

Irish Business Network in Scotland launched today

A new organisation to bring together businesses in Scotland and Ireland is being launched in Edinburgh today.

The Irish Business Network in Scotland is being set up at a time when trade between Ireland and Scotland has grown to unprecedented levels. The organisation's members are expected to come from the established Irish business community in Scotland, companies in Ireland looking to expand into Scotland, and Scottish businesses with an interest in Ireland.



Founding chairman, **Colm Moloney** says it's an exciting time to launch the new Network:

"This is about encouraging businesses and entrepreneurs in both Scotland and Ireland to explore the opportunities on the other side of the water. We want to create a network that shares ideas and information, creates opportunities for partnerships and collaborations, and taps into the experience of those people and companies that have made a success of broadening their horizons across the Irish Sea."

One of the founding members is the Allied Irish Bank which has for many years had branches in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Regional Director Billy MacLeod says the Irish business community in Scotland is wide and diverse:

"Ireland, like Scotland, has seen huge growth in innovation-based industries like energy, technology, construction and lifesciences. And, just as in Scotland, culture and heritage companies are thriving too. Alongside these, the support sectors, such as finance, law and accountancy, have also taken the step across the water to set up new operations."

“Allied Irish Bank specialises in banking for owner managed businesses and has several really exciting Irish clients in Scotland. I am delighted that the new Network will help oil the wheels for those who wish to bring new business to Scotland or from Scotland to Ireland.”

The initiative is being encouraged by the Scottish and Irish governments. Speakers at this evening’s launch at Edinburgh Castle include the Irish Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe TD, and Scotland’s Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop MSP.

Fiona Hyslop said:

“Scottish exports to Ireland are worth around £1.125 billion, while the turnover of Irish businesses here in Scotland is over £2.5 billion, supporting nearly 6,000 jobs.

“The Scottish Government is pleased to welcome the development of the Irish Business Network Scotland □to provide a way for businesses wanting to expand to tap into companies with experience already located in Scotland.

“We also welcome the close collaboration that has already begun between the Network and the Scottish Innovation and Investment Hub in Ireland, to ensure opportunities are developed for Scottish companies wanting to trade or invest in Ireland.”

Paschal Donohoe said:

“The establishment of the Irish Business Network is further evidence of the already close cooperation that exists between Ireland and Scotland at so many levels. The Network will provide an opportunity to bring together businesses from the two countries for their mutual benefit. The Irish Government is especially keen to foster such links.

“As Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform I also have a

special interest in the opportunities for cooperation provided by the EU-funded INTERREG Programme between Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland which will see more than €280 million invested in the region for the period 2014-2020.”

The Network is the result of a meeting of many businesses in Scotland with links to Ireland supported by staff at the Consulate of Ireland in Edinburgh and Ireland’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Consul General of Ireland to Scotland, Mark Hanniffy, says he has been impressed by the drive he has seen to make it happen:

“I have been struck since the moment I arrived in this job by the similarities between businesses in Scotland and Ireland. We share a very positive business climate, and our enterprises – both new and established – have an ambition for growth and an eagerness to expand into new markets. Nonetheless, opening a new business in a different country can be daunting. Your home government and its agencies can help with advice and information but often it’s being able learn from others who have made the journey before you that makes the biggest difference.”

For more information about joining the new network, go to www.irishbusinessnetwork.scot and follow the organisation on Twitter @irishbusnetwork