

**Written evidence submitted by Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), in relation to the Investment in Northern Ireland inquiry (INI0033)**

**BUSINESS VIEWS ON THE PROTOCOL AND N/S COOPERATION MORE GENERALLY**

**Summary of City Deals cost effectiveness evaluation**

**City Deals**

When taking evidence on investment in Northern Ireland (NI) relating to City Deals, questions were raised on evaluating cost effectiveness and what KPI's were to be adopted. As these aspects were being considered one important strategic dimension for NI was overlooked.

In a UK context the unique aspect of City Deals in NI is for them to have an island of Ireland dimension to leverage the existing framework of N/S economic interaction, collaboration and cooperation in order to meet local needs, engage in capacity building and be more ambitious.

Earlier contributors to the session provided numerous examples: the Belfast/Dublin Economic Corridor; the Derry and Strabane along with Donegal District Council lead North West Growth Partnership; unique Research & Development (R&D) opportunities combining N/S/EU and E/W/UK expertise and resources; Science Foundation Ireland's (SFI) proposal for an all island R&D Centre of excellence; the opportunities for accelerating the investment and development of renewable energy of scale to be more cost efficient (e.g. for hydrogen and in the north west).

To facilitate this unique N/S cross border dimension its UK wide rules need to flexibly accommodate how City Deal funding for NI is invested, what KPIs promoters are asked to design their projects to meet, and their RoI and/or costs effectiveness as evaluated by Government.

Therefore, the Committee may wish to consider including the need for this flexibility amongst its recommendations.