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**STRANDS 2 AND 3 KEY OUTSTANDING ISSUES
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE STRUCTURES**

- Issue: What is the relationship between the North/South Ministerial Council and the inter-Governmental Council?
- Analysis: Some parties have suggested that the North/South Ministerial Council should be within the context of the inter-Governmental Council. Others that even if other bilateral relations came under the inter Governmental Council, the North/South Ministerial Council should be free standing.
- Lead Option: The inter-Governmental Council will cover the totality of relations between all its members on a multilateral basis. It will facilitate the development of further multilateral and bilateral relationships but will not be responsible for establishing bilateral links between its members.
- The British Irish Intergovernmental machinery and the North/South Ministerial Council will be established against this background; as will any bilateral structures between devolved administrations in Edinburgh or Cardiff and Dublin which the new administrations and the Irish Government might in due course establish. The North/South Ministerial Council will be an expression of an institutional relationship which could develop along any of the axes of the inter-Governmental Council.

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