



Brexit

Utilising the Irish/Scottish finance corridor

March 2019

The Scottish Irish Finance Initiative was founded in part to overcome Brexit-related issues for the finance industry.

Our aim with this document is to gather together into one place the resources that any company might need when investigating the use of the Irish Scottish corridor as a facility to mitigate any Brexit challenges.

Our thesis as always is that there are synergies and complimentary competencies in both locations that can help companies operate to their maximum potential. With Brexit, our focus is on ensuring that companies can continue to operate as freely as possible within the EU and the UK and continue, as much as is possible, to access the benefits that were available to them pre-Brexit.

Our aim and hope is that trade between the two jurisdictions will not only continue but expand and our hope is that a proactive, pragmatic and sensible approach to Brexit difficulties can actually open up opportunities. Already the challenge of Brexit has spurred some companies into accelerating sales programmes and to look proactively at the international options available to them.

All of this is underpinned by the continuing and increasing goodwill between Ireland and Scotland – whatever happens the ongoing development of this bilateral relationship at a cultural, commercial and governmental level will ease any short-term strains caused by the UK's vote.

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Government strategy

Both Scotland and Ireland have administrations, and populations, that are in general pro-European and recognise the importance of cross-border trade to their own domestic economies. Therefore in our experience, both governments are keen to do what they can to provide an accommodative environment for the international financial services industry.

In Ireland, it is no secret that Brexit can be an opportunity to enhance Ireland's financial industry standing, but in Scotland as well there are a wide range of qualities that makes the nation an attractive place to undertake financial services activities within any Brexit settlement.

SIFI has strong relations with both governments, working closely to develop our financial industries, and ministers from both countries regularly attend our events.

More details on the Irish Government's financial sector strategy (soon to be updated) can be found at the following address:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/209a77-ifs2020-strategy/>

The Scottish Government's prospectus for its financial industry can be found in the following link:

<https://www.sdi.co.uk/media/1643/scotland-financial-services-brochure.pdf>

Industries/companies

Both locations are home to significant financial industries. As a generalisation, Scotland has had a deep relationship with the finance industry going back hundreds of years, while Ireland has astutely targeted the growth of international banking and investment management over the past 30 years to become a hugely significant European hub.

From an overview perspective, Scotland is home to a significant banking operations, including the headquarters of RBS, a large insurance industry grown out of the mutual societies that developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, significant investment operations such as Aberdeen Standard and Baillie Gifford, a large wealth management sector, and a growing asset servicing industry. There is a large and growing fintech industry that benefits from being in proximity to Scotland's financial sector.

Ireland has established itself alongside Luxembourg as one of the two main fund servicing hubs for Europe, while also being the European home of a large number of international banking institutions and investment banks. It also has an extensive legal services network to support the financial industry. As in Scotland it has a significant fintech sector that has grown up both independently of, and in conjunction with, the growing finance industry.

In short there are companies in both locations that should be able to partner with and service international financial companies looking to establish in either place. Importantly, there are potential partners for businesses in both Scotland and Ireland that can help with the continuation of trade post Brexit.

For further information, we suggest tapping the helpful and well-organised trade associations in both locations. SIFI has close relations with our trade groups and the companies they represent, and we seek to engage them in our meetings and policy development.

In Ireland:

IBEC

https://www.ibec.ie/IBEC/BA.nsf/vPages/Business_Sectors~financial-services-ireland

Irish Funds

<https://www.irishfunds.ie>

For a link to Irish Funds members:

<https://www.irishfunds.ie/about/members>

The IFSC is the body that oversees the development of the financial centre in Dublin's docklands.

<http://www.ifsc.ie/>

In Scotland

Scottish Financial Enterprise

<http://www.sfe.org.uk>

And for a list of members:

<http://www.sfe.org.uk/about/our-members/>

The BICC British Irish Chamber of Commerce has extensive links across these islands.

<http://www.britishirishchamber.com>

There is also a developing business network between Ireland and Scotland.

<https://www.causewayexchange.net>

Fintech

There are several organisations that exist to help promote our cutting-edge fintech industries, and both governments are behind efforts to enhance this sector. SIFI holds many meetings with the industry to promote its development.

In Ireland the Fintech & Payments Association is a company-led trade group that promotes the fintech industry.

<http://www.fpai.ie>

In Scotland the Government has brought together under one umbrella organisation all of the various stakeholders in the fintech industry through FinTech Scotland.

<http://www.fintechscotland.com>

Universities

Both countries have strong third level education and research in finance. We have worked with, or have come across in our fintech investigations, the following third level institutions.

In Scotland

University of Strathclyde

<https://www.strath.ac.uk>

University of Edinburgh

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/>

Heriot Watt University

<https://www.hw.ac.uk>

In Ireland

UCD – Michael Smurfit

Graduate School of Business

<https://www.smurfitschool.ie>

Dublin Business School

<https://www.dbs.ie>

Dublin City University

<https://www.dcu.ie>

Trinity College Dublin

<https://www.tcd.ie>

University College Cork

<https://www.ucc.ie/en>

University of Limerick

<http://www.ul.ie/>

Consultancies

There are significant consultancy operations in both Ireland and Scotland with the major companies represented.

The Scottish Irish Finance initiative works closely with PwC, our event partners, who have offices across the main Irish and Scottish cities.

<https://www.pwc.ie>

<https://www.pwc.co.uk/who-we-are/regional-sites/scotland.html>

We have also contributed to work that EY has done on behalf of the Scottish Government.

<https://www.ey.com/ie>

<https://www.ey.com/uk/en/services/specialty-services/ey-scotland>

Deloitte in Dublin also provide services to the finance community.

<https://www2.deloitte.com/ie/en/footerlinks/office-locator/Dublin-Deloitte-Ireland-Office-details/Dublin-office-details.html>

Legal services

Ireland operates within the common law system similar to England and Wales, while Scotland has a hybrid legal system. For more information on the legal services available in each location please contact the following organisations:

Law Society of Scotland

<https://www.lawscot.org.uk/>

Law Society of Ireland

<https://www.lawsociety.ie/>

Regulation

Obviously the final Brexit settlement will determine the extent of activities that can take place cross-border. Hearteningly, the regulators in Europe and the UK have already agreed memoranda of understanding that should come into place to help ensure the smooth continuation of business post Brexit. Details can be found in the following press release here:

<https://www.esma.europa.eu/press-news/esma-news/esma-and-eu-securities-regulators-agree-no-deal-brex-it-mous-fca>

In the investment sphere it seems that all parties in these islands are keen to see the continuation of fund delegation activities. The regulators have also expressed continued support for the ability of companies to export activities outside of the jurisdiction. For the latest guidance, this speech from the Central Bank of Ireland can provide some background.

<https://www.centralbank.ie/news/article/asset-management-after-brex-it-michael-hodson>

Michael Hodson recently spoke at a SIFI event and gave the following speech:

<https://centralbank.ie/news/article/brexit-gatekeeping-and-the-changing-landscape---michael-hodson-director-of-asset-management-and-investment-banking>

The FCA's policy on Brexit can be seen here:

<https://www.fca.org.uk/publications/policy-statements/ps19-5-brexit-policy-statement>

The respective home pages for the regulators can be found below here:

Financial Conduct Authority

<https://www.fca.org.uk/>

Central Bank of Ireland

<https://www.centralbank.ie/>

Development agencies

Both Ireland and Scotland have highly professional development agencies that can help companies trade and establish cross-border. Both countries offer, under certain circumstances, targeted incentives for companies to establish operations domestically. SIFI works with agencies from both nations to develop trade.

In Scotland, business development activities are overseen by Scottish Enterprise and by its international division Scottish Development International:

<https://www.scottish-enterprise.com/>

<https://www.sdi.co.uk/>

In Ireland, attracting inward investment is overseen by the Industrial Development Authority:

<https://www.idaireland.com>

International trade development is overseen by Enterprise Ireland:

<https://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/>

Both countries are keen to develop financial services industries across the regions and have been highly successful in this strategy. Further information can be found from relevant local authorities, while the following two organisations are particularly focused on developing industry in rural locations.

In Ireland Uderas na Gaeltachta helps to develop the Irish speaking regions that are mainly located across the western seaboard:

<http://www.udaras.ie/en/>

In Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise is focused on developing these regions:

<http://www.hie.co.uk/>

Locations/employee lifestyle

Both locations are keen to develop financial services broadly spread across the countries and there are opportunities to establish businesses in both urban and rural locations. That said, financial services are mainly centred in urban locations. In terms of lifestyle, urban centres in both Scotland and Ireland are never far away from the attractive rural landscapes that attract tourists throughout the year. All of the main cities have attracted a cosmopolitan and young population in recent years, while the larger the main cities, obviously the more significant artistic and cultural facilities can be accessed. The towns and cities of Ireland have a range of events throughout the year, as does Scotland; indeed Edinburgh lays claim to be the home of the largest arts festival in the world.

Again, living costs tend to be higher in the more developed urban areas, although costs are considerably cheaper than those of London.

Both countries have a mix of state and private educational opportunities. Scotland has a free-at-the-point-of-delivery health service through the NHS. While Ireland has a public health safety net, most people use health insurance to pay for their care.

In Ireland, Dublin is the main centre for financial services operations, while Cork, the second city, is building a growing financial services base too. Other cities looking to build up their financial services industries include Limerick and Galway.

<https://dublin.ie>

<https://www.corkcity.ie>

<http://www.galwaycity.ie>

<https://www.limerick.ie/council>

In Scotland both Edinburgh and Glasgow have traditionally been financial centres – nowadays Edinburgh still houses the headquarters for RBS and some large asset managers, while Glasgow has a growing asset servicing sector and Dundee remains the headquarters for Alliance Trust. Aberdeen is the home of Scotland's significant oil industry.

<http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/>

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/>

<https://www.dundeecity.gov.uk>

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/>

Labour

While the move in the UK to limit freedom of movement will make it more difficult to hire European citizens, both countries benefit greatly from continued access to extended labour resources through the Common Travel Area. In effect this means that Irish citizens can continue to freely travel, live and work in the UK post Brexit with the same benefits for UK citizens in Ireland.

More information on the CTA can be found in the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/travelling-in-the-common-travel-area-if-theres-no-brexite-deal/travelling-within-the-common-travel-area-and-the-associated-rights-of-british-and-irish-citizens-if-there-is-no-brexite-deal>

The similar lifestyle between Ireland and Scotland can hopefully make transfers more palatable for employees should the need arise. Also, depending on the regulatory environment, some daily or weekly commuting may be appropriate or allowable. In fact the Scots are used to this given a tradition of working in London for Scottish-based employees.

There are a number of executive search and recruitment agencies in Scotland and Ireland. We have been in contact with the following.

In Ireland

Robert Walters

<https://www.robertwalters.ie/banking-financial-services.html>

Morgan McKinley

<https://www.morganmckinley.ie/>

Quest

<https://www.questrecruitment.ie/>

In Scotland

Eden Scott

www.EdenScott.com

Talent Scotland

Talent Scotland, part of Scottish Enterprise, works to help get people with the right skills in Scotland:

<https://www.talentScotland.com/>

Michael Page

<https://www.michaelpage.co.uk/jobs/banking-financial-services/scotland>

Core Asset

<http://www.core-asset.co.uk/>

Fletcher Jones

<https://www.fletcher-jones.co.uk>

Hays

<https://www.hays.co.uk/scotland/index.htm>

Transport

One of the key attractions of a combined business approach to Scotland and Ireland is the easy and regular transport links between the two locations. In fact the commute from Edinburgh to Dublin office-to-office is achievable in under 2.5 hours. Between Edinburgh and Dublin there are roughly seven flights a day, with slightly fewer on the Glasgow/Dublin route. There are various other flights between the other cities on less frequent basis.

Both locations maintain very close and easy links with London. While airlines fly on these routes regularly, Scotland benefits from being on the same land mass and therefore having train links – the minimum train journey between London and Scotland is about four hours. Also available are sleeper services that allow people to travel overnight and begin work early in the morning. The following links are for transport companies that operate in these islands.

For travel between Ireland and Scotland

Aer Lingus

<https://www.aerlingus.com/>

Ryanair

<https://www.ryanair.com/ie/en/>

British Airways

<https://www.britishairways.com/>

For intra UK air travel

Easyjet

<https://www.easyjet.com/EN>

FlyBE

<https://www.flybe.com>

British Airways

<https://www.britishairways.com/>

UK train services

Virgin West Coast

<https://www.virgintrains.co.uk/>

London North Eastern Railway

<https://www.lner.co.uk/>

Scotrail

<https://www.scotrail.co.uk/>

Caledonian Sleeper

<https://www.sleeper.scot/>

Irish rail services

www.irishrail.ie

On-the-ground government support

Both governments in our experience are committed to helping companies exploit the Scottish Irish corridor in order to boost trade and overcome Brexit difficulties. Key contacts for both governments are

Scottish Government representative office in

Dublin (based in the British Embassy):

<https://www.sdi.co.uk/about-sdi/global-offices/europe-middle-east-and-africa/ireland-dublin>

Irish Consulate General Edinburgh:

<https://www.dfa.ie/irish-consulate/edinburgh/>

More official information can be found here:

<https://www.prepareforbrexit.scot/>

<https://www.dfa.ie/brexit/>