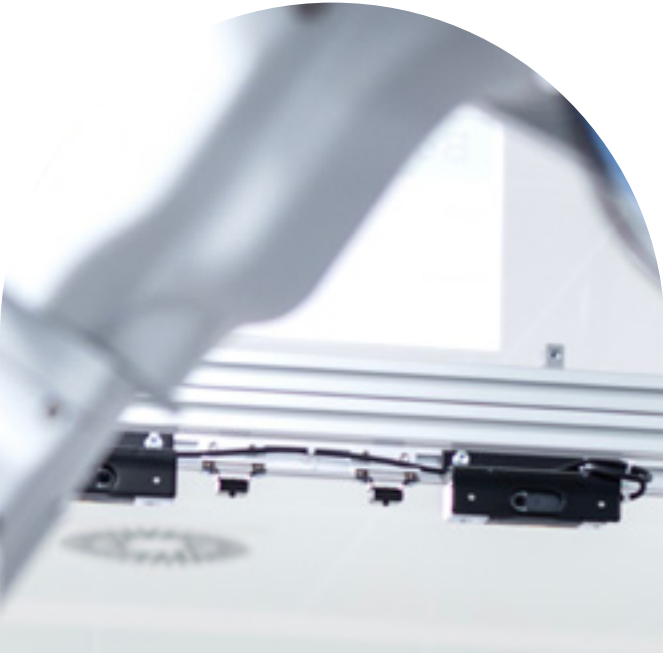
- At each North South Ministerial Council Trade & Business Development Sectoral Meeting, a progress and highlights report is provided to the Ministers of our sponsor/partner departments.
- Quarterly Liaison Meetings are held between the InterTradelreland Senior Leadership Team and our sponsor/partner departments to monitor delivery and performance against targets.
- InterTradelreland carries out a continuous programme of evaluations for its activities.
- InterTradelreland publishes an Annual Review of activities and Accounts.

Equality

InterTradelreland is committed to the development and delivery of successful North South trade and business development programmes, provided to improve enterprise competitiveness, and in a manner that provides equal opportunities for all citizens in both jurisdictions. We are committed to the implementation of our approved Equality Scheme and its Equality Action Plan, and to the fulfilment of the obligations contained in both. In the delivery of its Corporate Plan, we will:

- Screen all new policies and programmes which are to be adopted, assess equality impacts and conduct Equality Impact Assessments as required.
- Consult with interested groups and individuals to learn how our policies and operations affect their needs in terms of equality of opportunity.
- Provide staff with the skills necessary to deliver equality objectives in their roles and areas of responsibility in InterTradelreland.
- Ensure that recruitment practices are fully compliant with equality obligations.
- Identify targets for operational activities, where possible, for the promotion of equality of opportunity.

Communicating our Corporate Plan



InterTradelreland will develop a focused and integrated Communications Strategy for the organisation that will underpin our activity and support the operational delivery of this Corporate Plan.

We will ensure our messaging reaches and resonates with businesses, stakeholders, and policymakers, reinforcing InterTradelreland's role as a trusted partner. We will deploy a wide range of traditional, digital, and social media channels together with proactive, sustained stakeholder engagement, enhanced by extensive 'on the ground' activity and events. Our strategy will comprise strong branding, clear messaging, specific communications campaigns, and public relations activity – increasing awareness and encouraging widespread participation among SMEs and collaboration with partners and stakeholders across the island.

While our Corporate Plan will guide our operations, InterTradelreland will keep our plans and strategy under close review, to ensure we continue to deliver against policy priorities, remain agile and responsive to changes in the external market environment or business needs and maximise our economic impact.



By strategically investing in our people, processes, regional presence and communications, InterTradelreland will ensure we are equipped and ready to deliver exceptional results, drive economic collaboration, and contribute meaningfully to the competitiveness, innovation, and resilience of businesses across the island of Ireland.





InterTraderIreland

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Alternative formats of our Corporate Plan can be provided to support language and accessibility requirements.
Please contact us if you need this document in a different format.