



# Developing cross border links examined

## Lifford-Strabane taken as model

GREATER co-operation in cross border areas is the key to improving social and economic conditions International Fund for Ireland research revealed last week.

"Fostering Mutual Benefits in Cross-Border Areas: The Challenges and Opportunities in Connecting Irish Border Towns and Villages" was launched in County Cavan.

A key finding of the report highlights the real need for more joined up community and stakeholder collaboration across regional jurisdictions, in order to secure greater benefits.

The research was conducted by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development and centres on a number of communities along the border area. Core funding to the value of €450,000 was provided by the IFI.

### TOWNS AND VILLAGES

The report takes an in-depth focus on a number of cross-border towns and villages including Lifford-Strabane; Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver; Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo; Clones-Rosslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea; and Castleblayney-Crossmaglen.

To ensure greater levels of cross border and regional co-operation become more strategic and effective, the report recommends a number of processes

which could be implemented.

These include the preparation of cross-border integrated plans, the establishment of a civil society forum, the establishment of a cross border councillors forum and the development of business networks at a sub-regional level.

### FEATURES

According to Deirdre Ryan, Board Member of the IFI, the report successfully captured many of the features, successes and challenges associated with territorial co-operation in a border region.

"We welcome this report as an important contribution to our shared goals of peace and reconciliation on this island and an opportunity for the Fund to contribute to the strategic development of cross-border links," Ms Ryan said.

Mr John Driscoll, Director of ICLRD said cross-border collaboration on the island of Ireland continued to evolve.

"Projects and partnerships are much more complex than they were in the early 1990s and greater emphasis is being placed on meeting local needs through the adoption of an integrated and holistic approach based on a longer-term vision and strategy for co-operation," Mr Driscoll added.