Fostering Mutual Benefits in Cross-Border Areas

The Challenges and Opportunities in Connecting Irish Border Towns and Villages

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This research, focusing on fostering mutual benefits through cross-border cooperation in border towns and villages, has been carried out by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) as part of their core research programme for the period 2007-2008. This report is one of a series of three that will be produced by ICLRD in 2008 as a result of its research activities; the others being:

- The Twin City Region: Supporting the Implementation of Cross-Border Collaborative Frameworks in Newry-Dundalk
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THE CAVAN WAY
Foreword

Dr. Francois Vigier, President,
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In January 2008, I was privileged to chair a session on ‘Fostering Cross-Border Cooperation’ as part of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development’s (ICLRD) Third Annual Conference. During this session, the research programme, which is captured in this report, was first recounted. While the research team had, at that stage, not yet concluded their investigations, it was already becoming obvious that the work being undertaken clearly highlighted the competitive advantage of micro-regions and the mutual benefits of inter-jurisdictional collaboration – whether community, private sector or local government driven.

Achieving the objective of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) of “balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union” poses daunting challenges as it presupposes cooperation among national, regional and local levels of government. In response to this challenge, and others posed by the ESDP, most European countries have prepared large-scale spatial development strategies to enhance their economic competitiveness and achieve spatial structures that are more efficient and sensitive to environmental concerns. For the island of Ireland, this translates into the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland. However, their implementation at the local level, where detailed regulatory decisions are still made, often pose difficult challenges.

At the ICLRD conference last January, I noted that “Borders are the bane of regional planners” because they do not always take account of evolving growth patterns and often impair the creation and implementation of rational and efficient spatial patterns. And when it comes to implementing plans, frameworks and strategies ‘on-the-ground’, the process “can be stymied by the patchwork of administrative borders of independent local units of government, each with its own view of a more desirable future”.

The Irish Border is one such ‘bane’. Not only has it led to the fracturing of economic and trading linkages which in turn has led to the near demise of many Border towns and villages but it has also severed social networks and relationships. Border settlements have been unable to realise their full development potential because of their peripheral location – relative to the capital city and other national growth poles; such as the identified Gateways and Hubs. As a result, the Irish Border region has, for decades, been characterised by low levels of urbanisation, poor connectivity, the decline of traditional economic activities and a lack of joined-up thinking and cooperation. For a period of seventy years, from the early 1920s to the early 1990s, the Irish Border towns and villages became synonymous with socio-economic stagnation, socio-cultural tensions and socio-political conflict. Opportunities for cross-border cooperation were limited – and in many instances the desire to collaborate did not exist.

Yet, since the mid- to late-1980s there has been significant change on the island of Ireland – supported politically and financially by the European Union (EU) – with a
steady increase in the desire for, and nature of, cross-border collaboration. Initially driven by the community and voluntary sector, there is evidence that the private sector and local government agencies in these Border counties and districts are increasingly engaging with each other; both on a cross-border and cross-community basis. These ‘emerging players’ recognise, in this increasingly globalised economy, that cross-border co-operation can help reduce the disadvantages of a remote and / or peripheral location, often the cause of their stagnation, and improve living conditions for their population. This knowledge of, and confidence in, cross-border cooperation is being further enhanced by the growing awareness of successful cross-border collaborations throughout Europe – as highlighted in the ICLRD report *Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland: Development of a Framework for Collaborative Action*.

For the island of Ireland, the Border is now becoming increasingly seamless. While tensions still remain, the mutual benefits and advantages to be achieved through generating economies of scale and critical mass has led to communities along the Irish Border region becoming strong advocates of collaborative efforts. Initiatives undertaken over the past twenty or so years have not only redressed decades of decline but also promoted innovation; thus demonstrating a shift in mindset from dwelling on challenges and issues to focusing on opportunities and potentiality. The valorisation of local assets together with the implementation of policies on a North/South basis which unleash the development potential of rural resources will – over the medium- to long-term (rather than through short funding-driven programmes) – lead to the ESDPs objective of balanced and sustainable territorial development.

Going forward, increased opportunities for open dialogue (through cross-border forums and networks for example) and the efficient delivery of complementary services together with jointly formulated comprehensive development strategies and spatial plans – covering the natural and built environment, economic growth and social capital – are key to the future competitiveness and growth of the island.

This study presents the work carried out by an interdisciplinary ICLRD team, over a twelve-month period, to determine the nature of the relationship linking the five selected cross-border towns / villages; to identify the factors associated with successful collaboration; to identify good practice in cross-border cooperation (both local & transnational); and to assess the potential going forward for cross-border collaboration on the island of Ireland. One of its important features was the commitment to obtain the views of a broad spectrum of stakeholders on both sides of the Border. It is my hope that this report’s findings and recommendations, together with the experiences and good practice it brings to our attention, may extend the discussion of the need for North-South cooperation and provide a model for other cross-border initiatives.
Executive Summary

Up until the 1990s, areas adjacent to the Border between the Republic of Ireland (from hereon referred to as Ireland) and Northern Ireland were synonymous with socio-political conflict, tension and socio-economic stagnation and decline; all largely associated with Partition and the Troubles. Today however, communities along the Irish Border are strong advocates of cross-border collaboration. As this report shows, such collaboration is serving to redress the decades of socio-economic and physical decline experienced in this region and to promote innovations in economic development, improved access to local services, social progress and ecological conservation. Such micro-level inter-community collaboration has helped to drive the Peace Process forward; while the St. Andrew’s Agreement in October 2006, the devolution of power from Westminster back to the Northern Ireland Assembly in May 2007, and the forthcoming publication of a non-statutory all-island collaborative framework (due in Autumn 2008) by both governments all serve to provide a supportive context in which cross-border collaboration and the development of sustainable communities can thrive.

This study, undertaken by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD), considers the nature and level of connectivity that exists between a number of small cross-border towns and villages (i.e. micro-regions) together with the mutual benefits and success factors for these processes of cooperation and collaboration, including the role of spatial planning. These issues are being examined in five case study ‘clusters’ in the Irish Border region; the Irish Border region being defined as the geographical area located 15km each side of the actual Border. The selection of the case studies was based on their historical linkages, variation in scale (whether village, small town, medium-sized town); the distances between them; and their typology (if classified as rural, peri-urban, marginal, structurally weak).

Progress on the roll-out of collaborative initiatives along the Irish Border parallels a process of increased cross-border collaboration throughout the European Union (EU). The EU has strongly advocated and supported a regional development agenda and, to this end, has committed considerable resources to enabling regions to overcome peripherality and to develop their potential in a sustainable way. The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland and Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland are complementary frameworks for the elaboration and implementation of spatial development policies. They recognise the importance of sustainable development principles and advocate balanced regional and territorial development. The ESDP in particular is explicit on the need for connectivity between rural and urban areas and it advocates a valorisation of rural assets, including landscape, heritage and environment. To this end, international funds and EU-led initiatives such as INTERREG and the Peace and Reconciliation Programme – operated in conjunction with national and regional authorities – have stimulated and promoted regional development on a cross-border basis.

While the Ireland-Northern Ireland experience in cross-border collaboration can be associated with increased European integration, it also has a number of unique and distinctive features. On this island, cross-border collaboration is part of a process that enables a transition whereby the Border changes from being a security cordon...
to a standard inter-jurisdictional border that is recognised by all, and which has a diminished negative effect on the lives of citizens and on the development potential of adjacent and surrounding areas. Moreover, cross-border collaboration involves a process of healing after several decades of political conflict and it implies cross-community (unionist and nationalist) as well as inter-jurisdictional collaboration. Thus, while sectarian and political sensitivities can hinder some aspects of cross-border development, collaborative processes can be, and are often, motivated by a desire to reach out to ‘the other side’; such activities express support for the consolidation of peace and the normalisation of inter-jurisdictional relations in the context of European integration.

Territories along the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland are predominantly rural. Thus, cross-border collaboration dovetails with the rural development agenda and the on-going diversification of the rural economy. Low population densities and a strong sense of local identity imply that the most appropriate approach to territorial development lies in interventions at the micro-regional level. Strategies pursued on the island of Ireland have tended to be more localised and smaller in scale than those pursued in frontier regions on the European mainland; with civil society generally playing a pivotal role in initiating and promoting collaboration (unlike other EU countries where local and regional governments tend to be to the fore in coordinating cross-border development).

The promotion of cross-border collaboration is a gradual development process, and various levels of engagement can be observed among actors and agencies along the Irish Border. Collaboration is never immediate and the development of social capital on a cross-border basis is generally preceded and accompanied by the development of physical and infrastructural connectivity. Indeed, the freedom and capacity to move goods, services and people across the Border is a prerequisite for the development of social, community and governance linkages. Advancing collaborative governance and enhancing integrated spatial planning on a cross-border basis requires strong institutional support, responsiveness and flexibility on the part of agencies, investment in agency capacity-building and the empowerment of local representatives. These efforts, over time, are essential in progressing from initial cross-border contacts to developing inter-community networks, and ultimately to underpinning collaborative partnerships with a multi-sectoral remit and an approach that is guided by the principles of sustainable development. Cross-border collaboration is most effective, and its contributions to regional development are maximised when initiatives are promoted and implemented by integrated, multi-sectoral and inclusive partnerships; with the bottom-up and top-down actors working in collaboration to an agreed strategic plan.

The case studies presented capture the dynamics of cross-border collaboration across a broad range of micro-regional contexts along the Irish Border. They reveal considerable variations in the levels of collaboration achieved and in the degrees of involvement (in initiatives) on the parts of community groups, local authorities, regional bodies, private sector interests and statutory agencies. The empirical work presented here suggests that, in terms of ‘driving’ collaboration:

- Community and voluntary associations are, for the most part, the main advocates in the North West and western areas (County Donegal, Strabane District, West Fermanagh, County Leitrim and West Cavan); the focus being on social and economic development
• Local government plays a significant role in the central border area (Counties Monaghan and Fermanagh); the core activities promoting cross-community, social and cultural connectivity
• Together with the community sector, local authorities and the private sector are most active in the eastern region (Counties Monaghan and Armagh, Newry & Mourne District); the emphasis being economic development and growth.

Community-level connectivity tends to be strongest where the majority of persons on both sides of the Border belong to the same religious denomination. A shared religious affiliation generally correlates with a shared cultural identity and strong family ties. The presence of such factors favours cross-border collaboration; while at the same time challenging initiatives to be inclusive of persons of other denominations and traditions.

Cross-border collaboration in Lifford-Strabane emerged very strongly from the bottom-up, with community representatives and businesspeople from both towns having come together to redress high levels of unemployment and social exclusion. The Strabane Lifford Development Commission, for example, which was established as a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG), has been a key driver of cross-border collaboration in the area. The Commission has promoted projects in enterprise development, training, community development, the arts and culture. The Commission works in close collaboration with local government – North and South; yet this micro-region continues to be challenged in the areas of inter-agency communication and joint approaches to spatial planning, infrastructure provision and public service delivery.

Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver represents the most rural of the case study areas in this report; with Partition and the Troubles having accentuated their peripherality and propelled their decline. Today, the area continues to suffer from a high level of dependence on small-scale agriculture, poor public service provision and a consequent weak demographic structure. Building on the long-held tradition of neighbour helping neighbour (irrespective of jurisdictional boundaries), local communities have come together to formalise their cross-border partnerships. One such partnership, the KiltyCashel Project, is wholly dedicated to promoting cross-border and cross-community cooperation through the development of social, economic and cultural capital. All activities stem from an identified local need and there is a small dedicated team of staff in place who not only oversee and implement project activities but who, like the Project, have become an integral part of the community. Going forward, strengthening and sustaining central, regional and local government support for endogenous development are essential.

Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo is also an under-developed rural micro-region that has suffered socially, economically and demographically because of its proximity to the Border. During the Troubles, inter-community connectivity was severely restricted by custom posts and patrols on border crossings. The legacy of this disconnect is still in evidence today; back-to-back planning continues to hamper public service provision and economic development. In response, community and voluntary groups have come together to promote inter-generational projects, active ageing groups, arts’ development and rural transport provision. Increasingly, the initiatives promoted in this area have an educational or economic development focus. An emerging strength, which to date remains under-exploited, is the abundance of natural and cultural assets which would support the development of
the area as an eco-tourism destination – lakes, valleys, mountains, caves, forests, walks, activity centres, music halls; as reflected by the focus of the Lough McNean Tourism Initiative. There are a number of initiatives already in place (Bréifne, The Green Box) which form a platform for launching and lobbying for increased investment in tourism-related activities – provided that these communities can come together around a joint plan of action.

Within Clones-Rosslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea there have been a number of initiatives aimed at promoting collaboration but these have not been very profound; as their commercial hinterlands overlap in geographical terms, the relationship between Clones and Lisnaskea can at times be characterised as competitive rather than collaborative. The relationship between Clones and neighbouring communities north of the Border, such as Rosslea, Newtownbutler and Aghdrumsee, has strengthened since the commencement of the Peace Process; as reflected by increased activity in enabling cross-cultural connections, community development and local capacity-building. The Clones-Erne East Partnership is an innovative body involving local authority representatives from both sides of the Border and has had considerable successes to date in promoting projects in community and economic development, rural tourism and local service provision. However, the functional and temporal differences in local election cycles between local government in both jurisdictions continues to pose difficulties for, and militate against, collaboration.

The most easterly of the case studies, Castleblayney-Crossmaglen and the surrounding communities maintained strong inter-community linkages despite Partition and the Troubles. Located adjacent to the Dublin-Belfast corridor and the Newry-Dundalk City-Region, this micro-region is well positioned to benefit from the development and roll-out of an all-island economy. The social linkages of the past are evolving into initiatives with an economic development objective; with drivers of cross-border collaboration increasingly including representatives of the private and local government sectors. The Castleblayney-South Armagh Partnership (CASA), for example, facilitates collaboration between local authorities (Castleblayney Town Council and Newry and Mourne District Council) and has enabled infrastructural improvements and joint marketing initiatives. There is a growing awareness that the area has the potential to develop itself as a tourism destination and a hub for micro-enterprises; and this will necessitate greater involvement of regional and state agencies going forward.

The five case studies provide tangible insights into the processes and factors that contribute to successful cross-border collaboration. They demonstrate the merits of collaborative and partnership approaches to development and underscore the importance of institutional flexibility in engaging in partnership. The studies also reveal the importance of continued funding – for example, PEACE and International Fund for Ireland (IFI) – with a renewed emphasis on local capacity-building and the tailoring of projects to respond to local needs and development potential.

The evidence garnered from these case studies, together with observations based on Truagh-Aughnacloy (the Monaghan-Tyrone border) and Pettigo-Tullyhummon-Kesh (the Donegal-Fermanagh border), show that despite some local difficulties, cross-border collaboration is working and that a culture of collaboration is emerging among stakeholders on both sides of the Border. Community and voluntary groups have been energised as a result of the Peace Process, and support bodies such as Border Action, the regional cross-border networks, LEADER Local Action Groups and Area/District Partnerships have played an important role in facilitating and enabling
bottom-up development, as well as dialogue between the endogenous and
exogenous actors. Communication between local government bodies, North and
South, has improved considerably – despite cross-border spatial planning lacking a
common institutional framework. Local authorities generally take account of each
others’ objectives and consult with one another more frequently; cross-border
projects provide a forum through which interfacing can take place. Thus, cross-
border collaboration is becoming an integral element of local government and
community development practice; with the agreed objectives of:

- Identifying mutual benefits for the participants involved
- Developing connectivity on the basis of socio-economic development
- Emphasising relationship building and understanding of each other
- Adopting a common sense and strategic approach.

The focus of cross-border cooperation must be on securing mutual benefits for all
stakeholders involved; pragmatically described as meeting the needs of people “on
the ground”. In the context of the Irish Border region, this has involved the
mobilisation of local communities in local decision-making, the development and
promotion of rural tourism and the acceleration of infrastructural development and
connectivity between both jurisdictions. More recently, increasing emphasis is being
placed on widening the collaborative stakeholder-base; that is embedding national
and regional agencies and the business community in cross-border initiatives. The
range of areas covered by cross-border programmes is also being extended; thus
reflecting changing concerns and issues – training, capacity building, and heritage
and enterprise development. In moving forward, it is important to continue to
recognise the role of the community and voluntary sector in cross-border
cooperation and invest in building their capacity to manage projects; particularly in
the context of the changing emphasis of funding programmes. Both governments
need, therefore, to ensure that communities are adequately resourced to grow and
sustain current projects and develop new ones.

Active involvement by politicians has evolved in the context of the Peace Process.
During the 1980s and early 1990s, those politicians who were most active in cross-
border linkages tended to be active community leaders of a nationalist persuasion.
However, with the evolution of the Peace Process and cross-border structures
becoming more inclusive of both political traditions and perspectives, unionist
participation in cross-border initiatives is now increasing. As the case studies
suggest, optimum participation leads to more sustained development and greater
benefits for all sections of the community.

While efforts at initiating and progressing cross-border cooperation and
collaboration at the micro-regional level have been extensive (and generally
successful), local actors continue to face a number of barriers. Most notable in this
respect are the:

- Changing focus of some, and the imminent cessation of other, funding
  programmes
- Increased levels of ‘red tape’ involved in the drawing down and accounting for
  monies received through various sources
- Disparities in respect of local government remits and responsibilities and
  variations in approaches to public service delivery.
Greater collaboration between statutory agencies, North and South, and where feasible an alignment of functions, would ‘facilitate’ a more favourable institutional context for the development of micro-regions, the roll-out of programmes and the enhancement of public service delivery; this may also contribute to improved territorial competitiveness. An overview of service provision in the five case study areas – in terms of geographical proximity to a range of services versus locations at which residents of each town or village currently access these services – demonstrates that a key challenge facing the Irish Border region going forward is the clear anomaly in respect to being able to access the closest available service irrespective of jurisdiction. While a greater analysis is needed of service provision and accessibility in the Irish Border region, the tentative findings from this short review make a strong case for service provision to be based on proximity rather than on one’s jurisdiction of residence / nationality.

There is much good practice in evidence to build on. Previous cross-border initiatives – whether successful or not – have all informed the process of inter-jurisdictional and cross-community cooperation. The case studies highlighted in this report demonstrate good practice in, among other things, establishing a board of governance, putting the emphasis on local needs and development potential, taking the lead, engaging in evidence-informed practices, responding to local opinion and developing trust. Based on their vast experiences, the interviewees and workshop participants have put forward a number of recommendations as to how the processes of cooperation and collaboration can become more strategic in their focus and effective on the ground. This includes the preparation of cross-border integrated plans for identified micro-regions, improved vertical and horizontal integration between spatial policies North and South and improved North-South and East-West infrastructural links. In addition, a number of practical ‘soft linkages’ were promoted, including the development of a cross-border councillors forum and the development of business networks at micro-region level (possibly based around clusters of micro-enterprises).

There is a huge commitment to cross-border and cross-community cooperation and collaboration throughout the Irish Border region. Rural communities, development agencies and policy makers are increasingly advocating that the sustainable development of rural areas cannot be advanced by trying to compete with urban centres to attract external capital – particularly as globalisation gathers pace. Instead, sustainable rural development requires a valorisation of local assets and the implementation of interventions to unleash the development potential (recognised and latent) of rural resources. For the Irish Border region, this necessitates working on an inter-jurisdictional basis. The realisation of balanced development between regions requires exogenous interventions – in particular from local, regional and central government and other state agencies (including all-island bodies such as InterTradeIreland and the North South Ministerial Council). As this report shows, partnership approaches based on collaborative local governance and local flexibility are essential in enabling micro-regions in border areas to overcome their peripherality and develop their potentiality.
part 1 setting the context
Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Border regions cover 40% of the European Union’s territory and are home to 30% of Europe’s population (Beck, 2008). Unsurprisingly then, the landscape of Europe is shaped and strongly influenced by borders and their associated challenges and opportunities. As evidenced by previous research carried out by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (InterTradeIreland, 2006), some countries are better than others at overcoming the issues raised by a border (e.g. mobility, trade). In addition to enabling and assisting border regions to overcome peripherality, EU, Irish, and British policy is pointing towards the need for greater research into local economic development and complementary functional areas, with the emphasis being on sustaining rural communities by harnessing their potentiality. In the context of border areas one of the most effective ways of promoting sustainable regional and local development is to work on a cross-border basis. Each border area, however, faces unique challenges; with every community having its own ‘local needs, perspectives and potential’. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that border areas are now considered by certain sectors as a positive rather than a depressing factor due to the business opportunities that can emerge (Perkmann, 2007; IDELE, 2005).

Within the Irish Border Region, the dominant trend has been for people on both sides of the Border to live ‘back-to-back’ (Busteed, 1992). Yet, a range of cross-border relationships exist – both formal and informal – and these vary in both their intensity and level of stakeholder participation. A number of these agencies predated Partition in 1921 and continued to operate in a formal capacity on an all-island basis; for example, the Commissioners of Irish Lights, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (Coakley & O’Dowd, 2007) and the agri-business sector (Kingon, 2008). Up until the late 1950s, officials from both jurisdictions met on a regular basis on the maintenance of the rail network and, on occasion, the protection of shared river systems; for example, the Foyle (Greer, 2003). In the case of community-based cross-border schemes, these would initially have begun as environmental improvement programmes (i.e. short-term with single objective) and, over time, have evolved to include tourism product development, service provision, ICT connectivity, and other on-the-ground actions to overcome the remaining negative perceptions of the Border area (i.e. still short-term but more strategic in focus). In those Border towns and villages which are located within a short distance of each other, there is evidence of increasing cross-border mobility in the areas of employment, education, retail, and housing. This has meant that once insular bodies have had to become more open to the idea of, and mechanisms involved in, cross-border collaboration.

This chapter provides a general overview of the issues facing the Irish Border region – starting with the characteristics and dynamics of the Irish Border, and the North-South / East-West divide that exists. For the purpose of this research study, the Irish Border region is defined as the geographical area located 15km each side of the actual Border (see Figure 1.1). The chapter then provides an introduction to the main concept and principles of cross-border cooperation and the contribution that various stakeholders can bring to the process. The final sections of this chapter then introduce the research programme on which this report is based – its terms of reference and focus – and the remaining structure of the report.
Figure 1.1: Defining the Irish Border Region
CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1. Characteristics and Dynamics of the Irish Border

The Border region on the island of Ireland is “a contested border” (Coakley & O’Dowd, 2004) – no longer in a political sense for the vast majority of people North and South (as a result of the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement 1998 and the St. Andrew’s Agreement in 2006); but rather physically and mentally as many citizens perceive the Border as being inconsistent with local economic, community and social linkages and patterns. Areas along the Irish Border are characterised by many problems: peripherality from Dublin and Belfast; a lack of joined-up action and spatial planning; an infrastructure deficit; the decline of traditional economic activities such as farming, forestry and textiles; high unemployment / under-employment; and low educational attainment. In economic terms, towns and villages along the Border have been cut off from their natural trading and retailing hinterlands. Furthermore, while the violence associated with the Troubles and associated political objectives has largely abated and security measures have been considerably reduced, work remains to be done in terms of promoting inter-religious and inter-jurisdictional collaboration.

The Border, together with the Troubles and associated cross-border road closures due to the security situation, had significant negative impacts on the viability and vitality of settlements – primarily through economic stagnation and social disconnection. The Border became an actual barrier to relationships. This was practically experienced by:

- Difficulties in the agriculture sector for farming lands located on either side of the Border
- Changes to educational arrangements
- Break-down in the movement of goods and services
- Disruption of social networks.

In areas where roads had not been physically closed, the ‘Border effect’ nonetheless continued to influence economic and social activity through negative perceptions; even in areas which shared the same ethno-religious background.

Location is considered a key factor in influencing economic growth. There exists a settlement hierarchy which typically translates as the dependence of small rural towns and villages on larger urban centres; although more recently, the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland1 highlight the role of small towns as ‘supporters’ of, and partners with, urban centres. The survival and growth of these smaller rural settlements in a balanced and sustainable manner is dependent on such a ‘policy fit’; but also to a large extent on good road infrastructure – particularly in the absence of adequate public transport options in the Border region (see Figure 1.2).

1 The ESDP was published in 1999, the RDS in 2001 and the NSS in 2002.
It is apparent from interview evidence and other sources (Harvey et al, 2005) that there are three distinct economic eras that can be identified for these Border towns and villages:

- Pre-1970s;
- 1970s to 1990s; and
- 2000-present day.

From Partition in 1921 until the 1970s, the economic development of areas along the Irish Border was adversely affected by the presence of customs posts and the imposition of tariffs and other trade barriers by the authorities, both North and South. While towns such as Clones (County Monaghan) lost much of their natural hinterlands, customers and traders were not generally averse to crossing the Border, although smuggling of cattle and certain commodities posed problems for the governments. While the Emergency / World War II and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) Border campaign of the 1950s imposed a degree of security restrictions on the movement of people across the Irish Border, locals managed to maintain strong community, social and recreational links as was the case prior to Partition.

However, the commencement of the Troubles in the late 1960s increased the reluctance of southerners to travel northwards, while the migration of Catholics / nationalists from the North to Border towns in the South provoked some tensions among those in the host communities. The Troubles ignited sectarian tensions at local level and areas such as South Armagh and parts of County Fermanagh witnessed several atrocities. Intensified security measures and the severing of cross-border road connections, promoted by the Conservative Government in Britain during the 1980s, seriously restricted cross-border movements and during the 1980s North-South interfacing at any level was at its lowest ever.
Changes began to occur during the 1990s. Following the Single European Act (1987), the completion of the European internal market and the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty on economic and monetary union (1993), cross-border movements of goods, services, capital and people were greatly facilitated throughout the European Union - including between Ireland and Northern Ireland. Reforms of the EU budget post-1992 have increased the emphasis on regional development and territorial cohesion; with border regions becoming the subject of increased investment through programmes such as INTERREG. The republican and loyalist ceasefires and demilitarisation have further transformed the physical appearance of the Irish Border. The removal of check-points, for example, represents the removal of physical and psychological barriers to cross-border interaction.

The establishment of North-South and East-West institutions and increased intergovernmental collaboration have provided a framework for conducive cross-border contacts. It has long been accepted that the establishment of the Irish Border in 1921 led to a North-South disconnect – which was greatly enhanced over eighty years of back-to-back policy development and thirty years of conflict. In particular, the removal of railway connections from Border towns in the 1950s increased both the experience and perception of disconnectedness and peripherality; and this was then further compounded by poor roads infrastructure and the Troubles during the 1970s-1990s (see Chapters 4 to 9 inclusive). The concentration of investment in the East Border region has further strengthened this long established East / West disconnect.

Regional, national (British and Irish) and EU supports for cross-border projects signify a fusion of top-down and bottom-up approaches to cross-border collaboration. The publication of the ESDP, together with spatial strategies, North and South, emphasise the importance of collaborative, inter-jurisdictional approaches to spatial planning so that regions and micro-regions realise their full potential.

### 1.2. Concept and Principles of Cross-Border Collaboration: An Introduction

The concept of cross-border cooperation is not new. There is a long history of such cooperation throughout Europe; having had to live with the presence of borders for centuries, it has long been recognised that they are a barrier to cooperation, free movement and development (O’Dowd, 2002). As membership of the European Union increases, greater emphasis is being placed on the need for integrated regional policy – and this has led to the adoption of a series of treaties and the launch of funding programmes which encourage such cohesion. The Madrid Convention, for example, signed in 1980 details the key principles that should lie behind any convention or contract of cooperation between member states – whether cross-border or transnational in nature.

Border areas have become laboratories of change and integration (Beck, 2008; O’Dowd, 2002). It is widely recognised that there is much added-value to be gained from cross-border cooperation. According to the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), this takes the form of:

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3 The Association of European Border Regions was established in 1971 to act for the benefit of all European border and cross-border regions. It promotes cooperation, exchange of knowledge and lobbying on common issues.
• Political added-value; this includes integration, the building of trust, developing partnerships, increased cohesion
• Institutional added-value; this includes increased citizen participation, a long-term vision for cooperation
• Socio-economic added-value; while this can take many forms it includes the mobilisation of endogenous potential, harmonisation and improvement of policies, additional infrastructural developments
• Socio-cultural added-value; this includes sharing of experiences and knowledge, promotion of equal opportunities (AEBR, 2003).

Cross-border cooperation, in its many guises, also brings added value to national measures; for example, it reduces regional disparities by improving connectivity, attracting investment, creating new opportunities and promoting diversification of the local economy. It also promotes networking and exchange of good practice; and where the private sector and universities can be encouraged to get involved, it can lead to joint research and innovation (AEBR, 2005).

In many respects, this added-value informs and acts as the basis for the principles of cross-border cooperation and collaboration. By its very nature, cross-border cooperation is about bringing people and places together with a united vision around an identified potential through the harmonisation and development of joint policies – a process that is based on trust, wide stakeholder involvement and a willingness to share information.

But as well as creating opportunities, borders also generate many challenges which not only affect the people living and working in these areas but also have implications for local, regional and national policy and agencies. Such challenges include poorly developed infrastructure, low levels of urbanisation and an over-reliance on agriculture for employment due to a lack of other economic investment in the area (Bacsi & Kovacs, 2006). A recent statement by the forum of the Association of European Border Regions on rural development noted that rural border areas are “affected by all kinds of territorial trends and challenges” and that such regions “require completely different measures from urban or suburban areas” (AEBR, 2007). There is not, therefore, a ‘one size fits all’ model of cooperation. Rather there are conditions that must be in place within each cross-border community before it can begin to think of working on an inter-jurisdictional basis. One such condition is rebuilding confidence in the area; for this results in greater interaction and encourages others to engage in the collaborative process. It also leads to these areas becoming more attractive to inward investment, and this in turn leads to further cross-border cooperation.

1.3. Cross-Border Cooperation in the Irish Border Region: The Role of Community, Government and the Private Sector

Compared to the larger urban centres, particularly along the eastern coastline, the Celtic Tiger effect4 has not been experienced by smaller towns and villages in peripheral areas and settlements located along the Border or in Northern Ireland. Rather, these areas became characterised by a dependency on state subventions (Coakley et al, 2007) and traditional sources of employment. Despite this, and in part because of being ‘by-passed’, groups and individuals along the Irish Border have been taking up the challenge of attracting businesses and developing

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4 The ‘Celtic Tiger’ emerged as a result of Ireland’s high rates of economic growth in the 1990s, firstly matching and then exceeding that of the four Asian tigers – South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. The ‘Celtic Tiger’ resulted in employment growth, low inflation, net immigration, low interest rates, growing incomes, reduced national debt and rising living standards.
community links in their locales. Such cross-border cooperation is considered ‘logical’. However, the extent and vibrancy of cross-border links is often dependent on the availability and enthusiasm of active local actors to drive forward projects. Evidence indicates that cross-border connections have existed for many years, emerging in the first instance from within the community sector, building on strong social and cultural links, and spreading out to incorporate private businesses and the local government sector in local partnerships (Tannam, 2006); but as argued by Harvey et al (2005), such a model of cross-border development will have to become much more sophisticated in the funding period 2007-2013 if local stakeholders wish to engage in strategic development.

Community and voluntary stakeholder organisations have, historically, been the main drivers for establishing and maintaining cross-border links. While various funding initiatives (national and EU) have stimulated and sustained bottom-up action, the self-startedness and commitment of community leaders and volunteers has been essential in initiating and steering development. With their local knowledge base and heightened awareness of local needs, this sector has the propensity to focus on particular issues and to operate within narrow geographical and/or sectoral boundaries. Given the many issues facing communities in the mid-1980s when funding supports began to come on stream – through the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), for example - early cross-border cooperation projects frequently tended to be ‘issue-based’. It is only in more recent years as capacity and the level of stakeholder engagement has increased that initiatives have tended to become more strategic in their focus. Cross-border community-based partnerships or initiatives are increasingly being developed on an organic basis - and these are viewed as being more robust, sustainable and effective (Harvey, 2007).

A greater level of commitment is required to initiate cross-border projects due to operational and legislative barriers. Common issues include the short-term nature of funding programmes and business initiatives and the lack of long-term government support. Concerns also exist over the nature of government financial support which presently forces towns and villages in cross-border areas to compete for scarce funds. In addition there is significant apprehension amongst community groups on the future direction and focus of funding programmes such as PEACE III and INTERREG IV. It is feared, particularly within smaller towns and villages along the Border, that this has – and will – result in settlements becoming ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ depending on their ability to secure funding. Therefore, sustained government intervention in Ireland and Northern Ireland in the form of financial and policy support is considered essential for the long-term viability of Border towns and villages, particularly in relation to community capacity building.

Whilst the private sector is often keen for cross-border cooperation to develop, businesses can be restricted with regard to the capacity for involvement, particularly with regard to financial contributions. As a result, their support has often taken the form of ‘in kind’ contributions – such as the use of premises – particularly in more rural areas.

Increasingly, there is a growing awareness of the need to create formal linkages to complement informal connections that in certain instances have existed for decades. To date, there has been a significant level of inter-council working...
occurring informally between local government officers; with barriers to greater collaboration including a lack of formal structures to enable dialogue and also differences in the responsibilities of county councils in Ireland compared with local councils in Northern Ireland. As a result, there tends to be greater levels of formal collaboration along the Border amongst councils within the jurisdiction as compared with cross-jurisdictional working. But increasingly both county councils in the South and local councils in the North are now beginning to formalise existing relationships in an attempt to ensure the growth and development of the wider region. There is an evolving recognition of the interdependency of neighbouring counties, and in some instances, towns.

Active involvement by politicians has evolved in the context of the Peace Process. Prior to the early 1990s those politicians who were most active in cross-border linkages tended to be of a nationalist persuasion and were also active community leaders, as was the case in Lifford-Strabane. With the evolution of the Peace Process, unionist participation in cross-border initiatives has gradually increased but further steps need to be taken to make cross-border structures more inclusive of both political traditions and perspectives - thereby securing greater levels of unionist engagement. In turn, as the case studies in this report suggest, optimum participation leads to more sustained development and greater benefits for all sections of the community.

Across the Irish Border region, dedicated partnerships have been established as a response to the difficulties imposed by the Border. These include three cross-border networks – East Border Region (EBR), Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN), and the North West Region Cross-Border Group (NWRCBG) – which are accredited with making significant contributions to the increasing interactions between local government, the community and voluntary sector and the business sector.

Cross-border cooperation in the Irish Border region is, therefore, multi-faceted; with significant buy-in from across a wide range of stakeholder organisations acknowledged as being critical for nurturing relationships and ensuring effective delivery.

1.4. Terms of Reference

This study by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD), a North-South-US partnership explores the contribution that planning can make to the development and growth of the island of Ireland (see Appendix 1). With the support of the International Fund for Ireland (see Box 1.1), this study is considering the nature and level of connectivity that exists between a number of small cross-border towns and villages (i.e. micro-regions) together with the mutual benefits and success factors for these processes of cooperation and collaboration, including the role of spatial planning. These once thriving Border communities suffered socially and economically during the Troubles, and many would argue that the Border itself was largely responsible for their decline and compounded peripherality.
The Irish Border region covers 11% of the island of Ireland. In 2001/2002 (the last time that the Census of Population for Ireland and Northern Ireland coincided), the population of this region was approximately 523,000; that is 13% of the population living on the island of Ireland. In terms of typology, the OECD-devised typology (1996) when applied to the Border region demonstrates the remoteness and peripherality of this area. This is, in turn, largely supported by the typology developed in NUI Maynooth (McHugh, 2001); the predominant classifications emerging being ‘marginal’ and ‘structurally weak’ with some ‘economic diversification’ (see Figure 1.3).

The issues of connectivity, cooperation and collaboration are being examined in five case study ‘clusters’ in the Irish Border region as part of this research programme; the selection of which was based on their variation in scale, the distances between them and their typology.

The case study areas for this research programme are:

- Lifford-Strabane on the Donegal-Tyrone Border
- Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver on the Leitrim-Fermanagh Border
- Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo on the Leitrim-Cavan-Fermanagh Border
- Clones-Rosslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea on the Monaghan-Fermanagh Border
- Castleblayney-Crossmaglen on the Monaghan-Armagh Border (see Figure 1.4).

Box 1.1: The International Fund for Ireland (IFI)

This unique international organisation with an all-island focus was established in 1986 by the Irish and British governments. Its establishment was the first public acknowledgement that the Irish Border region was a distinct area with special needs. The objectives of the Fund, as outlined in Article 2 of the founding agreement are:

- To promote economic and social development
- To encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout the island of Ireland.

The Fund applies to the six Northern counties and six Border counties in the South. It is administered by an independent board and assisted by a secretariat composed of seconded officials from both governments. Being an independent fund, the monies come from the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the EU.

Funded initiatives include cross-community and cross-border projects across a wide range of issues: for example rural development, tourism programmes, environmental improvements and business enterprise programmes. Flagship projects have included the restoration of the Shannon-Erne Waterway, the development of the Navan Fort / Eamhain Macha Interpretative Centre in Armagh and the regeneration of the co-located cross-border towns of Lifford and Strabane.

The IFI’s new strategy, *Sharing this Space: A Strategic Framework for Action 2006-2010*, outlines the focus of the Fund over its final five years in existence. It represents a shift in emphasis from economic regeneration to social development; that is building respect, tolerance and understanding through addressing weak community infrastructure. As it enters its final phase, the IFI is turning its attention towards its legacy - ensuring that communities are enabled to help themselves into the future.
CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Figure 1.3:
Applying the OECD and NUI Maynooth Typologies to the Irish Border Region

(Source: OECD, 1996)

(Source: Derived from McHugh, 2001)
Figure 1.4: Location of Case Study ‘Clusters’

(Prepared by AIRO, 2008; ©Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland Copyright Permit No. MP006608)
The main objectives of this research programme were to:

- Determine the nature of the relationship linking selected cross-border towns/villages
- Consider the role of the peace process in generating linkages
- Identify the factors associated with successful collaboration
- Identify the ‘potentials’ for connected areas
- Determine if/how connected areas can make more effective use of the supports available
- Review the history & dynamics of the selected connected areas
- Identify best practice in joined-up planning and regeneration in inter-connected cross-border areas, both nationally and traditionally.

1.5. Structure of this Report

Chapter 2 considers the context, main concepts and principles of cross-border cooperation in rural and peri-urban areas. It also considers what is happening throughout Europe in terms of cross-border cooperation between similar ‘micro-regions’.

Chapter 3 maps the impact of Partition, the Troubles and decades of back-to-back policy development on population, employment structure and religion on the island of Ireland using census data from 1991 and 2001/2002.

Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology adopted for this study and explains why a case study approach was favoured.

Chapters 5 to 9 (inclusive) outline the history of cross-border cooperation in each of the five selected case study areas, emphasise the work of one or two organisations in particular which struck the research team as demonstrating an innovative approach to cooperation and collaboration and considers their future in moving forward.

Chapter 10 follows through on the case study approach by considering the experiences of two other cross-border regions which the research team observed based on their proximity to the other case study areas and the ‘perception’ that these areas had been very successful in developing cross-border partnerships and initiatives and drawing down funds to the benefit of all involved.

Chapter 11 considers the activity of cross-border cooperation, its purpose in small border towns and villages and the processes, structures and factors necessary for establishing successful cross-border programmes that address local needs and issues effectively and efficiently.

Chapter 12 puts forward the conclusions emerging from this study and considers the future capacity for cross-border cooperation both among the five case study areas but also along the Irish Border in general.
Defining Cross-Border Cooperation in Small Towns, Villages and Rural Communities

Border areas have often been associated with peripherality and remoteness and have at times been the subject of disputes and tensions between states. In recent years, however, and particularly in the context of European Integration, negative perceptions of borders and of border regions have tended to dissipate; with border areas currently considered amongst the most dynamic and innovative territories in Europe. Increased flows of goods, services and people across state borders, together with greater investments in regional development, have stimulated economic diversification, social progress and cultural renewal.

Frontier areas face considerable challenges in responding to an environment in which they are subject to the increasing influences of globalisation and transnational movements of people, goods and services. Many border regions, particularly those along the external border of the European Union, face specific difficulties associated with low population densities, poor infrastructure, low levels of productivity and limited influence on national decision-making. Rural border areas in peripheral locations have been disadvantaged by the ways in which states have approached planning and the provision of infrastructure and services, as most states have tended to prioritise the centre over the periphery. These challenges are recognised in the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) which sets about promoting territorial cohesion, inter-regional collaboration and balanced spatial development throughout the EU.

This chapter outlines the dominant theoretical perspectives that have influenced the development and underdevelopment of border areas in Europe over the past fifty years. These perspectives have been reflected in policies which, over several decades, have associated border areas – in particular rural border areas – with peripherality and backwardness. Policy approaches up to the 1980s tended to lack a significant spatial dimension; favouring instead a sectoral approach to investment. During the 1980s, policies began to address this deficit by taking on board emerging theories which noted that the lack of spatial differentiation in the formulation and administration of public policy was leading to increased urban agglomeration and further rural peripherality. As a result, regional development has been high on the EU policy agenda for the past two decades; with more recent perspectives emphasising the importance of “micro-regions” in achieving balanced and sustainable territorial development and advocating collaborative governance at the local level. The discussion on evolving theoretical perspectives concludes by referring to the principles that underpin current policies.

The second section of this chapter looks at how current policy instruments are translating into practice in “micro-regions” along Europe’s borders and considers how evolving policy perspectives and instruments, as well as geopolitical factors, have influenced the fortunes of border communities.

5 A term increasingly applied to Border areas; with the term ‘frontier workers’ being applied to those who work on one side of a border and live on the other.
These factors have had progressive impacts on the Irish Border region; leading to the incremental reversal of social and economic decline. Reconnected communities and increased cross-border collaboration are now recognised as being integral to the realisation of territorial competitiveness and sustainable development.

2.1. Theoretical Perspectives on Rural Cross-Border Collaboration

Over the past fifty years, economic theories and perspectives considering cross-border collaboration have increased in number and significance. In his review of rural development theory, Maillat (1997) classifies four generations of territorial development approaches. He outlines how each has come to be superseded by subsequent generations of policies which, in turn, place greater emphasis on the development milieu, endogenous resources and multi-level governance.

2.1.1. First Generation Models

Early economic development theories, such as structural change models (Nurkse, 1953; Lewis, 1955) and modernisation (Rostow, 1960) tended to view rural and geographically peripheral areas as synonymous with underdevelopment. These theories held that in order for societies to develop, there would have to be a movement away from rurally-based activities in favour of urban-based activities; particularly those associated with new technologies and services (Todaro, 1994). The translation of these theories into policy came to be associated with the widespread mechanisation of agriculture, rapid urbanisation, agglomeration, degradation of the rural environment and the decline of services in rural and outlying areas (Hines 2001). Similarly, though less explicitly, the development potential of rural areas occupied a pejorative (weak) position in the centre-periphery theories that were in vogue during much of the 1960s whereby the centres were privileged urban nodes and service providers while the peripheries were subordinates that were rural, politically dependent, economically under-developed and culturally marginal (Rokkan, 1970).

2.1.2. Second and Third Generation Models

‘Second generation’ policies emphasised mobilisation of the entire community, animation of innovation, the development of networks and the stimulation of local entrepreneurship. ‘Third generation’ policies consolidated this approach and promoted linkages between localised endogenous (internal) approaches and exogenous (external) levels. As the case studies presented later in this report show (Chapters 5 through 9), cross-border initiatives tend to be characterised by an endogenous core with inter-institutional interfaces, networks and collaborations. The emergence of second and third generation theories can be framed in the context of a reaction against the excesses of first generation models which promoted economies of scale as the driving force that defined rural space (Marsden et al., 1993; Cloke, 2006). Productivist and econometric theories identified rural areas almost exclusively with agricultural production. During the post-war period in Europe economic theories that emphasised and favoured scale, intensity and technological advancement were applied to agriculture as they were to industry. Marsden (1998) claims that human geographers were generally uninterested in rural development theory and preferred to leave the analysis of
rural space / dynamics to agricultural economists. By the 1980s, the financial and environmental costs associated with the industrialisation of agriculture, as had been vigorously promoted through policy instruments such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), forced a review of productivist approaches to agriculture, gradually ushering in a post-productivist scenario in rural areas.

2.1.3. Fourth Generation Models
The impact of post-productivist restructuring extends beyond the domain of agriculture. The industrial restructuring of the 1980s meant that rural areas could no longer expect to attract branch plants of large industries seeking to move from urban to rural areas in search of cheaper labour supplies. Moreover, national authorities faced fiscal pressures and lacked the resources to promote redistribution between urban and rural areas or between prosperous (central) and lagging (peripheral) regions. The post-Fordist crisis from the late 1970s onwards called for greater emphasis on endogenous approaches to development, and increased spatial differentiation (Todaro, 1994); it became increasingly apparent that rural areas were becoming places of consumption, as well as production, and that the urban-rural dichotomy that had underpinned earlier theories was dissipating (Phillips, 1998). Both theory and practice began to reflect that rural restructuring had a social and cultural basis and that, as a consequence, combinations of market, public, community interests and networks might engage in the process of rural development to affect long-term structural economic, social and cultural change (Izquierdo-Vallina, 2002).

2.1.4. Applying Models to Cross-Border Cooperation
It is in the context of an emerging vision of networks as potential catalysts for development that cross-border partnership structures and partnership-based governance arrangements at regional and micro-regional levels emerged. They offered a means of regulating rural restructuring, enabling territories to overcome the traditional disadvantages associated with peripherality and, as an alternative, promoting rural sites as innovation spaces (Phillips, 1998). By involving the state as a partner in cross-border development, some local initiatives and structures may be described as representing a neo-endogenous model. This model can enable rural areas, and peripheral rural areas in particular, to overcome the problems associated with exclusively endogenous models. However, neo-endogenous approaches raise issues around power relationships and inequalities – as proved to be the case in the micro-regions discussed in this report.

Inter-territorial and cross-border linkages are increasingly recognised as essential elements in economic development policies. However, current theoretical perspectives, which advocate increased emphasis on the territory and collaborative governance, are more easily applied to a rural / peripheral area that is within a state than to an area that transcends inter-state boundaries. In the case of the latter, political considerations weigh heavily and in the context of the Irish Border region, these considerations are especially acute. Up until the late 1980s, policies in most European states tended to emphasise the sectoral over the spatial. However, following the successes of multi-sectoral and area-based approaches during the 1990s (Morgan and Nauwelaers, 2002), regional and local development strategies, based on the optimisation of territorial resources (i.e. assets), have gained increased currency. Central governments have acknowledged that area-based approaches underpinned by devolution and collaborative local governance arrangements foster creativity, entrepreneurship and social cohesion (OECD, 2005). With new generation
regional development policies concurring on the importance of territorial and cross-sectoral collaboration, the transition from representative democracy to multi-sectoral, collaborative and participative governance, so as to promote mutually beneficial economic and social development, requires increased agency engagement in cross-sectoral partnerships.

2.1.5. EU Policy and Spatial Frameworks

The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) represents a spatial strategy for the European Union and many of its provisions and principles have influenced the national and regional spatial strategies of member states. As noted at the start of this chapter, the core aim of the ESDP is to promote balanced and sustainable territorial development and this involves “strengthening structurally weaker areas of the EU and improving, across national borders, living and working conditions of areas with different development levels” (1999:11). Rural areas receive considerable attention within the ESDP; it recognises their diversity and advocates collaboration and exchanges between rural communities, particularly on a cross-border basis. In addition, the ESDP emphasises the importance of “strengthening small and medium sized towns in rural areas as focal points for regional development and the promotion of their networking” (op. cit. 25).

The ESDP recommends three levels of spatial cooperation:

- The Community level (i.e. EU)
- The transnational / national level
- The regional / local level.

It specifies the need for cross-border cooperation at internal frontiers and a number of policy instruments, notably INTERREG, have been strengthened so as to provide resources for inter-territorial collaboration. Ireland’s National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and Northern Ireland’s Regional Development Strategy (RDS) reflect the key principles and main approaches of the ESDP. Both advocate balanced territorial development and emphasise the role of spatial planning in determining sectoral approaches. Moreover, the NSS and RDS make provision for cross-border connectivity. They specify the role of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor and North West Gateway (Letterkenny-Derry/Londonderry link) in driving regional growth and they provide for the development of transport linkages that traverse the Border; thereby increasing the development potential of the Irish Borders many rural areas.

2.2. Cross-Border Cooperation in Rural Micro-Regions – European Perspectives and Experiences.

The overview of evolving theoretical and policy perspectives presented here shows that over recent decades, and particularly over the last fifteen years, the European Union and national and regional governments have become increasingly active in supporting transnational linkages, including collaboration between rural micro-regions in adjoining frontier areas. Initially, regional policy instruments were presented and formulated in the context of enabling peripheral regions to ameliorate the possible negative impacts of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). Current perspectives view the development of micro-regions and inter-regional collaboration as central to the overall balanced and sustainable development of the European territory and Community Initiatives, such as
INTERREG and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), provide direct support for cross-border structures and initiatives (see Figure 2.1).

While the scales of many INTERREG projects extend beyond that of micro-regions, and projects often involve city-regions and extensive territories in a number of countries, the examples presented below (see Table 2.1) represent a small cross-section of funded collaborative projects in rural micro-regions (see also Appendix 2). An example of an inter-regional project covering extensive rural and peripheral areas is that which brings together seven Italian regions and the autonomous community of Murcia in Spain. This has involved putting small towns online to prevent marginalisation; the main tool being the establishment of IT Access Gates through which local citizens can access legal, taxation and trade union services and engage in teleworking. It also involves tourism marketing, education and vocational training. Each of the projects presented contribute to regional development in Europe and signify EU and national support for interventions at the level of the micro-region which are based on collaborative governance.

Table 2.1: Sample INTERREG Projects in Rural Border Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location / Actors</th>
<th>Promoter / Local Entity</th>
<th>Thematic Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region of Murcia (Spain) Sardinia, Sicily, Basilicata, Liguria, Lacio, Umbria and Val d’Aosta (Italy)</td>
<td>Regione Umbria</td>
<td>Recognising role of ICT in access to information. Focusing on areas located away from major urban centres. Objective of setting up IT access gates for consultation and online assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Val d’Aosta (Italy), Espace nature Mont Blanc (France) Cantononne Valais (Switzerland)</td>
<td>Conférence transfrontalière Espace Mont Blanc</td>
<td>Development of fifty cross-border hiking trails in the most rural areas. Joint / Single Rescue Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss and German communities around Lake Constance (Der Bodensee)</td>
<td>Technische Hochschule (Zurich) and University of Hohenheim (Ravensburg)</td>
<td>Improvements in water quality and a reduction in leaching of agricultural waste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lapland (Finland) Nordbotten (Sweden) Nordland, Troms and Finnmark (Norway)</td>
<td>Reklanbyra AB (Lulea) Jabba Oy (Rovaneimi) and Media Okonomi AS (Bodo)</td>
<td>Inter-firm networking using ICT. A regional business incubator. Network of public relations and communication services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zarfa, Extremadura (Spain) Beja, Alentejo (Portugal)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Joint Agricultural (cattle and local produce) fair.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: DG Regio, European Commission, 2002)

In Central and Eastern Europe, where the delineation of borders has tended to be more contested than in Western Europe, many fine examples of cross-border collaboration are emerging. The Giurgiu Region (Romania) and Rousse District (Bulgaria) have been characterised by several decades of rural decline, an underdeveloped infrastructure, a lack of agricultural markets, high unemployment and the absence of a local development strategy. In response, local authority and civil society representatives have come together to forge a cross-border network with the aim of promoting sustainable rural development. To date, this network has
CHAPTER 2: Defining Cross-Border Cooperation in Small Towns, Villages and Rural Communities

Figure 2.1: Eligible Areas for Cross-Border Cooperation Funding, 2007-2013

(Source: DG Regio, European Commission, 2007)
organised institutional training, initiated product development and marketing and has facilitated exchanges of good practice between local authorities. In the case of Romania and Hungary, areas along the border have, in the past, been the subject of rival claims by both countries. Frontier areas, particularly in Romania, have suffered from centralised approaches to planning and development which have exacerbated the degree of peripherality experienced by many rural communities. In examining planning and regional development approaches in both Romania and Hungary since the fall of socialism, Nagy and Turnock (2000) observe that little investment trickles down to small towns and villages, and that rural areas need to improve inter-community (inter-village) networking. They advocate partnerships between villages which involve government and non-governmental bodies in highlighting territorial potential, developing local capacity and encouraging external investment. Despite the historical legacies of the border between Hungary and Romania, tangible steps have been taken to promote integrated rural development with benefits for communities in both countries. Similar steps have been taken along the Russia-Estonia border where communities have been putting aside ethnic tensions and historical legacies in order to promote economic diversification and improve access to services on a cross-border basis (see Appendix 2).

Cross-border collaboration between adjoining small towns, villages and rural communities in Ireland and Northern Ireland is not, therefore, unique. All over Europe, rural communities are actively involved in ensuring that the historical disadvantages frequently associated with frontier peripherality are converted into new opportunities for sustainable development. There are many parallels between the experiences of the Irish Border region and those elsewhere in Europe and these point to the merits of pursuing multi-sectoral and area-based approaches to collaborative governance.

### 2.3. Policies, Practices and Processes in Ireland and Northern Ireland

Communities along the Irish Border exhibit many of the characteristics associated with peripheral rural communities in other states; and many cross-border projects on the island of Ireland have a similar focus to those promoted across other European frontiers, as referred to in the previous section. Communities in border areas frequently have to deal with the consequences of having a narrow economic base, poor infrastructure, limited access to services and a weak demographic profile (see Chapter 3). In recent years, however, these communities have come to be characterised by cross-border innovations in rural development that have improved the quality of life for local citizens, created new economic and social opportunities, promoted environmental conservation and renewed cultural expression. The remainder of this section tracks how communities along the Irish Border have travelled a trajectory over the past fifteen years that has seen a huge transformation in local dynamics and in relations between both parts of the island.

#### 2.3.1. Disconnect and Decline along the Irish Border

The island of Ireland is, in per capita terms, the single biggest beneficiary of EU structural and cohesion funds to date. Since the 1980s, EU regional policy has sought to enable regions that were defined as ‘lagging’ or peripheral to attain a level of development on a par with most of the rest of the Union. Ireland qualified for the highest tier of EU funds, having been designated as an Objective I region. This designation was based on the fact that Ireland – North and South – had a per-
capita income that was below 75% of the EU average. Furthermore, the island of Ireland’s peripheral location and poor infrastructure meant that in the advent of EMU, economic disparities with the rest of the EU could increase - and such a scenario would run contrary to territorial cohesion objectives.

For the purposes of allocating structural cohesion funds, the EU treated the island of Ireland as a single Objective I area. While this approach helped to increase the level of funding which the island received, it did not take into account internal disparities. It was not until 1999, when the Republic of Ireland as a whole no longer qualified for Objective I, that the Irish authorities looked at internal disparities and regional dynamics. This process, which involved the Republic’s eight regional authorities, revealed that the counties along the Border with Northern Ireland (Donegal, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth) had higher levels of deprivation and a weaker economic base than the other regions in the State. This Border region shared many of the characteristics of the West of Ireland and the Midlands; in that all three regions suffered from relatively low levels of income, poor connectivity and limited economic diversification. The problems of the Border were further compounded by its peripherality, a disconnect from adjoining areas in Northern Ireland and from a spill-over of the political and security situation there.

Figures 2.2 seeks to capture the main features and characteristics of the Border disconnect, and the ways in which this has produced and re-enforced decline and stagnation. The model lists negative factors associated with the Border under four broad headings – economic, socio-cultural, institutional and political – and the decline in respect of these may be termed ‘The Border Effect’. The advent of the Border in 1921 divided communities that were once connected and had interacted with one another for generations (i.e. natural hinterlands). The construction of customs and excise posts at crossing-points along the Border, while not restricting the movement of persons or discouraging travel or interaction between individuals or bodies in both jurisdictions, represented an outward manifestation of the emergence of two states with differing systems in local government, policing, taxation, education, health and public services generally (Harvey et al, 2005).

Following Partition, rural areas on both sides of the Irish Border found themselves increasingly peripheral in their respective states. Distance from Belfast and Dublin, and from other areas of growth, arrested their development and increased their dependence on agriculture. The gradual withdrawal of public services, and in particular the closure of railways, compounded this peripherality and disconnect. The Troubles, between the late 1960s and the early 1990s, deepened the physical, social and political divide between North and South. Areas along the Border suffered from military and paramilitary incursions and violent attacks on property, civilians and the security forces.
CHAPTER 2: Defining Cross-Border Cooperation in Small Towns, Villages and Rural Communities

Figure 2.2: Cross Border Collaboration: Processes, Features and Impacts
CHAPTER 2: Defining Cross-Border Cooperation in Small Towns, Villages and Rural Communities

As a result, sectarian tensions increased and intra- and inter-community contacts waned and friendships and social contacts declined. Increased security and the associated road closures, the fear of paramilitarism and a distrust of ‘the other side’ meant that during the three decades of the Troubles, cross-border contacts were at their lowest level ever. The only structured attempts at cross-border collaboration were those remaining from before Partition and those promoted by peace organisations and by some community leaders during the Troubles. Thus, in many communities along the Border a generation grew-up for whom crossing the Border and associating with those in the other jurisdiction was something they simply did not do. Due to the military, paramilitary and security factors associated with it, the Irish Border has had a detrimental effect on communities and citizens. It has reduced their quality of life and it has retarded regional development. The Border, which was initially a dividing line between two jurisdictions has become much more. It has defined and shaped mindsets, approaches, practices, perceptions, outlooks and degrees of development and underdevelopment.

2.3.2. The Border Effect – Compounding the Disconnect and Peripherality

In economic terms, the Border has had significant negative consequences. The severing of towns from their rural hinterlands reduced their customer base and propelled economic decline. Thus, many of the towns and villages in this study have experienced large-scale business closures. Few new businesses were opened and Border towns and villages gradually lost business to the larger urban centres. With opportunities for economic development reduced, these frontier areas experienced considerable out-migration resulting in a weakened demographic profile. As the case studies (Chapters 5 to 9) show, these features manifested themselves in different ways and with varying levels of intensity.

Economic decline was accompanied by socio-cultural decline, with communities experiencing disruptions to contacts and networks, some sectarian tensions (in mixed areas), attacks on community facilities and a general reduction in cross-border travel and contact. The disconnect between communities on both sides of the Irish Border was more pronounced than was the case in any other border area in Europe; so much so that by the early 1990s, the Border region was among the most disadvantaged in the EU.

At the same time, however, the EU had begun to place increased emphasis on regional development. Reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) were underway and budgetary changes had been introduced. This allowed for additional investment in lagging rural areas. The completion of the Internal Market in 1993 and the Maastricht provisions for EMU meant that internal EU borders were increasingly irrelevant and were being diluted. Customs posts on the Irish Border disappeared and business linkages between Ireland and Northern Ireland became more feasible.

In addition to European-induced changes, positive political developments were beginning to emerge on the island of Ireland. The first paramilitary ceasefire in 1994 and the subsequent Peace Process led to the removal of security checkpoints along the Border. The Peace Process also enabled the roll-out of local development initiatives, such as those promoted by Area Development Management / Combat Poverty Agency (ADM/CPA) - now Border Action - and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI). These brought about considerable improvements in local infrastructure, created new economic activities and generated employment. In addition, they nurtured improved intra- and inter-community relations and enhanced the capacity of local communities and the leaders of civil society to initiate and lead...
development. The Belfast / Good Friday Agreement and the resulting formation of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) copper-fastened government support for cross-border collaboration and led to considerable investment in improving cross-border infrastructure and connectivity. The ESDP and subsequent spatial strategies North and South – the **Regional Development Strategy** and the **National Spatial Strategy** – emphasised the importance of cross-border collaboration, and committed authorities on both sides of the Border to the development and promotion of collaborative spatial planning. Cross-border networks involving local councils from both jurisdictions, such as ICBAN (Irish Central Border Area Network), have emerged in order to ensure North-South collaboration in the areas of spatial planning and local governance; while InterTradeIreland has advanced the development of the all-island economy. Thus, as Figure 2.2 demonstrates, cross-border collaboration is characterised by a strong endogenous drive and is supported by institutional support from both jurisdictions.

### 2.3.3. Being Border Effective – Promoting Connectivity, Cooperation and Collaboration

The positive local and institutional contexts that have evolved over the past ten years have enabled actors in adjoining towns, villages and rural communities to come together in collaborative cross-border arrangements. The following matrix (Table 2.2) provides a summary / overview of the levels of connectivity that have been achieved by communities in border areas, both in Ireland and in other parts of the EU. The matrix suggests a hierarchy in terms of the levels of interaction that can be realised. Lower levels are associated with physical infrastructure. Medium levels are associated with the emergence of collaborative structures and platforms that enable actors from different jurisdictions to come together formally and informally to pursue common goals. The optimum levels are achieved when stakeholders on both sides of a border pursue an agreed common agenda through mutual, broadly-based and representative structures which enjoy mainstream support and are characterised by their ability to implement strategies and programmes based on an agreed territorial vision. As the matrix shows, the higher the level of interaction, the greater the mutual benefits.

The case studies presented in this report provide an opportunity and an arena in which one can take stock of the levels of cross-border collaboration that have been realised on the island of Ireland in the past twenty-five years. In some cases, high levels of collaboration have crystallised, while in other areas cross-border linkages are only now slowly getting off the ground. Significant challenges stand in the way of full cross-border collaboration and this report explores how such obstacles can be overcome. Above all, this report profiles and highlights the benefits that accrue from cross-border collaboration and the examples presented here demonstrate how cross-border collaboration delivers territorial competitiveness and regional development. It is envisaged that the case studies will provide insights into:

- The varying types of connectivity that have emerged along the Irish Border
- The impacts of this connectivity and the extent of mutual benefits for participating micro-regions
- The specifics and dynamics of cross-border collaboration in respect of small towns, villages and rural townlands
- The factors that contribute to and sustain cross-border linkages and collaboration at the micro-level.
### Table 2.2: Achieving, Progressing and Building-On Connectivity between Small Towns, Villages and Rural Communities along the Border

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Drivers</th>
<th>Governance Arrangements</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Collaboration &amp; Networking</td>
<td>Joint Bodies with area-based cross-sectoral remit and focus, whose membership is reflective of both communities and a range of stakeholders. Emergence of strategic plans with multi-agency buy-in.</td>
<td>Community and voluntary groups. Local government Local development sector. Border Action ICBAN etc.</td>
<td>Integrated partnerships.</td>
<td>Investment in and marketing of territorial resources. Increased employment and outputs.</td>
<td>Promoting and encouraging innovation. Progressing from trend planning to vision planning. Enforcing exogenous buy-in and commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Integration</td>
<td>Outreaching and mainstreaming so that piloted and short-term initiatives are strengthened and secured. Multi-Annual, Area-Based, Vision-Planning</td>
<td>Top-down and bottom-up organisations (coming together).</td>
<td>Integrated partnerships with mainstream support and security of funding.</td>
<td>Attraction of inward investment. Optimisation of local potential.</td>
<td>Sustaining development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mapping Characteristics of the Irish Border Region

As noted in Chapter 1, the Irish Border region experiences considerable structural challenges. These include demographic weaknesses (in particular an ageing population), low population densities, a weak urban network, limited connectivity, poor quality public services, high unemployment / under-employment and low educational attainment. Together, these factors have implications for the type of employment available locally and the attractiveness of the region to potential investors. Addressing these deficits is dependent on recognising and tapping into assets, opportunities and potential at the local, county and regional levels; and this can best be achieved through greater collaboration and joint programmes of action on a North/South basis. The effectiveness of such a collaborative approach, however, is determined by the extent and quality of the evidence-base on which action programmes and policy are based. Where a detailed and accurate evidence-base is in place, it becomes more possible to demonstrate the ‘real extent’ of the issues that border communities face on a day-to-day basis, thereby enabling the formulation of strategies and actions that are rooted in local needs and are best suited to local conditions and the optimisation of local and regional development potential.

Through the work of the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO), based in NUI Maynooth, we are growing the possibilities for mapping the implications of policy emanating from both jurisdictions (see [www.airo.ie](http://www.airo.ie)). AIRO began as a pilot cross-border spatial data project, the aim of which was to provide reliable cross-border information through the collection, analysis and mapping of data relevant to the region. It aimed to act as a spatial, social and economic databank resource for community, public and private bodies. Since late 2007, AIRO is being funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) under Cycle 4 of the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutes (PRTLI 4) and now focuses on the entire island of Ireland from a local to a regional perspective. As a research unit and interactive spatial data portal, AIRO acts as a single point of access to a wide variety of spatial data and information about the various regions of the island of Ireland, and it collects, analyses and provides evidence that can be used to support policy- and decision-making.

This chapter highlights the impact of the Border, the Troubles and decades of back-to-back policy development on the towns, villages and communities of the Irish Border region through mapping the current situation in both jurisdictions – based on the Census of Population of 2001 for Northern Ireland and 2002 for Ireland. In particular, the maps focus on the demographic, employment and labour force participation challenges facing the Irish Border region currently. These issues will have to be addressed as the region moves to build on its potentiality and achieve balanced and sustainable regional and territorial development.
These maps reveal considerable demographic weaknesses throughout much of Northern Ireland, relative to the island as a whole. Low-levels of persons in the 15 to 24 year old age cohort are indicative of an inability to sustain current population levels. Along the Irish Border corridor, the areas with the lowest proportions of young people are mostly in Northern Ireland, notably in West Tyrone and West Fermanagh. In the South, North Leitrim and parts of West Cavan also have low levels of persons aged 15 to 24 years. In contrast, most of County Monaghan, North
Louth and East Donegal have more vibrant young populations. Districts in the west and north-west are more likely to have an older population than are areas in the east and south-east of Ireland. The areas with the highest proportions of older people include Greater Belfast, North Mayo, North Roscommon, West Donegal and areas along the Border, particularly in West Fermanagh, North Leitrim and West Cavan. These communities generally have the lowest levels of connectivity and the poorest public services of any areas along the Border, and are consequently experiencing severe demographic weaknesses.

Figure 3.2: Population Density – Number of persons per square kilometre at ED level (RoI) and Ward level (NI), 2001/02

These maps emphasise the rural character of the Irish Border corridor. They reveal that population decline, associated with rurality and peripherality, is a significant challenge for border areas, particularly those of West Cavan, West Tyrone, South and East Donegal and parts of Monaghan and Leitrim.
Figure 3.3: Commuting Distances – Persons travelling over 16km / 10miles (one way) to work, school or college as proportion of total persons travelling to work, school or college at ED level (RoI) and Ward level (NI), 2001/02

Commuting distances tend to be longer in the South than in the North, with significant numbers travelling to the major cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway. Due to its peripherality, the Irish Border corridor has not been able to avail of the growth in urban-based employment opportunities that have occurred since the early 1990s. As the maps show, the only areas that have been so affected are West Cavan and parts of North Leitrim, from where commuting to Sligo is feasible. Within Northern Ireland, shorter commuting distances are associated with a better-developed network of urban centres relative to the Republic.
Rural areas in the Republic of Ireland generally have a greater dependence on agriculture than do rural areas in Northern Ireland. This is due in part to the presence of larger farms in the North (therefore, fewer farmers), but can also be attributed to the wider economic base which exists in rural Northern Ireland, relative to the South. As the maps show, the dependence on agriculture is highest in central areas – from Monaghan through to North Leitrim - with the lowest levels
of engagement in agriculture being in the more urbanised districts i.e. close to Newry-Dundalk and the City of Derry. The maps also highlight that agricultural employment has contracted very considerably on both parts of the island since 1991. While this can be attributed in part to the expansion of other sectors of the economy, the absolute decline in agriculture represents a very significant challenge for rural areas on both sides of the Irish Border; with the central border area likely to be most affected by rural restructuring and agricultural decline over the coming years.

Figure 3.5: Commercial Employment – Persons employed in commerce as a proportion of all employees at ED level (RoI) and Ward level (NI), 2001/02

The map shows a very clear spatial pattern, with employment in the commercial sector being much more prevalent in and around the urban centres of Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Limerick than in other parts of the island. Northern Ireland’s strong network of middle-tier towns has succeeded in enabling the development of commercial activities over a relatively wider area than is the case in the South. Thus, along the Irish Border corridor, the proportion of the workforce employed in commerce is notably higher in Northern Ireland, with a small number of exceptions (mainly centred on Dundalk).
Figure 3.6: Unemployment – Unemployed persons as a proportion of the total workforce at ED level (RoI) and Ward level (Ni), 2001/02

The map clearly shows that the highest rates of unemployment on the island of Ireland are in the North West - in counties Donegal and Mayo, and along the Border. Within the study area (the Border corridor), rates are noticeably higher in the west than in the centre and east, with East Donegal and West Cavan having the highest unemployment rates of all Border districts. The towns of Clones and Castleblayney also emerge as having rates of unemployment that are considerably above the national and regional averages.
The highest rates of labour force participation are in the Greater Belfast Area. Outside of there, participation rates are generally similar throughout the island – ranging between 60% and 70% in most districts. Along the Irish Border corridor, three areas emerge as having levels of labour force participation that are considerably below the island-average. These are West Cavan, rural West Tyrone and South Armagh, including the town of Crossmaglen and the village of Cullaville.
The figures for 2001 / 2002 contrast considerably with those for 1991. The maps based on the 1991 figures for labour force participation show a marked difference between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In 1991, participation rates were notably higher in the North, and especially in more urbanised parts. Since 1991 however, the growth of the Southern economy has redressed the North-South disparity, but some rural areas along the Border continue to lag behind the rest of the island.

**Figure 3.8:** Religious Affiliation – Percentage of population affiliated to Catholic and Protestant and other denominations as a percentage of total persons at ED level (RoI) and Ward level (NI), 2001/02
The maps show that in the Republic of Ireland the vast majority of people are affiliated to the Catholic Church. Catholics represent about 45% of the population in Northern Ireland, but Catholics represent the majority population in West Belfast, Moyle (North Antrim), Mid-Ulster, Derry, South Down and South Armagh. They constitute the religious majority along most of the Irish Border corridor. On the Northern side of the Border, towns such as Crossmaglen and Strabane, and the villages of Garrison, Cashel/Scribbagh, Rosslea and Newtownbutler are overwhelmingly Catholic; thus giving them cultural and social ties with communities in the South.

Members of the various Protestant churches are heavily concentrated in the north-east of the Island, notably in North Down, South Antrim, North Armagh and along the Lower Bann. They account for the minority of the population in most of the case study areas, with the exceptions of some rural parts of Strabane District and parts of North Fermanagh. As the map of the Irish Border corridor shows, some pockets with majority Protestant populations exist immediately along the Border - but all are on the Northern side.
Research Design

In the context of territorial governance, regions and locales are emerging as significant policy and development arenas. Development strategies that focus on the locale or micro-region have particular advantages over traditional top-down, sectoral approaches. Local development is characterised by having the flexibility to ensure that the varying and specific needs of territories are taken into account in strategic planning. It also involves targeting resources at areas with particular needs, stimulating latent or other resources that may not have been recognised by large-scale interventions and mobilising local citizens to input into the development process so that interventions respond to identified local needs; thus maximising the capacity for unleashing an area’s development potential.

This chapter of the report summarises the methodology employed by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) research team as part of the case-study approach adopted. The key research question being addressed throughout this study was:

What is the current level of connectivity, (leading to mutual benefits) and future ‘potentiality’ between the selected small cross-border connected towns and villages? And can this be enhanced through collaborative spatial planning?

The methodology, as applied, involved selecting the case study areas, devising a survey instrument in the form of a questionnaire, conducting a number of one-to-one-interviews in each of the case study areas, and holding a series of focused workshops. The methodology employed was purposely flexible and pliable; thus meaning that as the research programme progressed both in terms of its roll-out and time, each step of the methodology employed could be – and was – revisited to ensure it was appropriate to the direction of the study and supported the objectives of that phase of the research.

4.1. Selecting the Case Study Areas

In consultation with the ICLRD partners and the Steering and Advisory Committees, it was determined that this research programme should focus on five cross-border case study areas which would span the length of the Irish Border. As outlined in Table 4.1., several options were tabled for consideration.
The final selection was based on a number of criteria including the scale of the cross-border settlement cluster, the distance between the settlements in each cluster, their typology (see Chapter 1) and their function / role within the wider settlement hierarchy. Based on this analysis, the case study areas selected were as follows:

1. Lifford-Strabane
2. Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver
3. Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo
4. Clones-Rosslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea
5. Castleblayney-Crossmaglen.

4.2. Phase I: Examining the Level of Connectivity

This research programme was rolled-out over two distinct phases:

- Phase I focusing on the level of connectivity between the selected cross-border towns and villages
- Phase II focusing on communities becoming ‘border effective’ and untapping their identified ‘potentiality’.

Phase I of this research was carried out over the period June to September 2007 and its purpose was to examine the level of connectivity between the selected cross-border connected towns and villages. Through this Phase of the research programme, the objectives of (a) reviewing the history and dynamics of the selected cross-border areas, (b) determining the nature of the relationship linking the selected areas, and (c) identifying the factors associated with successful collaboration, were met.

4.2.1. Designing the Survey Instrument

From the outset, the research team were aware that it would not be possible to consider the potentiality of the selected case study areas without first considering
their historic and current patterns of connectivity. The survey instrument (see Appendix 3) was designed therefore to consider the past, the present and the future in terms of cross-border cooperation and collaboration. Through this questionnaire, the research team was able to quickly establish in what direction and at what scale the border towns and villages were making connections; the focus of these connections; the ‘drivers’ behind these connections; and whether they were natural / spontaneous linkages or planned / artificial.

4.2.2. Face-to-Face Interviews
The purpose of the survey instrument was to steer the discussions with each of the interviewees on the level and focus of local connectivity and complementarity – historically and currently – and to elicit their views on future cross-border cooperation and collaboration. During the summer months of 2007, the research team met with over 80 people – an average of 14 persons per micro-region. Interviewees included representatives of local government, the community and voluntary sector, private sector, public service providers, dedicated cross-border agencies and funding bodies (see Appendix 4). Through these meetings, the research team was able to ascertain the type of connections taking place; whether there was funding involved (which in turn had implications for their lifespan); and the benefits and challenges that result from engaging in such cross-border cooperation and collaboration.

4.2.3. Analysis and Feedback
With each of the case study areas being at a different stage in their evolution, it became clear from an early stage in the study that the potential existed for each of the cross-border clusters to learn from each other. In particular, this opportunity for ‘cross-learning’ emerged strongly from the analysis of the face-to-face interviews. The analysis of the survey instrument and the face-to-face interview responses also clearly highlighted that the selected case study areas – and the Irish Border region in general - were an active arena for cross-border cooperation and collaboration. In turn, this reiterated that each of the case study areas is unique in that the cooperation and collaboration that has taken – or it taking – place has tended to take many forms, have various objectives (primarily short-term in nature), use a variety of delivery methods, comprise different partnerships in terms of make-up and numbers involved, and for the most part be part- or wholly-funded.
4.3. Phase II: Making Communities Border Effective

The focus of Phase II was to consider how the selected cross-border case study areas could become more ‘border effective’. In the context of a changing funding environment, future cross-border cooperation, both in terms of the ‘who’ and the ‘how’, must be based on real local needs where the Border itself is not seen as an impediment. A two-pronged methodology was applied to this Phase: that of field study and desk-based research with a primary focus on policy and vision planning. During Phase II, which covered the period October 2007 – February 2008, the research team probed deeper into each of the study areas to:

- Quantify the levels of connectivity / cooperation that have taken, or are taking, place
- Examine examples, or elements, of good practice in cross-border connectivity / cooperation within the selected small cross-border towns and villages
- Identify the components of connectivity / cooperation which are achieving success in the Irish Border region and analyse their transferability with other border regions.

Phase II was, therefore, concerned with a further and more detailed examination of the concepts of connectivity and cooperation leading to collaboration in the Irish Border region.

4.3.1. Developing the research tools

A key aspect of the field study, which was rolled out in late 2007 / early 2008, was to work with representatives from the selected Border towns and villages, through a series of workshops, on increasing their understanding of how they could construct a new future based on current and potential growth sectors. The research team devised a series of research tools which would allow local stakeholders to consider:

- What is cross-border cooperation?
- What is the role of funding in cross-border collaboration?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of their micro-region in terms of future collaboration and cooperation?
- What is the areas’ connectivity potential?

This template was employed for each workshop and it allowed the research team to gather an inordinate amount of comparable information and data on the respective case study clusters. This in turn facilitated the research team in analysing the current levels of connectivity and cooperation, including considering the role of funding in cross-border collaboration, determining each areas’ strengths and weaknesses and the impact of same on future collaboration.

4.3.2. Workshops

During November 2007 and January 2008, a half-day workshop was organised for each cross-border cluster (see Table 4.2). Each workshop was attended by approximately 20 stakeholders representing local government, community development agencies, funding bodies and public service providers from both sides of the Border.
Each workshop was broken into three sections:

- Presentation of findings emerging from Phase I, with a particular emphasis on how these relate to the cross-border area in question
- Session focusing on cross-border cooperation i.e. what is cross-border cooperation and collaboration? And how does this definition compare with how it is implemented on the ground in these communities?
- Session focusing on the areas’ capacity for future collaboration and cooperation including the areas’ strengths and weaknesses, its vision for the future and the potential focus of future collaborative efforts.

### 4.4. Conclusion

In designing the research methodology for this study, it was essential that the emphasis be put on the selected case study areas so that ‘what’ is happening in these communities, ‘who’ is driving the activity, ‘how’ is it being resourced, and ‘why’ is the focus going in this particular direction could be determined. The focus was very much on people, place and space rather than sector. The methodology applied in both phases of the research put the community at the centre of the research - and it is worth noting that such was the enthusiasm for this research programme that when word of the study circulated within the respective case study areas, members of the team were often contacted by individuals / organisations asking that they be met with and interviewed! As a result of it being part-funded by the Irish Government, the research became equated with a renewed interest in ‘the rural’ at government level and that these peripheral communities – albeit to varying extents – had not lost out to the designated Gateways and Hubs as it had been widely feared.
The methodology also reflects the case-study nature of this research – through its design, it has extracted a significant amount of information on each cross-border cluster and its cross-border links over a short timeframe. As will be revealed in Chapters 5 through 10, it demonstrates the consensus across the different stakeholder groups of the need for cross-border cooperation and collaboration that is long-term in its vision and which is based on an identified local need.

The case studies presented in this report provide insights into local governance arrangements and micro-regional strategies in five distinct areas along the Irish Border. While it is not the purpose of the case studies to evaluate activities, the accounts that are presented successfully capture many of the features, processes, successes and challenges associated with territorial approaches in a border context. In addition, they demonstrate:

- The impacts of various policy instruments
- The responses that have emerged at local level to border conditions and experiences
- The roles played by actors from civil society, the productive sector, local government and the state sector in developing border areas and in engaging in cross-border collaboration
- The extent of collaborative approaches to local governance
- The levels and degrees of collaboration achieved
- The mutual benefits delivered and the extent of these benefits
- The factors that contribute to successful cross-border collaboration
- Innovations and good practice in cross-border collaboration.
part 2 the case studies
Cross-Border Cooperation in Lifford-Strabane and Surrounds

The Northwest part of the island of Ireland is a distinct region. It is characterised by a unique landscape, a distinctive culture, and a peripherality that has in some ways made it an insular and inward-looking region. Being remote from the capital cities of Dublin and Belfast, the region has long relied on itself for its survival. A large number of towns and villages in the region have, over the years, developed strong links with each other on a cross-border basis – and this has been mainly community driven; albeit for economic reasons.

This chapter focuses on the towns of Lifford and Strabane which lie right on the Border between counties Donegal and Tyrone (see Figure 5.1). Less than 1km apart, both towns grew as a result of their strategic position as a ‘gateway’ linking Ireland and Northern Ireland. Both counties are essentially rural in character – and therefore face similar challenges around rural restructuring and diversification. In recognition of these common traits and challenges, a wide range of organisations in this border area – community, local government, health – have been working together on a cross-border basis, albeit to varying degrees, for many years.
Initially, much of this cooperation would have been on an informal basis; for while there was a recognition of the need for a more formalised and integrated approach on a cross-jurisdictional and cross-agency basis, the commitment and necessary resources to make this a reality have not always been in place. And there are many reasons for this; for example

- The existence of a mental barrier to cooperation (the result of years of sectarian tensions\(^\text{11}\))
- The perception – and reality – that both counties, specifically their respective larger towns and various sectoral interests, were in competition with each other, particularly in trying to attract investment and new businesses.

However, with the cessation of violence and the opening up of the Border in 1994 – thus facilitating free movement again – together with the increased understanding of the value, and need for, cross-border partnerships, the number, scale and focus of cross-border initiatives is on the rise. And more importantly, these cross-border relationships are being formalised, are widening their stakeholder base, and are looking to the future.

5.1. Context: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

Strabane, with a population in 2001 of nearly 13,500 people (NISRA, 2001\(^\text{12}\)), is by far the largest town being examined as part of this research programme. Located in County Tyrone, it was a significant market town and one of the main shopping and industrial employment centres in this border area prior to the Troubles. However, the onset of the Troubles, together with the global economic downturn, resulted in the fortunes of the area going into ‘freefall’. In the mid-1980s’ the town centre was decimated and major industries, notably textiles and food processing, had experienced a steep decline. By 1991, Strabane had become an unemployment ‘black-spot’ with a 28% unemployment rate. Since then, however, the town of Strabane has benefited from major regeneration and economic development initiatives; for example Strabane 2000\(^\text{13}\). The town’s population is growing steadily; the area now has a higher than average population under 16 years of age. This bodes well for future development in the areas of housing and enhanced service provision. In economic development terms, there has been a shift towards services, although manufacturing still remains an important sector of employment (23% in 2001). However, the unemployment rate has remained significantly above the national average (10% in 2001) - as has the number of persons that are recorded as permanently sick or disabled.

The County Donegal town of Lifford, with a population of 1,448, is much smaller in size than Strabane. The main employers in the area were – and remain – Donegal County Council, the local military barracks and the manufacturing sector; with farming also playing a large role in the local economy up until the 1970s. As was the case in Strabane, the Troubles brought economic decline and employment loss to the area. Its role as the administrative centre for the County was nearly lost to the

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11 As noted in the draft North West Gateway Initiative (January 2008), the North West was a focal point for cross-border conflict during the Troubles.
12 For Area Profile of Strabane, see http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk/mapxtreme_towns/report.asp?SettlementName=Strabane&bandName=Medium%20Town, downloaded on 7th July 2008.
13 Established in 1998; see Section 5.1.3 for further details.

"THE TOWN with the highest unemployment in Europe and the highest birthrate, with the most broken marriages in Ireland, the most bombs – more than 200 – and the biggest consumption of legally prescribed drugs: this is the sad picture of Strabane"

Irish Times, 2 August 1976
Troubles – with the extent of the physical and economic decline of the area, together with the tensions caused by border patrols, leading Donegal County Council to consider its geographical position. While the Council remained, a number of other public sector employers have relocated to other parts of the county – the North Western Health Board, Teagasc, the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and the County Library Headquarters. Lifford’s fortunes are, however, turning – albeit slowly; new business units have been constructed in the area, there has been huge private investment in the local greyhound track which is drawing large numbers to the region every weekend, and in recent years, a number of large housing developments have taken place – thus boosting the local population. These private sector ventures have not yet been matched by public investment – the town’s proximity to Strabane, together with the economic uncertainties resulting from fluctuating exchange rates and differing tax levels, has meant that the area has lost out to the rapidly expanding ‘Gateway’ of Letterkenny and the twin towns of Ballybofey/Stranorlar. Being much smaller in scale, Lifford remains challenged in terms of defining an identity (outside of administrative centre) and niche that will attract potential investors and businesses.

Today, there are strong ties between families living on both sides of the Border in this area, particularly for nationalist families. This is largely the result of a Catholic migration from North to South during the height of the Troubles. Cross-border movement between both towns at present is mainly accounted for by retail (to Strabane), petrol (to Lifford), leisure and recreation (two-way flow – with fitness centres in Strabane and the cineplex in Lifford), and socialising (again a two-way flow with restaurants in Strabane and greyhound racing in Lifford).

5.1.1. The Issues

Today – and in the past – the towns of Lifford and Strabane were a natural economic hinterland for each other. This, however, was not the case during the Troubles. During this thirty-year period, there was limited movement of people or goods between both settlements; and as a result the economic fortunes of both towns went into decline. With the closure of businesses, the unemployment rate in both towns rose. From the late 1970s right until the mid-1990s, Strabane had the unfortunate accolade of having the highest unemployment rate in Northern Ireland. In relation to service provision and access (see Table 5.1), the research team have been made aware of a number of persistent deficits affecting both communities – despite their close proximity:

- A letter posted in one town usually takes four to five days to reach the other
- There is a lack of cross-border transport services – and those that do exist are not time efficient
- Broadband connectivity is limited.

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14 A designated ‘gateway’ in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), the population of Letterkenny grew by almost 20% between 2002-2006.
15 For example, the shortest possible travel time by bus between Lifford and Castlederg, a distance of 21km – and using the public transport providers, Bus Eireann and Ulsterbus – is 1 hour and 49 minutes.
In the areas of health and, until recently fire emergency services, Strabane was unable to provide services to Lifford; rather these would have had to come from Letterkenny or Ballybofey (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3). In terms of youth and youth development, key challenges facing both towns remains their higher than average early school-leaving rates. Within Lifford, this high drop-out rate is not helped by the fact that there is no secondary school located in the town. While efforts have been made locally to develop community-based services and amenities, particularly for the youth in both towns who have few opportunities to ‘mix’, these require additional resources – including animation and capacity building – which are just not available at present.

During the course of the research representatives from both towns also raised the issue of the paperwork involved if a business in one town wants to hire someone from the other town. Being a ‘European Frontier Worker’ is not an uncommon practice in any cross-border community but rather than getting easier, the process of getting a National Insurance Number in the North or a PPS number¹⁶ in the South is becoming more complicated.

5.1.2. The Challenges

For the communities engaged in cross-border and cross-community partnerships and projects, the big challenge they have faced – and continue to face – is that of funding. Cross-border funding programmes are increasingly made up of EU monies;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.1: Services Available in Lifford-Strabane</th>
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<tr>
<td><img src="chart.png" alt="Table" /></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹⁶ Personal Public Service number - a unique reference number which will help a person to access benefits and information from public service agencies more quickly and more easily; for example social welfare, revenue, public healthcare and education [http://www.welfare.ie/topics/ppsni/index.html](http://www.welfare.ie/topics/ppsni/index.html).
and this brings with it increasing bureaucracy and administration. During the course of this research, all groups involved in cross-border programmes spoke of their wish to be sustainable; of being able to survive and develop without needing to access short-term funding. But the fact is that this, according to all interviewees (see Appendix 4), is not yet a possibility. All Border communities, including Lifford, Strabane and their surrounds, are constantly playing ‘catch-up’ – while they are receiving monies to bring them to an ‘equal footing’ with those communities on which the Border does not impact, these other communities are also in receipt of funding for socio-economic activities.

Communities groups in Lifford have also, in some instances, been wary of coming together on a cross-border basis; largely because of concerns about, or perceptions of, paramilitary involvement in many of the Strabane-based groups. This has emerged as a particular challenge within youth organisations.

For the respective Councils – Donegal County Council and Strabane District Council – both of which are now actively developing their cross-border agendas, a big challenge has been – and remains – matching ‘like-with-like’; that is, matching council departments with the same or similar remit and matching personnel with the same or similar job description in two different administrative systems. This challenge applies to all local councils on a North-South basis; and is one of the main reasons put forward for there not being as much cross-border cooperation as there possibly should have been given the proximity and similar profiles of both Councils and the areas they administer. Within both Councils, there is a belief among some staff that the other council is not interested in cooperating or collaborating on a cross-border basis; that both Councils are in competition with each other. This perception is the result of requests for information and invitations to events not receiving a response. This, albeit only in part, can be attributed to the aforementioned issues of matching ‘like-with-like’.

While both towns are either self-sufficient, or taken together meet the needs of their respective communities in terms of service provision, there are gaps. For citizens of Lifford the nearest second-level school is in Strabane. However, most teenagers from Lifford attend secondary school in Raphoe – 12km away. This is thought to be contributing to the high school drop-out rate at secondary level in the area. Although Strabane has a fire station, up until earlier this year the people of Lifford were reliant on the service based in Ballybofey.

Table 5.2: Locations at Which Citizens Currently Access Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Lifford</th>
<th>Strabane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s Surgery</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency Service / A&amp;E Unit</td>
<td>Letterkenny (30km)</td>
<td>Derry (25km) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>Ballybofey (15km)</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Level School</td>
<td>Raphoe (12km)</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ambulance service locally
Thus, Tables 5.2 and 5.3 identify ambulance services and second-level education as two potential areas for future cross-border collaboration and/or cooperation. That this is possible has recently been demonstrated by the recent announcement that Strabane Fire Service can respond to call-outs in Lifford. The Tables further suggest the potential for developing collaborative approaches in the areas of healthcare access – based on proximity rather than on one’s jurisdiction of residence/nationality – and police services based on need. During the interviews and workshop, feedback also revealed low levels of access to services in rural areas, particularly in southern parts of the Strabane District; a deficiency that could be addressed by allowing existing rural transport services on either side of the Border, such as Easilift based in Strabane (see www.communitytransport-ni.com/operators/sdtp/), to operate on a cross-border basis.

At a policy level, both the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland identify the linked ‘Gateway’\(^\text{17}\) of Letterkenny-Derry/Londonderry. However, neither strategy specifies how this linked gateway is to develop or if and how any future development is to be resourced on a cross-border basis; rather this is only currently being considered in the soon to be finalised North West Gateway Initiative. Nor does either strategy consider the distortion effect created by the existence of other strong urban centres close to the gateway in Northern Ireland – such as Strabane and Omagh. The County town of Lifford is identified within the NSS as a regionally strategic residential, employment, administrative centre but not as a town with urban strengthening opportunities. Within the RDS, the town of Strabane is identified as one of two ‘hubs’ in the North-West region; and as such its strategic objective is to strengthen the role of Derry/Londonderry as the regional city for the North West. It is envisaged that Strabane will develop as a ‘growth pole’ for the clustering of economic activity; for example, employment, services, leisure and culture. Within the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for the Border Region, there is no further clarification given on how the town of Lifford should develop - there is no guidance on population growth and in relation to economic and employment development, broad emphasis is placed on small-scale indigenous enterprise, retail and tourism. The Guidelines do, however, note that Strabane is a ‘hub’ within this cross-border area (thus demonstrating horizontal linkages with the RDS) and it is this hub that will generate future growth and ‘urban strengthening opportunities’.

\(^\text{17}\) The term ‘gateway’ features in both the NSS and RDS – but is applied differently in each jurisdiction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Lifford</th>
<th>Strabane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s Surgery</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency Service / A&amp;E Unit</td>
<td>Derry (28km)</td>
<td>Derry (25km) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>Strabane</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Level School</td>
<td>Strabane</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
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<td>Banking</td>
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</table>

* Ambulance service locally
The *North West Gateway Initiative* (NWGI), when published, will go further than the spatial strategies or regional guidelines by emphasising the need for concentrating growth among a core network of settlements including Derry/Londonderry, Letterkenny, Strabane, Lifford and Limavady. These centres will become the economic driver for the North West and become the main hubs for education, health and social service provision.

The *West Tyrone Area Plan 2019* Issues Paper supports the notion of Strabane as a ‘hub’ and the focus of large-scale development (plus it describes the town as the main service centre for East Donegal). In line with the proposed NWGI (but unlike the RDS) it places slightly stronger emphasis on the importance of balanced growth across the neighbouring smaller settlements. Similarly, the *County Donegal Development Plan 2006-2012* and the *Lifford Local Area Plan 2007* take a stronger viewpoint than the NSS and RPGs on the future role of Lifford in the North-West Region. Both documents propose that as the centre of local governance, Lifford’s development is critical to the development of the County and the North West region as a whole. Unlike the West Tyrone Issues Paper, however, the Lifford Plan makes little reference to how the towns of Strabane and Lifford compliment each other or whether they have a coordinated vision.

For Strabane District Council, a further potential challenge facing it into the future is its association with two development strategies: the North West Region to which it is currently a peripheral partner – but as the North West Gateway Initiative begins to be rolled-out, the Council will have to stake a bigger claim or be left behind; and the WEST Project (Western Economic Strategy Team) which is a partnership between a number of Councils in Northern Ireland, together with Government Departments, and whose focus it is to strategically position this area of Northern Ireland as a place to do business. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that both these strategies may some day find themselves on a collision course.

In summary, as well as a lack of coherent vertical and horizontal integration of policy both North and South, a further key obstacle facing the Northwest region as it moves forward is the “lack of a development strategy based on an assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the cross-border region” (Cividin, 2006:5).

### 5.1.3. The Opportunities

There is a long history of collaboration between Lifford and Strabane. As both towns would have developed during the 18th and 19th Centuries, they would have regarded themselves as ‘one place, one entity’. During the course of this research programme, interviewees referred to the existence of a degree of functional complementarity between their two towns, in terms of commercial and other services. They also noted that together, the towns and their surrounding rural communities represent a territory with considerable critical mass.

As noted in the forthcoming NWGI, the network of settlements that is Derry/Londonderry, Letterkenny, Lifford, Strabane and Limavady together make up the fourth largest urban centre on the island of Ireland. For the towns of Lifford and Strabane, because of their close proximity to each other, it is inevitable that new development and / or regeneration programmes in one area will positively benefit the other; the argument being “confidence breeds confidence” (*The Sunday Tribune*, 2003). *Strabane 2000*, for example, is an innovative partnership between the local...
Council, Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Department of Social Development (DSD) which was established in 1998. This strategy aims to promote a clear vision for the town and its future and to assist in the acceleration of its regeneration on key sites. Initiatives have included environmental improvement schemes, a town centre living initiative, and the construction of walkways, bridges (winning design selected in 2007), an exhibition centre and civic spaces.

As previously noted, both Donegal County Council and Strabane District Council are in the process of developing their cross-border cooperation portfolio – this includes collaboration with each other and with other neighbouring cross-border bodies. While not always the case, their engagement with each other is greatly aided by the fact that the headquarters for both Councils are located less than 1km from each other. And where this cross-border engagement is with other and / or additional parties, the cross-border region that is Donegal and Strabane District, and more specifically Lifford and Strabane towns, benefit because of the experiences being gained by the personnel involved. Both Councils now have very clear criteria regarding cross-border cooperation – again, this was not always the case; particularly during the Troubles. Today, both Councils only engage in initiatives that are clearly aligned with their respective strategic objectives. For example, the Strabane-Donegal Tourism Consortia focuses on the marketing of both Donegal and Strabane District using the internet. Both counties are renowned for their mountains, lakes, and fishing courses; and this initiative which fits with both Councils’ objective of developing rural tourism aims to tap into these resources to support the local economy.

The new PEACE III programme (for the period 2007-2013), which is also the final Peace and Reconciliation Programme for Northern Ireland and the six Border counties, is welcomed by both Councils as it provides them with an opportunity to address segregation and develop a shared vision society – particularly under Measure 2.1, Creating Shared Public Spaces. Donegal County Council, for example, has just completed an application to the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) for the development of the Lifford/Strabane Riverside Regeneration Project (see Box 5.1).

The selection of the ‘twin-towns’ of Lifford and Strabane as a flagship project by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) in 1986 has been invaluable to this cross-border area and its surrounds. At a time when both towns were ‘in a state of depression’ with businesses closing down, people moving out of the area, streets decimated as a result of bombings and vandalism, the IFI took a risk. In what is now considered a ‘bold move’ but for which they were highly criticised at the time, the IFI’s first move in regenerating this cross-border community was to provide monies to each town for environmental improvements. Their reasoning was that an improved appearance would increase confidence and start to send out the right message to potential investors i.e. that both towns were open for business. There was also a keen awareness within the IFI that to bring both towns together before they were ready – mentally and physically – would have been pointless. In the words of Paddy Harte, Development Consultant for the IFI in the region, “A bridge can only be constructed

“The growth of both settlements is hampered by their physical surrounds – flood plains, mountains, etc. Strabane is also being hindered in its expansion by the growth of both Derry and Omagh in the North, and Letterkenny and Ballybofey/Stranorlar in the South. Together, these factors are generating new pressures for collaboration and the creation of critical mass / economies of scale in the attraction of new investment”.

Local Government Official, Northern Ireland
when its pillars have been built and are firmly established” (Interview, 13 March 2007). This acumen can be attributed to the IFI’s early decision to recruit local people as their ‘agents on the ground’ – thus enabling them to tap into the local business and community mindset.

**Box 5.1: The Lifford/Strabane Riverside Regeneration Project**

Developed by Donegal County Council, and supported in principle by Strabane District Council, this project proposal has been submitted to the SEUPB for consideration under Measure 2.1 – *Creating Shared Public Space* – of the PEACE III Programme. Building on the previous PEACE programmes, the emphasis of PEACE III is the reconciliation of communities and contributing to a shared society.

Through infrastructural development, Measure 2.1 aims to address segregation, enhance reconciliation and change attitudes, thereby enabling the emergence of vibrant and economically active communities. This involves the regeneration of derelict or unwelcoming spaces into shared spaces.

The Lifford/Strabane Riverside Regeneration Project proposes to provide much-needed local amenities that both communities can use and enjoy. The project proposes to transform the riverbanks along the River Foyle – which has previously been conceived of as a barrier to interaction or boundary between both jurisdictions – by developing:

- An iconic pedestrian and cycleway bridge between both towns
- An arched leafway walkway
- A promenade along the Lifford riverbank.

In addition, the Lifford-Strabane road, previously a Troubles flashpoint, will be redesigned as a boulevard with pockets of shared space where people can meet and socialise. Boat launching areas will be constructed, public art spaces created and the river itself will be transformed by an innovative lighting system.

To date, the IFI have invested monies in environmental improvements, tourism and cultural initiatives (The Old Courthouse, Lifford), community enterprises (Lifford Enterprise Park), private development (Three Rivers Complex, Lifford), and project coordination (Strabane-Lifford Development Commission). Under its new strategy, covering the period 2006-2010, the IFI are turning their attention towards the development of social capital (see Box 1.1) – thus providing local stakeholders with new opportunities to address remaining cross-community issues such as fear to collaborate because of paramilitarism.

Lifford-Strabane is geographically well positioned to take advantage of its inclusion in the ‘linked Gateway’ of Letterkenny-Derry/Londonderry. Both are approximately 20 km from the Gateway and this strategic location is recognised by both communities as something that both should tap into in moving forward. At the same time, the main Gateway of Letterkenny-Derry/Londonderry is seen to represent a source of competition for public resources, private sector investment and retail trade. To counteract these fears and demonstrate their support for the ‘linked Gateway’, Donegal County Council has fed into, and supported the development of the *North West Gateway Initiative* and applied to the Gateway Innovation Fund*19*. 

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*19 The Gateway Innovation Fund (GIF) was established in 2007 by the Irish Government to stimulate Gateway development in the context of the National Spatial Strategy. The Fund is aimed at stimulating and rewarding joined-up strategies and action by funding targeted strategic projects that will trigger the accelerated development of the Gateways and their wider regions.*
The location of both towns on the strategic transport corridor that is the A5/N14/N15 – and that this route is the subject of a proposed upgrade within the Donegal County Development Plan 2006-2012 in support of the development of Letterkenny – will further enhance the role of Lifford and Strabane as a ‘gateway/growth centre’ of economic importance within the North West region.

5.2. Collaboration in Practice: Focus, Remit and Processes

Most cross-border cooperation, particularly in its early days was driven by the community sector on the island of Ireland. However, in the North West Region, this ‘truth’ has been somewhat turned on its head. Because of its peripherality and resulting sense of isolation, the local councils in this region have been relatively active on a cross-border basis since the launch of cross-border supports and programmes in the late 1980s / early 1990s. As was the nature of local government cooperation at this time, this relationship would have been both informal and issue / project-based. Within this cross-border area, there are many cross-border initiatives and partnerships which have – and continue to – focus on the towns of Lifford and Strabane. Moreso, however, these initiatives tend to focus on the whole of Donegal County and Strabane District – thus ensuring that it is not only these two key settlements that benefit.

- The HEART Project is an on-going initiative between Donegal County Council and Strabane District Council (see www.strabanedc.com/council/services/heart/heart-background-info/). Commenced in 2006 and funded under INTERREG IIIA, the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), the Councils and the private sector, this initiative focuses on heritage, environment, art and rural tourism in this Border region. Delivery has been through an open call to community groups in towns and villages in Donegal and the Strabane District to submit proposals for the environmental improvement of their locales (see Box 5.2).

- The cross-border initiative, Border Arts, was established in 2000 to develop synergies and promote cooperation between the artistic communities of Donegal and Tyrone. Prior to its establishment arts groups based in Donegal and West Tyrone would have worked in isolation from each other. The initiative covers music, singing, arts and crafts, painting, carpentry and design. It was aimed at those involved already in the arts industry but it also dedicated a lot of time to working with people who had no history in this field. Projects are undertaken on a cross-border and cross-community basis. Since its establishment, Border Arts has organised carnivals – and this has involved the communities designing and making their own costumes and building their own floats. A community-run initiative, its success is largely due to the commitment, vision and enthusiasm of its project team and volunteers.

- The Tyrone-Donegal Partnership has been in existence since 1994. A well-established cross-border company, its main objective is to identify, develop and support innovative initiatives in the areas of West Tyrone and East Donegal (see www.tyronedonegalpartnership.org/). In so doing, it is envisaged that the social and economic conditions in these areas will be improved. Over the years, it has availed of funding under the PEACE and LEADER programmes. It has...
actively participated in the Wider Horizon’s Programme, which is funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and supported other initiatives such as the Cross-Border Rural Childcare Project.

Box 5.2: The HEART Project

Jointly developed by Donegal County Council and Strabane District Council, this focused cross-border initiative has enabled a select number of communities to identify a range of economic, social, cultural and environmental projects to enhance the appearance of, and promote cooperation between community groups within, their towns.

The main aims of the HEART (Heritage, Environment, Art and Rural Tourism) Project are:

- Regenerate rural towns and villages in County Donegal and Strabane District
- Foster shared learning and development between the local communities
- Enhance the environment and quality of life in the rural towns and villages
- Identify and develop economic, social and cultural resources in a cross-border context.

Part of the Project involves the construction of a sculpture trail across 12 towns and villages. In Donegal, the towns include Ballyshannon, Ardara, Raphoe, Moville, Ramelton, Lifford and Ballybofey/Stranorlar while in Strabane District, the towns are Castlederg, Newtownstewart, Sion Mills, Plum Bridge and Dunamanagh.

Other elements of the project include environmental improvements, common signage, joint marketing, shared amenities and shop front enhancements. Not only will specific areas or premises benefit from a ‘face-lift’ but the towns and villages as a whole will profit from an overall improvement to their appearance.

The HEART Project is building on the increasing acknowledgement that arts and cultural initiatives have a role to play in developing the local economy; for example through the establishment of small-scale arts and craft businesses. This initiative has also gone some way to addressing the perception that involvement in arts and culture is only for certain communities, or certain members of the community.

It is not unusual for cross-border relationships to happen quite by accident, often in response to a sudden development or emerging issue. During the height of the Troubles, Strabane lost 3000 jobs in a ten-year period (Interview, local government official). To address this, an Employment Task Force was established, involving all relevant agencies, to examine the situation in Strabane. However, during the course of their research, the Task Force determined that many of those left unemployed as a result of the business closures in Strabane were from County Donegal. It therefore became essential for the Task Force to widen its membership base to include the relevant agencies from South of the Border in its deliberations on moving forward – and this it did. The Task Force became a cross-border body with the remit of addressing the impact of cross-border job losses and unemployment.

There are a number of other cross-border partnerships in this region which involve one or other of the counties of Donegal or Tyrone but which, irrespective of the partners involved, have added value for the North West region as a whole. For example:

- A transnational partnership involving regions in Ireland, Northern Ireland, the U.K., Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Poland and Italy. **ERNACT** (European Regions Network for the Application of Communications Technology) was established in 1990 to both
stimulate and accelerate the transition of local economies to the information society model of regional development in the respective partner regions. ERNACT is jointly managed by Donegal County Council and Derry City Council on behalf of all partners (see www.ernact.net). The network is practical and project driven, and has a successful track record in assisting participating regions to participate in EU cross-border, Interregional and transnational information society related programmes and community initiatives including INTERREG IIIB, IICC and the Framework Programmes. In the context of the Irish Border region, ERNACT has built on the strengths of this area by securing funds under PEACE, INTERREG and the International Fund for Ireland for the roll-out of broadband and other ICT initiatives.

Given the remoteness of County Donegal, particularly North Donegal, from the rest of the Republic of Ireland and given that the County shares over 140km of border with Northern Ireland (compared to the 9km with counties Leitrim and Sligo in the South), health – and in particular cross-border health care – is a major issue for this Border region. The cross-border agency, Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT) has been promoting the idea of shared health services on a cross-jurisdictional basis for the whole Irish Border region since the early 1990s and more recently, it has been piloting a programme of shared GP services in Monaghan/Armagh and Inishowen/Derry/Londonderry (see www.cawt.com). The Health Service Executive (HSE) is involved in two cross border initiatives focusing on the role of parents in their child’s development: LifeStart and SureStart. At a more local level, health focused initiatives include:

- The **Cross Border Women’s Health Network** is a partnership of 38 statutory and community and voluntary organisations from the North West who are committed to improving health care and provision in the region (see www.derrywellwoman.org/index.php/womens-health-network/). Facilitated by the Derry Well Woman Centre, the Network has to date organised seminars, carried out research and hosted ‘question times’ on issues relating to health – including education, childcare, elder care and the environment.

- The **DergFinn Partnership** is a cross-border community initiative whose objective it is to improve the quality of life of people in need and their carers. This is achieved through community development projects, support programmes, training and skills-exchange.

A common thread throughout the aforementioned initiatives – each of which have been successful in their own right – has been the commitment to ‘pre-development work’ i.e. building and developing relationships. The failure to commit time and resources to nurturing a cross-border partnership is one of several reasons as to why such partnerships fail. Without the relevant supports, commitment and trust, cross-border projects and partnerships will generally fail within the first twelve months of operation. This was the experience of, for example, the Lifford-Clonleigh Resource Centre; for many of the reasons outlined above, it has been unable to establish itself as a cross-border organisation. Instead, it concentrates its activities in Lifford on a day-to-day basis and, as opportunities arise, it engages in cross-border funded programmes of activity.

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*To facilitate this cooperation, the relevant health boards – North and South – entered into a formal accord known as the Ballyconnell Agreement.*
While these examples of cross-border cooperation extend beyond the boundaries of the two towns on which this chapter is focusing, one organisation which has focused specifically on Lifford-Strabane for most of its lifetime has been the Strabane Lifford Development Commission (SLDC). What makes this partnership even more interesting is that it was established and continues to be driven by a number of local business people – a unique development approach for the island of Ireland in the early 1990s.

5.3. The Strabane-Lifford Development Commission

As previously noted, during the Troubles both Lifford and Strabane became black-spots for paramilitary activity and they both experienced economic decline. Together, these factors were enough to keep investors away and for the government of both jurisdictions to conclude that this was not the time to be putting money into either area. By the early 1990s, both towns were in total despair. Only the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) was making any sort of commitment to the area – but this was sufficient to stir a group of local businessmen into action.

In 1993, a group of local business and community leaders from both sides of the Border came together at the suggestion of John Hume, then local MP and MEP, to consider how best to address the socio-economic decline of both towns21. At this first meeting, Mr. Hume explained that to move forward, both towns would have to come together as ‘one’. It was agreed that a cross-border body should be established with the objective of developing a strategy to promote the economic development and regeneration of the area. Again at the suggestion of John Hume, the established body – the Strabane Lifford Development Commission – was constituted as an European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG). According to Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2137/85 of 25 July 1985, the purpose of an EEIG is:

_to facilitate or develop the economic activities of its members by a pooling of resources, activities or skills. This will produce better results than the members acting alone…..An EEIG must have at least two members from different member states._

The Commission was, in effect, the marriage of two bodies; the Lifford Commission and the Strabane Commission. In establishing itself as an EEIG, the Strabane Lifford Development Commission could (a) apply for EU regional funding and (b) undertake joint initiatives to the benefit of both towns and / or initiatives which would address the priorities of each town.

The Strabane Lifford Development Commission (SLDC) became ‘a space for the meeting of minds’. In these early days, the Border was still heavily fortified, no government monies were coming on stream and both towns were, in effect, ‘sleep-walking’. The Commission’s Board of Management recognised from the outset that both towns would first have to address their own priorities and needs before they came together on joint initiatives – a similar approach to that adopted by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI). Unsurprisingly, the Commission developed a close working relationship with IFI in those early days; they become sounding boards for each other in terms of programmes of activity to pursue. This ‘partnership’ happened at the right time – as both organisations were adopting

21 The constituency covered by John Hume MEP considered the engineer behind the establishment of the Strabane Lifford Development Commission, included Strabane and Derry/Londonderry. There are many who believe that Mr. Hume did a lot to promote the development of Derry/Londonderry – probably at Strabane’s expense – and this was his way of addressing this (Interview, Local Development Agent).
flexible approaches to “get things done and meet the burning needs of the areas in question” (Interview, Local Action Group).

Since its establishment, the Commission has involved itself in social, physical and economic regeneration activities. For both towns and the local nationalist and unionist communities, the symbol of their ‘moving forward’ has become the installation entitled ‘Let the Dance Begin’ (known affectionately as ‘The Tinnies’) which was designed by Maurice Harron in 2000; a sculpture group of 5 figures symbolising music and dance and representing a shared beginning for both communities. The SLDC has participated in transnational exchanges to highlight the areas strengths and assets. Traditional music groups from both sides of the Border have been brought together to share their experiences and collaborate in writing music and performing. Between 1993 and 2006, the Commission pumped €25million into a number of development projects in this inter-jurisdictional area. Examples of the initiatives with which the SLDC has been closely associated, or taken the lead, include:

- **Development of the Finn Valley Enterprise Park**: a development only made possible by the commitment of a number of Lifford-based businessmen who secured a loan of IRE£100,000 from a local bank to purchase the land. The objective of this initiative was to create employment locally over the long-term; and this scheme did take time to get off the ground. Units have been constructed on a phased basis and leased to state agencies such as RehabCare and An Post.

- **The Wider Horizons Programme**: aimed at improving the employability of young people from disadvantaged communities, this initiative was supported by the IFI and involved the training of persons aged 16-28 years in the hospitality sector. Following their training, participants were provided with work experience abroad. Over the course of two programmes\(^22\), twenty-one persons from the area went on an 18-month placement\(^23\) to the Opryland Hotel, Nashville. All went on to very good jobs in Ireland or America. It is hoped to roll-out this programme again in the near future.

- **Border Reach Arts Project**: funded under PEACE, this millennium arts initiative supported the roll-out of fifteen projects with an arts focus (including ‘Let the Dance Begin’). These included creative writing classes, youth theatre and music composition. The Project also supported the hosting of the June Hiring Festival which celebrated the common local tradition of hiring fairs\(^24\).

- **Centre without Walls Project**: launched in 2001 to provide Information Technology (IT) training to local community groups and individuals who were unemployed in the area. As part of this programme, IT Hubs have been established where taster sessions in IT and computer literacy can be taken. A number of cross-border networks were also established to improve inter-community relationships through the use of IT (i.e. chat-rooms, notice boards,

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22 One rolled-out in association with CERT; the other with the North-West Institute.
23 The normal placement period is six weeks but the SLDC felt this timeframe was too short to prevent the young participants ‘falling back into old habits’. They therefore negotiated a longer placement period with IFI and the host organisation.
24 Associated for the most part with the “hungry 1930s”, the hiring fairs involved the hiring of young men and women whereby they would be “bought” to work on a farm or in a factory for a number of months; with payment being dependent on the person hired staying for the duration for which they were hired.
virtual ‘buddy’ systems). Many of those who undertook this programme have since gone on to complete formal qualifications in IT.

- **Outward Bound**: an initiative working with youth in the area to address political and religious tensions and which included their participation in a wide range of projects ranging from music composition to photographic projects.

- **Mind your Tongue Programme**: an initiative which explored ethnic diversity in the area through face-to-face meetings and seminars in order to raise awareness and secure recognition for the many different cultures living in the area.

- **Restoration of part of the Strabane Canal**: an ambitious but difficult project which involved an investment of Stg£1.3 million in the restoration of one and a half miles of the canal network, including two locks.

More recently, the SLDC has become involved in the development of work space and social housing. In Strabane, the Commission has assisted with the construction of a commercial and community resource centre. In association with Habinteg Housing Association, whose Irish headquarters are located in Lifford, it has provided a grant to assist in the administration of a social housing scheme in Lifford. This scheme consists of 55 units including family units, bungalows and apartments. When completed, this housing will be available to people from Lifford and Strabane.

Interestingly, the cultural differences North and South have impacted on the extent to which representatives from Strabane and Lifford have initiated and become involved in the work of the Commission over the years. To date, the tendency has been for representatives from the South to be the greater ‘risk-takers’; or some would argue more willing to take ‘leaps of faith’. The Northern partners have, however, been hampered in identifying projects and seeing them through; largely due to there being a different and difficult political environment in-situ.

The Commission has from the outset been supported in its work by both Donegal County Council and Strabane District Council; both have recognised its ability to ‘get projects off the ground’ quicker than either council could because of its non-political status. As well as financial commitments through annual subventions, representatives from both Councils sit on the Board of Management and Donegal County Council provides the Commission with office space. The involvement of the Councils is regarded as key in leveraging further support and buy-in for the Commission’s work. When the Review of Public Administration (RPA) is complete, it is highly unlikely that the SLDC will be dealing with Strabane District Council alone in the future; given that there are to be eleven ‘super-councils’ from 2011 onwards it is expected that Strabane will be joined with Derry City Council under the preferred model\(^25\). This may have implications for the size of area covered by the Commission in the future – but given that it has already demonstrated a willingness to expand, this should not be an issue. Over the years, the SLDC has broadened its remit and the area it covers; largely in response to local feedback. In its Corporate Plan 2001-2006, the Commission’s mission statement was revised to read “to help take forward the economic, social and cultural regeneration of Strabane, Lifford and their

\(^{25}\) As announced by Environment Minister Arlene Foster on 13 March 2008; the preferred model being ‘11b’ as contained in the 2005 RPA consultation document (see [http://www.rpani.gov.uk/2005_consultation_doc.pdf](http://www.rpani.gov.uk/2005_consultation_doc.pdf)).

\(^{26}\) The Commission’s Corporate Plan 2001-2006 was published in April 2001.
As a result, the SLDC has moved some of its activities to neighbouring villages such as Convoy, County Donegal and is looking to develop links with the west coast of Scotland.

The Strabane Lifford Development Commission is currently considering its future. Its current funding is coming to an end and because it is not self-sustainable – as an EEIG it is not intended that it make a profit – it must try to identify potential funding programmes to which it can apply over the coming months.

5.4. Moving Forward: Building on Achievements and Broadening, Deepening and Sustaining Collaboration

The communities of Lifford and Strabane are becoming ‘business savvy’ in terms of moving forward. There is a growing realisation that the area as a whole must ‘think outside the box’, ‘break moulds’ and ‘create new paths of cooperation’. This cross-border area recognises that it needs to jointly market itself as a place to come to live and work – and the message must be positive. To this end, Strabane has adopted the slogan ‘Strabane is Changing’ – and already it is resulting in increasing trade in the area (Interview, Local Business Representative; Northern Ireland). In addition the Strabane Chamber of Commerce and Industry, after years of being in a lull, is reinventing itself and developing its membership base (see www.strabanechamber.com/). While there is currently no Chamber in Lifford with which it can cooperate and collaborate, this is expected to change within the next two years; with discussions already underway between businesses in both towns on the benefit of each having a Chamber.

Other recent cross-jurisdictional business developments which the ‘linked Gateway’ towns should be tapping into and capitalising on include the:

- North West Business Technology Zone 27 – currently focusing on Letterkenny and Derry/Londonderry but with the potential to widen its remit in future years
- The North West Science and Technology Partnership 28 – covering all of the North West and with the potential to promote the clustering and networking of businesses and R&D activities.

Tourism development is regarded as a potential area of growth in economic terms for this cross-border region. Its rugged landscape of hills, mountains and waterways has largely been untapped to date in terms of development; the only flagship tourism product in the region being the Glenveagh National Park in County Donegal. During the course of this research programme, potential areas listed for development and marketing included:

- The Sperrins
- The Stone Circle, Raphoe (purported to be older than Stonehenge in Wiltshire)

and, more locally, the ‘no man’s land’ flanking either side of the River Foyle and which is currently unused by either settlement, Lifford or Strabane (refer back to Box. 5.1 for recent developments in this regard).

There is a strong case for both councils to come together to prepare joint funding applications that ‘fit’ with the Cross-Border Tourism Framework which, in turn, has identified key themes and priorities for funding over the period 2007-13. That this

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27 Supported by IDA Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland.
28 Established in 2006 and facilitated by InterTradeIreland.
cross-border area is already being jointly marketed and promoted as part of the Destination North West Initiative demonstrates that much can be achieved when resources are pooled and partnerships formed.

It was further proposed that the Tourism College Killybegs (see www.tck.ie/) and the South West College (with campuses in Enniskillen, Dungannon and Omagh – see www.swc.ac.uk/) should come together to develop joint courses and / or collaborate on modules on business development, tourism and travel, catering, eco- and agri-tourism and marine management.

The degree of connectivity between the locally elected representatives on both sides of the Border has been poor to date. Despite both Donegal County Council and Strabane District Council being located less than 1km apart, elected representatives have tended to only meet at local functions or conferences. There has been no tradition or agenda for cooperation – largely because of political party differences but also because of the difference in duration of office for councillors North and South. During the Foot and Mouth crisis of 2001, for example, there was no dialogue between councillors on a cross-jurisdictional basis – each looked after its own backyard (Interview, Local Elected Official; Northern Ireland). This is, however, beginning to slowly change with both sets of councillors now coming together on issue-specific matters; for example, road upgrades.

During the course of the research programme, as outlined in Table 5.4, there was widespread agreement that all future cross-border projects and partnerships should be made up of a mix of local stakeholders. The emphasis should no longer be put on the communities or Councils in terms of ‘driving’ physical, social, economic, cultural and environmental cooperation. There was a particular desire to see all stakeholders come together in the development of an integrated plan for the area, particularly among the community and private sectors; for it is felt that under the current regime, there is insufficient cooperation among the Councils in the drafting of plans and policies for both towns and their wider hinterlands.

### Table 5.4: Stakeholders and their Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Key Roles / Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lifford-Strabane</td>
<td>Work together to lobby for benefits for the entire catchment area, and not just for one part / locality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Groups</td>
<td>Road Improvements – jointly plan for projects and secure funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Road Improvements – jointly plan for projects and secure funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>Road Improvements – jointly plan for projects and secure funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector (incl. Statutory agencies)</td>
<td>Improve access to public services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>Promote cross-border trade and economic development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Government (RoI)</td>
<td>Incentivise investment in owner-occupied residential &amp; commercial developments in the towns and villages in the hinterland of Lifford – Strabane.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was also suggested that both governments should consider the use of financial incentives – rather than grants – to encourage commercial and residential development in the area – similar in many respects to the Rural Renewal Scheme\(^{29}\).

Such a degree of cooperation, together with an integrated framework document(s) for how the area should develop, would go a long way to ensuring that the area can – and will – benefit from its prominent position within the North West Gateway. For the towns of Lifford and Strabane, this means all stakeholders adopting a collaborative rather than a competitive mindset.

5.5. Synthesis

In such zones of conflict, with its associated socio-economic decline, it is quickly recognised that any collaborative movements must be inter-regional and strategic in focus, that they must be long-term in nature and that the concept and objective must be ‘sold’ externally so as to get people interested in the area again. Both Lifford and Strabane are now in the midst of a process of change – a change that reflects their ‘rebirth’ following the Troubles. There is a recognition that to capitalise on its strategic position on the Border, both communities need to work together to generate critical mass and economies of scale – thus making the region attractive to investors, tourists and potential residents alike.

There is growing recognition that cross-border cooperation and collaboration must involve a wide range of stakeholders; in particular, the private sector needs to be brought further into the process. There is also an increasing role to be played by councillors in developing connections and adopting a strategic, cross-border vision in the provision of services.

\(^{29}\) The Rural Renewal Scheme was a pilot programme operated by the Irish Government from 1998 to 2006. Relating to the Upper Shannon catchment area, it covered all of counties Leitrim and Longford and parts of counties Cavan, Roscommon and Sligo. Its aim was to invigorate and promote the development of this region by attracting much needed investment, both residential and commercial.
Both Councils must continue to work together, and where possible, do so in a more formalised context. The role-out of the North West Gateway Initiative, and the process that will now begin of identifying strategic projects, could provide many developmental opportunities for the towns of Lifford and Strabane. To capitalise from this process, the Councils must be ‘singing from the same hymn-sheet’ and demonstrating a capacity to collaborate effectively and efficiently.

For many, the Strabane Lifford Development Commission has been a champion for cross-border collaboration and cooperation in the area – both in terms of having a diverse stakeholder base and demonstrating the range of initiatives that organisations can engage in on a cross-border basis. The Commission’s actions and approaches have demonstrated the importance of personal connections – particularly at the start of a project; a point clearly demonstrated by the ability of some of the Lifford players to secure a loan to purchase land in the mid-1990s.

It is also widely acknowledged across all sectors and stakeholder groups that a number of ‘traditions’ need to be broken; for example, the notion / mindset among many youth that their future lies elsewhere needs to be shattered. The youth – and their skills base (once developed) – are vital to the future of both towns; in terms of social / human, economic and cultural capital.
North Leitrim and North West Fermanagh have traditionally had strong connections with each other, with cross-border movement and trade being integral to the daily lives of local people. Both areas would, historically, have been dependent on each other for the provision of services. During the course of this research, it was regularly reported that both areas share a similar landscape, culture, history, and ‘outlook on life’. This chapter focuses on the case study area of Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver, a very rural micro-region characterised by small-scale farms on mixed quality land and where it is no longer possible to earn a living from the farm alone (see Figure 6.1). It is an area whose traditional manufacturing industries are all but gone and, therefore, the settlements in this area are at risk of becoming dormitory towns and villages for the larger urban settlements in the wider region.
Figure 6.1: Locational Context: Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver

(Prepared by AIRO, 2008; ©Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland Copyright Permit No. MP006608)
From the initial discussions held as part of this research programme, one gets the impression that this remote region was not overly affected – in a negative way – by the introduction of the Border. Rather, its towns and villages were thriving and focal points of local commercial and social activity. It was with the onset of the Troubles in the 1960s, however, that the border towns and villages in this region did go into decline. All roads linking counties Leitrim and Fermanagh were closed, communities became separated and local cross-border trade was no longer feasible. This decline has continued right up until present day – despite the best efforts of the local communities to keep the region alive economically. Socially, however, this cross-border area has been characterised – both during and since the Troubles – by its strong community spirit with many groups and networks working locally, county-wide and cross-jurisdictionally for the areas’ betterment.

6.1. Context: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

The border villages of Kiltyclogher, Rossinver and Garrison, together with the townland of Cashel/Scribbagh, are in very close proximity to each other. Both Kiltyclogher and Rossinver are small rural villages situated in North Leitrim with populations of approximately 254 and 380 respectively (CSO, 2006). Despite the ‘Celtic Tiger’ years which are synonymous with economic growth and demographic expansion, both villages continue to experience a decline in their populations. Both villages are very different in appearance, with Kiltyclogher having a more nucleated structure. Located adjacent to the Border with County Fermanagh, Kiltyclogher was once the central economic and service base serving the study area; however with continued loss of services and a falling critical mass, this position has been lost to the larger urban centre of Manorhamilton (County Leitrim). The decline of both Kiltyclogher and Rossinver began with the aforementioned road closures of the Troubles. This rural area of North Leitrim now lags seriously behind in its development compared to other rural communities that were not divided in such a manner. Access to the area is poor, with the area being served by a network of secondary roads. Public transport in the area is limited. Unemployment in the area is high (male unemployment was 16.7% in Kiltyclogher in 2006) and there is little local employment available. Agriculture remains an important employer in the area, despite the poor quality of the land; with most of the remainder of the workforce commuting to larger settlements such as Manorhamilton and Enniskillen (County Fermanagh).

Garrison is a small rural village on the shores of Lough Melvin in County Fermanagh. While this area too suffered both economically and socially during the Troubles – largely due to the road closures – it is an area now beginning to experience some growth. In 2001, it had a population of 357 persons; an increase of 12% on 1991 (NISRA, 2001). The attraction of businesses to the area, however, is hampered by the poor quality of the surrounding road network and the lack of skills in the area; in 1991, 74% of the economically active population had no formal qualifications. The denominationally-mixed community of Cashel, located adjacent to the Border in County Fermanagh and 6km from Garrison, has approximately 350 inhabitants. In spatial terms, there is no village structure in Cashel; so the main focal point of the area is Cashel Cross where the local community centre and church are located.
Prior to the conflict, Kiltyclogher, located 1km away, was the main market centre for the community of Cashel. However, during the conflict the three Border roads connecting the communities were closed – thus physically hampering social and economic engagement.

6.1.1. The Issues
The road closures during the Troubles not only physically separated this cluster of cross-border settlements, but also severed the social and cultural ties between these communities. Where once Kiltyclogher and Cashel and Garrison and Rossinver would have regarded themselves as a single entity, this was no longer the case from the 1970s onwards.

With the Troubles, travel across the Border to social events – such as dances, gaelic football matches, concerts, carnivals, festivals and other community-based activities – ceased; children no longer crossed the Border to attend school; friendships were fractured; farms were split in two and what should have been a 10minute journey to tend to cattle became a 40km (25 mile) round trip; and cross-border movement of goods and livestock ceased. Where there was cross-border movement taking place, this would have been closely monitored by border patrols and custom posts and the direction would have been dictated by pricing and value for money. The border villages of Kiltyclogher, Rossinver and Garrison found themselves ‘on their knees’.

The lack of local employment, together with increasing tensions and occasional paramilitary activity, these villages no longer remained ‘happy places to live’. Young people started to migrate out of the area and, as a result, the population profile of the area began to age, and services became to close down. As highlighted in Table 6.1 the result of the cyclical process of decline (migration, job losses, and closure of services) has been that this cross-border micro-region is poorly served and badly inter-connected in terms of public transport and broadband communications. For the local communities, the community-based rural transport scheme, Rural Lift, is prohibited from collecting passengers on the other side of the Border; instead a service operates on each side of the Border. The residents of these border villages find themselves having to travel anything up to 35km to avail of day-to-day services, such as second-level education, a public library or a health centre. With declining populations, other services and facilities are being underutilised and, as a result, communities are having to come together to combine resources and share facilities. For example, Kiltyclogher and the nearby community of Glenfarne (see Chapter 7) have joined forces so as to be able to field a local gaelic football team. There have been no spare resources to invest in the development of water-based amenities; plus the will and commitment was not there, primarily because there was no guarantee that anyone would use these facilities – particularly where there were no border-crossings in place.
6.1.2. The Challenges

The key challenge now facing this cross-border micro-region is accessibility. The poor quality of the secondary road network that mainly serves the area, together with the lack of public transport services, is hampering economic development, the area's capacity to attract inward investment and its demographic renewal. It is also having a negative impact on the promotion and growth of eco-tourism and eco-industry in the area (see Section 6.2). As highlighted by de Brún (2008) having an eco-product is only one part of the business; the other is getting the target market from their arrival point – Dublin Airport, Dún Laoghaire Ferry Port or Knock International Airport – to that product in an eco-friendly and sustainable manner. The upgrading of the road network is essential to the development of this cross-border region as a whole but also to the promotion of cross-border cooperation in the area.

None of these villages or townlands are home to an enterprise with over fifteen employees, and the current prospects for industrial development are poor. The close proximity of larger and better established urban settlements such as Sligo, Enniskillen, Belleek, Ballyshannon and Carrick-on-Shannon means that any investments / businesses considering the wider region will turn their attention to these centres. The presence of these larger settlements also poses challenges for the villages of Kiltyclogher, Garrison and Rossinver in terms of maintaining their current services and not losing them to larger towns as a result of government-led rationalisation.

Table 6.1: Services Available in Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service / Amenity</th>
<th>Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Transport</td>
<td>Generally not available, except for Rural Lift (community transport initiative).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadband Access</td>
<td>Available in some centres, but more so in County Leitrim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling / Bring Centre / Waste Management</td>
<td>Bring centres are available in villages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Centre</td>
<td>Have been developed in the four communities, with most having been upgraded and re-furbished over the past decade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Grounds</td>
<td>Generally under-developed in the territory, and their future development is essential in enabling and enticing young people to live locally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Recreation Amenities</td>
<td>Not developed (despite the potential of Lough Melvin).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly Clubs</td>
<td>Established in each community; involved in cross-border projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Club</td>
<td>Poorly developed, although some activities for young people are organised locally (e.g. drama, soccer).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“There is an unspoken belief that the Celtic Tiger is still stuck behind a slow-moving tractor somewhere out on the R280”. (road from Kinlough to Drumkeeran, Co. Leitrim)

Irish Independent, 28 July 2001
As highlighted in Tables 6.2 and 6.3, there is a considerable discrepancy in the Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver area between the geographical or physical distances from services, and the actual distances which citizens are obliged to travel. To prevent further loss of, and to increase accessibility to, services there is a strong case to be made for sharing of services on a cross-border basis. While this is happening in some Border areas – for example, where GP services are being shared on a pilot basis (see Chapter 5) – this is not the case in this area.

Table 6.2: Locations at Which Citizens Currently Access Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Kiltyclogher</th>
<th>Rossinver</th>
<th>Garrison</th>
<th>Cashel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s Surgery</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>Kiltyclogher (7km)</td>
<td>Belleek (8km)</td>
<td>Belcoo (17km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency Service / A&amp;E Unit</td>
<td>Sligo* (49km)</td>
<td>Sligo (36km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (46km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (38km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (24km)</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (11km)</td>
<td>Belleek (8km)</td>
<td>Belleek (17km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Level School</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (24km)</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (11km)</td>
<td>Belleek (8km)</td>
<td>Belleek (17km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>Kiltyclogher (7km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (46km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen** (38km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>Kiltyclogher (7km)</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>Garrison (8km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (24km)</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (11km)</td>
<td>Belleek (8km)</td>
<td>Belleek (17km)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* There is a hospital in Manorhamilton but this is for elderly patients only.
** A small number use the library in Kiltyclogher which is only 1km away; it was always intended that this service would be available on a cross-border basis.

Table 6.3: Proximity to / Distance from Selected Essential Services in Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver: Locations of the closest service (geographically)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Kiltyclogher</th>
<th>Rossinver</th>
<th>Garrison</th>
<th>Cashel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s Surgery</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>Kiltyclogher (7km)</td>
<td>Belleek / Kiltyclogher (8-9km)</td>
<td>Kiltyclogher (1km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency Service / A&amp;E Unit</td>
<td>Enniskillen (36km)</td>
<td>Sligo (36km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (46km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (38km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (24km)</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (11km)</td>
<td>Belleek (8km)</td>
<td>Belleek (17km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Level School</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (24km)</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (11km)</td>
<td>Belleek (8km)</td>
<td>Belleek (17km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>Kiltyclogher (7km)</td>
<td>Kiltyclogher (10km)</td>
<td>Kiltyclogher (1km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>Garrison (4km)</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>Kiltyclogher (1km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (24km)</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (11km)</td>
<td>Belleek (8km)</td>
<td>Belleek (17km)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At a policy level, none of these four villages and townlands are specifically referred to in the sections of the spatial policies and planning guidelines that are relevant to this region or within the local area / county plans. The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland identifies Sligo as the ‘Gateway’ serving the North-West region, and Manorhamilton and Bundoran as the two urban centres with ‘urban strengthening opportunities’. Within the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland, the town of Enniskillen has been identified as the ‘main hub’ with an ‘inter-regional gateway role’ for this Border area. What this in effect means is that investment in housing, business development and employment will be directed towards these larger, better-established settlements. These policies are carried through into each jurisdictions respective regional and local plans – thus highlighting that there is vertical integration of policy. Regarding the smaller rural towns and villages, however, there is a policy vacuum with any policies recorded being very broad in their nature and failing to refer to any region or locale in particular. The issue with this is that while both the NSS, RDS and the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for the Border Region recognise and acknowledge that there is a great variety of rural areas, they provide little guidance or advice to the local authorities on how best to address the challenges facing these rural communities. Yet, at the same time, central government in the South and regional government in the North advise their respective local government agencies to categorise their different rural areas and to set housing targets for them; for it is professed that the social and economic viability of rural areas hinge on new residential development.

The Leitrim County Development Plan 2003-2009, currently under review, outlines a broad vision for the role of towns and villages within the county; the emphasis being on population growth and rural regeneration. While the towns of Carrick-on-Shannon (county town) and Manorhamilton are identified as the engines for future growth, it is envisaged that all towns and villages will be supported – socially and economically – particularly in areas where population decline has been the norm i.e. North Leitrim. Building on the direction emerging from the RPGs, the County Development Plan promotes growth by providing for residential development and, where adequate infrastructure is in place, industry and retail outlets. In support of this, Variation No. 7 to the County Plan, adopted in April 2007, introduced a settlement hierarchy for the towns and villages in the County. The villages of Kiltyclogher and Rossinver were included within tier 4 of the settlement strategy, with the development envelope of the centres defined by way of zoning maps. The Fermanagh Area Plan 2007 adopts a similar strategy for its villages and towns with small-scale housing and industrial/retail development being promoted provided that it meets local needs and encourages regeneration. However, it is difficult to conceive that any of this type, or scale, of development will be achievable in this case study area as the quality of the local infrastructure in terms of accessibility and connectivity is very poor. The failure of the recent Rural Renewal Scheme in kick-starting the physical regeneration and growth of the small towns and villages in North Leitrim, such as Rossinver and Kiltyclogher, further serves to heighten these concerns.
6.1.3. The Opportunities

There is widespread agreement among all stakeholders in this micro-region that emphasis must be placed, by both local and central government, on building up the areas infrastructure and capitalising on its many assets. The close proximity of these settlements means that they could potentially benefit from development in each other. This cross-border area shares many key assets, in particular its natural and cultural landscape: its water courses, landscape, forests, valleys, mountains and history.

The realignment of the N16 – linking Sligo with Enniskillen – has begun and it is widely felt that this will open up this Border region and greatly improve its accessibility. However, only part of this realignment is yet approved; with route selection still taking place for other sections.

The fluid nature of policies as they relate to rural towns and villages is considered by many to be a positive thing. Their ‘flexible’ nature leaves them open to interpretation by the relevant agencies, who again many would argue are in a better position to determine how these areas should develop. There is an acknowledgement at all levels of policy – from central right down to local level – that rural areas need to consolidate their role as local service providers, to build on their indigenous strengths, to identify and activate their potential and to regenerate. Cross-border cooperation and collaboration is highlighted as being a key element in bringing this about, particularly by regional and local agencies. In particular, local government and enterprise agencies, such as Leitrim County Enterprise Board, highlight the potential viability of small-scale retail, industrial and tourism enterprises to this cross-border region.

There are already strong connections and a good working relationship between individuals and some departments of both Leitrim County Council and Fermanagh District Council. This is seen as both a sound and reliable platform on which to build this inter-council relationship. Both Councils recognise that they have much in common – positive and negative – and that through greater collaboration, these issues can be addressed and opportunities exploited to their mutual benefit.

At a community level, the strong community spirit and commitment to local development has resulted in these areas achieving a lot – and largely off their own backs (i.e. with little or no support from central government). Where the Fine Gael / Labour Coalition Government of 1982-87 wished to plant North Leitrim with conifers (Tóibín, 1987), the communities instead kept these towns and villages alive. Instead of becoming a dense forest, North Leitrim has become a retreat for artists and craft workers; a tradition already well-established in Garrison and nearby Belleek.

6.2. Collaboration in Practice: Focus, Remit and Processes

Since the early 1990s, this cross-border grouping of villages have begun to come together again and rekindle old friendships. Much of the cooperation and collaboration that has taken place is socially-based and socially-driven - but heavily
dependent on funding from outside sources (although in many instances, the groups in question wish that this was not actually the case). For example:

- **The Garrison Women’s Group** has been in existence for 10 years and for most of this period, it has operated on a cross-community and cross-border basis. Through regular meetings and undertaking various activities – gardening, cookery, arts and crafts – the women involved have addressed the sense of isolation they had been feeling for almost 40 years (i.e. since the Troubles began).

- In November 2006, the **Krag Partnership**, involving Kinlough, Rossinver, Askil and Garrison, was launched. Covering the Lough Melvin Catchment Area, this partnership is open to both men and women and is primarily concerned with the development of the Lough. Initially, the Partnership is focusing on the building of friendships and the establishment of cross-border connections. Competitions have been organised for the local primary schools and concerts have been held with all acts being performed by local community groups. Other significant events include:
  - The revival of Bilberry Sunday, a traditional festival held on the last Sunday of July (with financial support from the Rural Community Network33)
  - The development of a tourist and history guide on the natural and built environment covered by the Partnership (with financial support from Cooperation Ireland).

An increasing number of cross-border partnerships and projects now have an economic focus – particularly in the latter funding years. Broadly speaking, the focus of these programmes and partnerships has been information exchange and local capacity building; the implication being that within such a programme or partnership, one member is looking to the other to ‘show it the way’. For example:

- **The Rossinver-Belleek Partnership** is considered locally as a natural unity as both areas would see themselves as a natural hinterland for each other. Within this Partnership, which has an economic and training focus and is known informally as ‘Communities on Line’, Rossinver would see itself as the smaller, less-experienced partner who is hoping to learn from its more qualified partner (see www.bordercommunitiesonline.com). Both partners do, however, bring complimentary skills to the Partnership; with Belleek having experience of working with youth while Rossinver has, in the past, developed and rolled-out training courses that have been tailored to meet local needs. Because this is a funded initiative – under PEACE and ESF - all courses are free. They are open to those living within a 25km cross-border radius of the area; thus covering Garrison, Ballyshannon, Belcoo and Blacklion.

- **The recently concluded Cross-Border Opportunities Project** involved Leitrim County Council and Fermanagh Local Strategy Partnership working together to bring potential project partners together with an interest in cross-border collaboration and cooperation (see Box 6.1). Its innovativeness was in bringing potential cross-border partnerships together prior to any funding call – meaning that potential partners had an opportunity to guage each other and learn more about their respective

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33 A membership-based organisation, Rural Community Network (RCN) is a regional voluntary organisation established by community groups from rural areas in 1991 to articulate the voice of rural communities in Northern Ireland on issues relating to poverty, disadvantage and equality.
interests, objectives and operations prior to entering a formal partnership or process of engagement. It is increasingly been argued that this is how cross-border partnerships and relationships should be formed and nurtured; that funding should not be the key factor that unites organisations. This proven methodology has the potential to be adopted and applied within a number of other cross-border counties; provided it has the relevant agency support (see www.crossborderpartnerships.com/).

Box 6.1: The Cross Border Opportunities Project

Funded under INTERREG IIIA, this cross-border initiative involved Leitrim County Council and Fermanagh Local Strategy Partnership working in partnership to bring groups and networks together to form true cross-border partnerships with understanding and trust between partners. A database was developed detailing over 75 organisations with similar remits in both counties North and South of the Border and who would be interested in being contacted around specific issues. Through this database, it was envisaged that cross-border partnerships could be developed prior to any project ideas being circulated (which is not always the case).

Following a number of information events in both counties, over 70 organisations from both counties expressed an interest in this project and working with the partner organisations to see if they could ‘link-up’ with a counterpart in the other jurisdiction. These organisations represented sporting clubs, womens’ networks, resident associations, local development groups, elderly clubs, youth clubs, heritage associations, organisations working with people with disabilities and migrants, and arts and crafts groups.

During its lifetime (2004-2007), the Cross-Border Opportunities Project facilitated the development of over ten cross-border partnerships which are now working towards preparing joint action plans and securing funding. Based on its experiences, the Project notes five stages to establishing a cross-border partnership:

1. Assessment of groups
2. Networking
3. Site visits
4. Partnership training
5. Project building.

By having their plans in place, these partnerships will be in a position, if and when they secure funding, to roll-out their plans immediately.

Also, under the auspices of the Project, a Good Practice Guide for community groups and communities on preparing for cross-border partnerships was published.

• The Manorhamilton Enterprise Forum, established in 2003, is charged with the social, cultural and economic development of the North Leitrim town of Manorhamilton (see www.manorhamiltonenterpriseforum.com/). This includes raising enterprise awareness, increasing business competitiveness and working with all sectors of the community to facilitate the development of the social economy. As it has become involved in an increasing number of initiatives, it has found itself engaging – albeit informally – with a number of Northern-based networks and businesses. For example, the Forum has established an alliance with the Fermanagh Enterprise Board and a B&B business in County Down. Through these relationships, the Forum receives advice on marketing, business unit design and layout, etc.

More recently again still, projects and partnerships are being established which primarily have an environmental focus but which, behind this, also have both a social and economic function to play. For example:
The first designated eco-tourism region on the island of Ireland, the **Green Box Tourism Project**, was launched in 2003 (see [www.greenbox.ie](http://www.greenbox.ie)). The brainchild of the Western Development Commission, the Organic Centre in Rossinver and the multi-agency Western Development Tourism Programme, the Green Box includes most of counties Leitrim and Fermanagh and parts of counties Sligo, Cavan, Donegal and Roscommon. The focus of the project is tourism branding and marketing and the promotion of eco-tourism. All operators who sign up to this programme must comply with certain environmental standards in areas such as use of locally sourced produce, waste management and energy efficiency. This initiative is beginning to result in economic growth in the region through the attraction of tourists. It is also supporting the establishment of cross-border business networks around ‘eco-tourist’ products.

The majority of cross-border projects and partnerships highlighted are community-driven and incorporate a mix of border towns and villages – thus reflecting the high degree of social entrepreneurship and the number of small inter-dependent settlements that exist within this micro-region. One further cross-border initiative operating in this area which focuses specifically on the communities of Kiltyclogher, Cashel/Scribbagh and Garrison – and to a lesser extent Rossinver – and whose remit is entirely the promotion of local cross-border cooperation is the **KiltyCashel Project**.

### 6.3. The KiltyCashel Project

One of the most well-established and well-known of the ‘true’ cross-border partnerships in this area is the KiltyCashel Project (see [www.kiltycashel.com](http://www.kiltycashel.com)). Established in 2001, it was borne out of a recognition, by both the Kiltyclogher Community Council and the nearby Cashel Community Association, that by working together they could achieve far more for their respective communities and surrounds than they could by working alone. Both communities had long hoped to reunite in some way, and while both groups would have come together to meet and plan, they were not in a position financially to undertake any joint projects. That is, until 2002 when PEACE II monies were secured.

The broad objectives of the KiltyCashel Project, as agreed by both communities, are:

- To stimulate economic activity
- To enhance local social conditions
- To jointly develop cultural activities
- To develop new, and strengthen existing, cross-border relations
- To promote a better understanding between the communities.

Together, it was envisaged that this would “fast track the natural developments that should have taken place in this area over the last twenty-five years” (First Western Consulting, 2005:4) and, thus, make this area a better place to live and work. The project was to help both communities put the Troubles behind them.

During the Troubles, the village of Kiltyclogher declined socially, economically and physically. And this in turn, had negative consequences for the townland of...
Cashel/Scribbagh as Kiltyclogher was its main service centre. The close relationship between both these communities was badly damaged during this time with suspicions being nurtured, friendships being fractured and working relationships being damaged. Movement between both communities declined to a trickle – largely made up of those travelling to The (parish) Church of Ireland in Kiltyclogher on a Sunday morning across the only remaining physical link, a footbridge across the local river. Members of the Roman Catholic population in the South would collect older people at the footbridge and convey them by car to the village, and bring them back to the bridge after worship.

The KiltyCashel Project is a cross-border, cross-community initiative which lives by the ethos of ‘getting things done’. The work of the KiltyCashel Project is overseen by a Board of Management; with four members representing the Kiltyclogher Community Council and four representing the Cashel Community Association. Having had access to PEACE II and PEACE II Extension monies since its establishment has been invaluable to this Project – it has aided both communities in re-establishing old linkages and developing new ones. However, in saying that, the monies would have achieved little without the strong community spirit that exists within this area.

A lot of the work that has been undertaken by the Project to date has involved increasing the employability of local people. Initiatives – often supported by other local agencies such as Leitrim Partnership – have included:

- The provision of training programmes such as ECDL (the European Computer Driving Licence)
- Providing capacity-building training and courses on starting your own business
- Establishing a jobs club for local men and women to assist them in returning to the workforce.

Recognising the potential for tourism development in the area, and the employment opportunities this could generate, the Project, with monies from LEADER, commissioned a feasibility and route study into the development of walking and cycling routes in the immediate area and its surrounds. The final report noted the existence of many complementary resources and activities and the many opportunities the area offers for those interested in taking a cycling or walking/hiking holiday. While this initiative has not progressed further to date, the KiltyCashel Project has secured better infrastructure for the area in terms of obtaining a part-time library service for the village of Kiltyclogher and providing broadband facilities for the wider community.

Under INTERREG IIIA, the KiltyCashel Project received monies for a cross-border social development project in the area, the Cross Border Social Challenge Project. This initiative focused on social and mental health issues in this cross-border community.

The Project has also invested a lot of resources in building bridges between the ‘lost generation’; that is those who have missed out on knowing each other as a
result of the road closures and Troubles. This has mainly involved working with the youth in both areas through hosting cross-border workshops – but because there is no clear cross-border programme supporting youth activities, both communities have had to undertake activities as singular entities. But, through local initiative and commitment these have, inevitably, resulted in cross-border benefits. The Cashel Community Association, for example, received monies to establish a local youth club to which teenagers from Kiltyclogher were invited; they also hold a summer camp every year, to which children from both settlements have the opportunity to – and do – participate. The Kiltyclogher Community Council applied for, and received, monies from the Leitrim Led Taskforce for the development of a playground in Kiltyclogher. For the same site, the KiltyCashel Project secured monies from Groundwork36 to develop a children’s educational allotment. Both these children’s resources are used by families from both sides of the Border.

The shared culture of both communities has been recognised and celebrated by the KiltyCashel Project through the commissioning of sculptures for both communities;

- A blue butterfly which is now a focal point in the Peace Park in Cashel (located next to the sculpture representing both communities coming together which was commissioned as part of the Lough McNean Sculpture Trail – see Chapter 7)
- A pink butterfly in Kiltyclogher’s public park (located next to the sculpture represent the Black Pigs Dyke37, again commissioned as part of the Lough McNean Sculpture Trail).

This celebration has been hugely important and it has provided an outlet for both communities to ‘bury’ the Troubles.

By the time funding for the KiltyCashel Project ends in June 2008, this cross-border initiative will have been involved in over 40 different projects, engaged with over 20 agencies and secured over €1,250,000 in funding for the area. While it is not yet clear if they will exist beyond 2008, this has not stopped them looking to the future. Plans are currently underway to develop a cross-border primary school project on understanding the history of this cross-border area. A similar initiative is already underway between transition year students in the local secondary schools - St. Claire’s Comprehensive (Manorhamilton) and St. Mary’s (Brollagh, Garrison). The Project is also interested in developing a fold in the Cashel area which would house elderly from the surrounds and tele-cottages in Kiltyclogher whereby locals could engage in work full-time or part-time depending on their needs and responsibilities.

For both communities, the success of the KiltyCashel project can be attributed to two things:

a) All activities arise out of an identified local need
b) There is a core staff in place to oversee the development and implementation of the Project’s activities.

The Kiltyclogher Community Council and the Cashel Community Association are very passionate about the economic and social development of this cross-border community and are committed to its reinvigoration. Both communities take great pride in where they come from. Because of their historic links, it has been relatively easy for these communities to come together as ‘they move in step’. Having a core
staff in place throughout the lifetime of the project has been essential in ensuring that plans transformed into on-the-ground actions. The staff have grown with the project and, as a result, have become – together with the Project itself – an integral part of the community. There is rarely a day when a local from the area will not ‘drop into the office for a chat’ or ‘come seeking advice about one thing or another’.

6.4. Moving Forward: Building on Achievements and Broadening, Deepening and Sustaining Collaboration

It is widely recognised and accepted that, due to decades of out-migration, and the persistent structural weaknesses in the rural economy, the viability of communities, and community-based services in North Leitrim and North West Fermanagh is precarious. The depletion of human resources and services, together with the current disconnect between public services on both sides of the Border, constitutes a significant weakness in this cross-border micro-region.

On a more positive note, however, there is broad consensus – both at a local and policy level – that the future for this cross-border area is tourism, and in particular eco-tourism and associated activities. The quality of its landscape – both natural and built – is its core asset; and to date this endogenous potential has been under-developed and under-exploited. There are many initiatives and organisations in place both locally and throughout the wider region which can assist this micro-region in promoting itself and in developing a ‘marketable product’ – for example, Destination North West Initiative, North Leitrim Glens Tourism Co-op and the Green Box (see www.greenbox.ie). The communities need to work more closely with these bodies from hereon in and, with their support, develop a niche product; there are many options available ranging from water-based activities to hiking, cycling to health farms and painting to organic cookery.

This area is already well-known as a retreat for artists and craft workers – a reputation that has not yet been exploited to its full. In association with the Leitrim Design Centre in Carrick-on-Shannon (see http://intoleitrim.com/), the Melvin Craft Centre in Garrison, Belleek Pottery (see www.belleek.ie/) and the Sculpture Centre in Manorhamilton, together with local hostleries (hotels, B&Bs, guesthouses and hostels), there is much potential to promote arts and crafts holidays, breaks and training programmes. Potential exists also for local resource centres and educational institutes to come together to develop joint modules or action learning programmes which could be accredited over the long-term; for example, a course on organic farming and cookery between the Organic Centre in Rossinver (see www.theorganiccentre.ie/) and the Enniskillen campus of South West College (see www.swc.ac.uk/).

Potential exists around the development of a network of enterprise forums in the vicinity of the case study villages. Based on the model of the Manorhamilton Enterprise Forum, and building on its existing links with the Fermanagh Enterprise Board, scope exists to develop a complementary forum in each of the surrounding larger towns – for example, Belleek, Derrygonnelly, Bundoran, Kinlough/Tullaghan, Drumkeeran and Drumshanbo. Working together, these forums could promote and market the region as a location for SMEs and identify training and skills needed.
locally to match the type of jobs / companies being targeted. In adopting such a collaborative approach, this cross-border region could potentially become home to sectorally-based clusters of industry and services – potentially with a focus on agri-business or eco-industry.

The aforementioned strong civic spirit in this cross-border region, together with the high level of community development that has emerged in the past twenty or so years, will be a major strength in moving forward in this direction. The communities willingness to engage with other key stakeholders such as local businesses and development agencies, together with the capacity of local community leaders to play an increasingly prominent role in cross-border collaboration and cooperation, will ensure that this cluster of settlements continue to work together to capitalise on the areas ‘potentiality’; a ‘potentiality’ that is already well recognised and valued.

There are concerns, however, that if it is left to the community groups alone to cultivate this ‘potentiality’, progress will continue through short-term, small-scale issue-based programmes of activity; primarily because of capacity and resource issues. Given the need for strategic, sustainable and integrated action going forward, it is no longer considered possible or feasible for community groups alone to sustain the level of cross-border activity that has characterised this region to date (see Table 6.4). This is particularly true in the case of the new funding programmes, PEACE III and INTERREG IV; predominantly because of their changing focus, where emphasis is now being put on large-scale projects and the enhanced role for regional and local agencies.

**Table 6.4: Stakeholders and their Roles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Key Roles / Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Groups</td>
<td>Ensuring local ownership of the development process and a commitment to meeting local needs. Maintaining the focus on territorial / endogenous potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Integrated Area Planning; shared vision planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector (incl. Statutory Agencies)</td>
<td>Developing the areas potential through enhanced local services and directing of agency resources to promote integrated and balanced territorial and regional development; rather than focusing on ‘growth-poles’. The provision of infrastructure and the development of connectivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>Enhanced participation; Investment and economic development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Government (RoI &amp; N Ire)</td>
<td>Greater coordination of objectives, priorities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instead partnerships involving a wide range of local stakeholders, and which bring a wide range of skills to the table, must be established. Furthermore, none of the cross-border community groups in this cross-jurisdictional area believe they will be able to survive – just yet – without funding from PEACE, INTERREG or agencies such as the International Fund for Ireland (IFI); although there are concerns regarding the direction in which these new programmes, in particular PEACE III, are going.

At the workshop held in November 2007 for the Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver area, there was a very strong feeling among delegates that the community and voluntary sector should continue to remain centrally involved in future cross-border collaboration and cooperation initiatives. At a minimum, citizens and associations should be informed about, and consulted regarding, all aspects of collaboration. However, such consultation cannot be based on agency-led meetings, but must instead be based on partnership approaches and processes.

The outstanding challenges, therefore, for this cross-border community in moving forward will be to (a) secure and sustain agency supports for local development, (b) promote collaborative efforts, involving a wide range of stakeholders, to enable the local communities deal with rural restructuring and revitalisation, and (c) avail of opportunities for diversification presented by new national and EU rural development programmes.

6.5. Synthesis

The cluster of villages on the Leitrim-Fermanagh border encompassing Kiltyclogher, Rossinver, Cashel/Scribbagh and Garrison are a hive of cross-border activity. As the funding programmes have become more sophisticated over the years in terms of their focus and end objectives, so too have the type and scale of projects in which local groups and organisations have been engaging. The broad range of cross-border initiatives either under way or completed cover social, economic and environmental objectives. Their make-up and timeframe is very much dictated by how they are funded and their focus. Unsurprisingly, those programmes with an economic focus generally tend to be based on informal linkages or partnerships where one partner is more dominant than the other (with the weaker partner engaging so as to learn).

The common thread running through all cross-border programmes in the area is their emphasis on social capital. Every project or partnership has been concerned, to some degree, with rebuilding the social fabric of this remote, rural Border area. This research programme uncovered great energy and passion for community development in this cross-jurisdictional region. The communities have a vision for the area – both in terms of how it should develop and who should be involved. They recognise the areas strengths and weaknesses. They are aware of government policy as it relates to the surrounding larger urban centres; and while the focus of these policies could be seen as a negative (in terms of competitiveness), the communities are hoping to tap into the ‘growth potential’ of the region as they work together to unlock their own under-developed assets – their landscape and culture.

38 These concerns relate in particular to Priority 1.1 of the Programme, Building Positive Relations at a Local Level. Emphasis is being placed on reconciliation through acknowledging and dealing with the conflict of the Troubles. To date the KiltyCashel Project has dealt subtly with such issues in its community development work. This community have expressed concerns about engaging in formal peace building workshops – as reported by First Western Consulting in 2005 – arguing that they do not wish to go down the route of labelling people into target groups.
Cross-Border Cooperation in Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo

The central border area within the Irish Border region is a predominantly rural area, with the majority of the population living in small towns and villages. This underdeveloped sub-region has suffered demographically, socially and economically because of its proximity to the Troubles. This chapter is focusing on the case study area of Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo (see Figure 7.1); an area involving the counties of Leitrim, Cavan and Fermanagh, and which is united on a cross-border basis by Lough McNean. Speaking of County Cavan, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) noted that during, and as a result of, the Troubles, it suffered from “long periods of uncertainty, insecurity and limited outside investment” (SEUPB, 2005:56); a summation that applies to this cross-border micro-region as a whole. Many would argue that because of its nationalist politics, the central border area – and in particular the counties covered by this case study together with County Monaghan – would have been ‘blacklisted’ by both governments as a region not suitable for investment. During the Troubles, people living in this area had to rely on themselves for economic survival – this resulted in a certain amount of smuggling taking place.
Figure 7.1: Locational Context: Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo

Prepared by ARO, 2008; ©Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland Copyright Permit No. MP006608
While not affected by direct road closures during the Troubles, this micro-region did experience economic decline as a result of the installation of customs posts and border patrols. Between counties Cavan and Fermanagh, for example, the only border crossing that remained open during the Troubles was the road linking Blacklion and Belcoo. However, the trend of decline had already started prior to the onset of the Troubles in the late 1960s; the closure of the railway in Belcoo in 1957 – which linked the urban settlements of Sligo and Enniskillen – was a major blow to this cross-border community. By reducing its connectivity and accessibility to the larger urban settlements, the possibilities for trade and attracting inward investment were greatly reduced.

Cross-border cooperation and collaboration has, therefore, become a lifeline for this micro-region. This has largely been community-driven – albeit with the support of the relevant local government agencies – and has tended to focus on socio-economic development. This cooperation has been both informal and formal in nature; but irrespective of its nature, it has led to mutual benefits for those involved.

7.1. Context: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

Glenfarne is a small spread-out rural village in North Leitrim. Situated on the N16, it is 26km from Enniskillen and 40km from Sligo. The village it rather unique in that it consists of three distinct nodes, each of which is approx 1-2km apart. Located close to the shores of Lough MacNean, this village is famous for its ‘Ballroom of Romance’\(^\text{39}\). The area is characterised by small farms made up of mixed quality land. The village provides its population with a limited range of services and these, together with a small number of businesses, provide some local employment. The majority of the population, however, tends to commute to the nearby larger urban centres for work; for example Manorhamilton, Carrick-on-Shannon (County Leitrim). The lack of childcare and youth facilities in the area is further considered an issue in keeping young families in the area.

Blacklion is a small village of approximately 174 persons (CSO, 2006) located in West Cavan. It is close to the Border with County Fermanagh, with the village being linked to the village of Belcoo by a road bridge. Blacklion is also located close to the shores of Lower and Upper Lough MacNean, as well as the Cavan Burren and the Marble Arch Caves. There is much evidence to suggest that this is an old, well-established settlement. The limestone plateau south of Blacklion, centred on the Burren Forest, shows extensive evidence of settlements throughout the Neolithic and Bronze Ages. The main employers in the area are agriculture, manufacturing and professional services – but most of this is located outside of Blacklion; with people commuting to the nearby centres of Enniskillen, Derrylin (County Fermanagh) and Manorhamilton.

The village of Belcoo, located in County Fermanagh, is co-located with Blacklion. It has a population of approximately 200 people\(^\text{40}\) (NISRA, 2001). These border villages, linked by a bridge across the Belcoo River, serve as a natural hinterland for each other. Belcoo serves as a retail and service centre while Blacklion serves as a social hub. The village of Belcoo is home to a number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), many of which are housed in the local enterprise units. The

\(^{39}\) The inspiration for, and title of, a short story and TV film by William Trevor in 1972.

\(^{40}\) According to the last Census of Population for Northern Ireland in 2001, the population of the village of Belcoo – with Holywell – was 486 persons. Further information on Belcoo can be downloaded at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belcoo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belcoo)
population of the area is growing (50% between 1991 and 2001) and this is in part attributed to its close proximity to the large urban centre of Enniskillen (18km away).

Historically, there have been strong links between these three rural villages – and these have been further strengthened in the past decade with the removal of the border patrols and customs posts, and the reopening of those roads which were blocked and / or cratered during the Troubles in the surrounding area. In terms of natural landscape, such is the similarity that there is nothing to indicate you are passing through three counties as you travel between these three villages. There are strong family and social ties between these villages; the result of people living and working on either side of the Border and cross-border marriages. There is a lot of cross-border movement around employment, farming activities and access to services.

7.1.1. The Issues
During the Troubles, the local border patrols, customs posts and road closures, together with the curfew41 for crossing the bridge linking Blacklion and Belcoo, led to reduced mobility and a social and economic disconnect within this natural hinterland. Friends and family lost contact with each other. It became increasingly difficult for farmers to conduct their day-to-day activities of tending to livestock – passing through the patrols and custom posts on the Border became a time-consuming chore.

All three villages could be described as structurally weak. They are limited in terms of how, and in what direction, they can grow. They are poorly served in terms of road and rail infrastructure; with the lack of non-primary sector industries and R&D facilities also being considered a major deficit. Recent ‘new builds’ have tended to be small-scale in nature – mainly one-off structures – and this in turn has implications for population growth. In terms of service provision, public transport links do exist to the main urban centres but concerns have been raised about their frequency and timings. On a more positive note, the area benefits from broadband access – an important factor for potential new small-scale business start-ups (see Table 7.1.).

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41 An 8.00p.m. curfew was in place in terms of crossing the bridge linking the villages of Blacklion and Belcoo. The bridge could only be crossed after this time if the person had a permit – and this had to be applied and paid for.
Indications are there is very little cross-border or inter-village cooperation around the provision of social services, such as sharing of sports grounds or community centres or establishing joint clubs. This is a lost opportunity, particularly for the youth, as it lessens the opportunities for these near neighbours to come together.

The size of the villages impacts negatively on the numbers that can – and do – become involved in community initiatives. Most community groups in the area operate with Boards of 6-7 people. This in turn impacts on the range and scale of projects with which these communities can actively engage; the tendency being to get involved in small-scale, short-term initiatives which the groups know can – and will be – successful. While this could be considered ‘playing it safe’, the benefit of such an approach is that these successes leave in their wake a ‘feel good factor’ about cross-border and cross-community cooperation.

In terms of cross-border cooperation, the villages of Glenfarne, Blacklion and Belcoo have different priorities in the main – therefore, identifying common ground on which to work together can be difficult and relationships can become fraught. As a result, much of the cross-border cooperation that has occurred has tended to be issue-based and informal in nature. In addition, there has tended to be very little communication between local councillors on a cross-border basis – a shortcoming attributed to the lack of any formal space to get together. Furthermore, cross-border programmes of activity require greater commitment and investment than those which are not cross-border in focus. Where the partnership does not come about organically, or where its need is not immediately recognised, this commitment can often be lacking. Glenfarne, for example, has no immediate identifiable socio-economic links with either Blacklion or Belcoo – unsurprising when you consider that all three villages are located in different counties42. Rather, links in this micro-region are more historical and traditional – for example, centred around the railway; therefore, the cross-border relationship between these villages can, on occasion, be contrived.

### Table 7.1: Services Available in Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service / Amenity</th>
<th>Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Transport</strong></td>
<td>Bus Eireann / Ulster Bus service connects Sligo-Enniskillen daily (part of larger service linking Westport-Belfast); Passes through three case study villages; Imbalance in timings – no evening service. Rural Lift covers wide area but services generally tend to operate Monday to Friday with one return service per day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broadband Access</strong></td>
<td>Available in all three villages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recycling / Bring Centre / Waste Management</strong></td>
<td>Available in Glenfarne &amp; Blacklion; Not available in Belcoo – closest services in North being in Garrison or Florencecourt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Centre</strong></td>
<td>Villages have a community centre or resource centre; home to wide range of activities; in some instances, in need of refurbishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sports Grounds</strong></td>
<td>Available in all villages; albeit Glenfarne seeking new ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water Recreation Amenities</strong></td>
<td>Partly developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elderly Clubs</strong></td>
<td>These have been established in most communities, with some working on a cross-border basis (e.g. Active Age).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Club</strong></td>
<td>In Glenfarne, Blacklion and Belcoo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42 As noted in Chapter 6, Glenfarnè’s socio-cultural links are with Kiltyclogher; for example, a joint gaelic football team.
7.1.2. The Challenges

Within some of the villages, there have been issues around the number of community development organisations in existence and the implications of this on volunteer numbers, membership and competition for funding. In Belcoo, for example, there was until recently three community groups – all with an emphasis on promoting local development. Recognising the additional challenges this created for the area, all three have now amalgamated under the one banner: the McNean Community Partnership. The challenge for this group was then to establish clear roles for its members and devise a programme of action that met with the approval of all involved.

The cross-border funding programmes, such as PEACE, were seen as a very positive development when they came on stream in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Towns and villages along the length of the Border have benefited from them in that many developments took place sooner than would have been possible without the funding. However, the imbalance in terms of proportion of monies awarded to each jurisdiction has become a bone of contention between communities. Between the villages of Blacklion and Belcoo, for example, the disproportionate split in monies awarded under PEACE and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) programmes caused tensions; instead of the intended aim of bringing these communities closer together. Partnerships were not considered equal. More recently, the changing direction of both EU funding programmes and philanthropic funds is causing concern within this micro-region. As well as IFI coming to an end in 2010, there are fears that future funding under PEACE III and INTERREG IV will be geared towards supporting large-scale infrastructure projects rather than community development and capacity building projects.

Spatial patterns regarding the use of services clearly demonstrate the impact of the Border. For the most-part, residents of all three villages are required to travel distances of between 10-20km for basic services (see Tables 7.2. and 7.3.). Interestingly, though unsurprisingly, there is a tendency to avail of services within one’s jurisdiction, even where a service across the Border is nearer.

Table 7.2: Locations at Which Citizens Currently Access Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Glenfarne</th>
<th>Blacklion</th>
<th>Belcoo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s Surgery</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>In village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(node closest to Ballroom of Romance)</td>
<td>(node closest to Ballroom of Romance)</td>
<td>(node closest to Ballroom of Romance)</td>
<td>(node closest to Ballroom of Romance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency Service / A&amp;E Unit</td>
<td>Sligo (45km)</td>
<td>Sligo (50km) / Cavan (47km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (18km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (14km)</td>
<td>Dowra (17km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (18km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Level School</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (14km)</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (22km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (18km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (14km)</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (22km)</td>
<td>Mobile Library*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>In village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (14km)</td>
<td>Dowra**/ Manorhamilton (17-22km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen/ Belleek (18-56km)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*every two weeks.  
** closing down.

43 These included the Belcoo and District Community Partnership, the Mullycovet Mill Association and the Belcoo Development Association.  
44 Funding was generally split in favour of Northern Ireland.
A clear anomaly emerges in respect of access to hospital and medical emergency services which works against residents of Blacklion and Glenfarne. Residents from both these villages are obliged to travel 50km and 45km respectively to hospital in Sligo – even though Enniskillen has a hospital with an emergency unit and is only 19km to 24km away respectively.

In policy terms, there are concerns in this cross-border area that not enough consideration is given to how national and regional policies impact on local communities. The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland both promote the concept of balanced regional development. Towards this, both documents identify a series of ‘gateways’ and ‘hubs’, whose role it is to sustain that region’s growth. For the central border area, in which Glenfarne, Blacklion and Belcoo are located, the identified ‘Gateway’ for the South is Sligo and the ‘Hub’ for the North is Enniskillen. Both these urban centres, Sligo in particular, are located quite a distance from the case study area (between 20-50 km). For the villages of Glenfarne and Blacklion, Manorhamilton has been identified as the urban centre with ‘urban strengthening opportunities’ for its surrounds. On this basis, one would therefore expect that any future economic investment – in terms of industrial growth, for example – will be directed towards this identified centre. This in turn has implications for the future location of housing and the consolidation of service delivery. Within the RDS, the village of Belcoo is noted as an area of particular rural disadvantage but little is said of what this classification means in policy terms. With Enniskillen identified as the main ‘hub’ serving this area, and with smaller towns and villages tasked with underpinning and reinforcing its growth, it is assumed that the growth of Belcoo will be limited to some housing and community service functions. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region categorise villages at the scale of Blacklion and Glenfarne as ‘rural’ but with

### Table 7.3: Proximity to / Distance from Selected Essential Services in Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo: Locations of the closest service (geographically)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Glenfarne</th>
<th>Blacklion</th>
<th>Belcoo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s Surgery</td>
<td>In village* (node closest to Ballroom of Romance)</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>In village **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency Service / A&amp;E Unit</td>
<td>Enniskillen (18km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (18km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (18km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (14km)</td>
<td>Dowra (17km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (18km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Level School</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (14km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (18km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (18km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>Kiltyclogher (10km)</td>
<td>Kiltyclogher (17km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (18km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>In village</td>
<td>In village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>Manorhamilton (14km)</td>
<td>Dowra*** (17km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen*** (18km)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Part-time surgery hours between Glenfarne, Manorhamilton and Kiltyclogher.
** Part-time surgery hours between Florencecourt, Kinawley and Belcoo.
*** Credit Union in Blacklion and Belcoo on part-time basis.

A clear anomaly emerges in respect of access to hospital and medical emergency services which works against residents of Blacklion and Glenfarne. Residents from both these villages are obliged to travel 50km and 45km respectively to hospital in Sligo – even though Enniskillen has a hospital with an emergency unit and is only 19km to 24km away respectively.
‘strong potential for diversification’; which in turn should be developed based on their indigenous strength. Of the options given, those potentials which apply to this region are tourism, forestry and small-scale enterprises. The Guidelines also promote the development of the strategic radial and linking corridors between Enniskillen-Sligo and Cavan-Sligo (the A4-N16 and N87-A32); the improvement of which would greatly benefit the villages of Glenfarne, Blacklion and Belcoo by opening up their accessibility.

Both the NSS and RDS promote cross-border cooperation and emphasise that many opportunities exist for cross-border planning and development. However, this is not carried through into the local plans: the Leitrim County Development Plan 2003-2009, the Cavan County Development Plan 2003-2009 or the Fermanagh Area Plan 2007. None of these plans identify a vision for cross-border cooperation; and in the case of counties Cavan and Fermanagh which have a number of towns and villages that span the Border, this is surprising. As noted in Chapter 6, the Leitrim Plan promotes population growth and rural regeneration and this is to be achieved through residential development and, where the relevant infrastructure is in place, industrial and retail outlets. In 2007, as part of Variation No. 7, a settlement hierarchy in the shape of a zoning map was produced for Glenfarne. By clarifying both ‘where’ and ‘what type’ of development is permissible in this village, it is envisaged that will support the future development of each of the distinct nodes that, together, make up the village of Glenfarne. In the case of the Cavan and Fermanagh Plans, their commonality is in adopting a limited growth scenario based on perceived local needs and protection of the villages’ character. Within the Cavan Plan, Blacklion is identified as a local service and employment centre. The Plan notes, however, that the area is less well served than its neighbour, Belcoo – and seems somewhat resigned to the fact that this will always be the case. Future retail development in Blacklion is to be limited to the village core; with most emphasis being placed on the development of tourism infrastructure. Tourism, based on natural and cultural heritage, is regarded as the ‘growth sector’ for this area. The development of Belcoo is also restricted under the Fermanagh Plan – with limited housing and retail outlets being planned for. Again, the emphasis is being put on developing the area as a tourist attraction, particularly around water-based recreation. If followed through, both villages will compliment each other in terms of the type of tourism-based activities they provide; an ‘accidental success’ given the limited contact between the councils on the preparation of either of these plans.

7.1.3. The Opportunities
Because of the closeness of the three villages, the residents of each tend to know each other. There is a strong local community spirit within and between each village. Residents support each others’ events. Given their close proximity, the villages of Blacklion and Belcoo would be regarded by many as ‘one big village, one community’; although there are a number of strong personalities in Blacklion who would not agree with this scenario (Interview, Community Activist, Blacklion). There is no sense that an inter-jurisdictional border still exists between these communities; the two currencies – Euro and Sterling – are, for example, used interchangeably in the villages of Blacklion and Belcoo.

The strategic position of all three villages on the N16-A4 (the Sligo-Enniskillen corridor) currently results in a lot of through-traffic passing through each; and this is
regarded by many as a ‘business opportunity’ that is currently being untapped. This micro-region is home to a number of hostelries and eateries – and there is a strong case to be made for improved signage in the area which flags their existence and location.

The villages of Glenfarne, Blacklion and Belcoo have a number of enterprise units with the units in Blacklion designed especially to support food production/processing. The units in each village are of varying sizes – thus providing potential small businesses with a choice of unit based on their own particular needs. Anecdotal evidence suggests that companies will set up in areas where space is available (Interview, Local Development Agency, Cavan) and remain there as their business grows. These units are aimed at small to medium sized enterprises and have been relatively successful to date in attracting clients.

Tourism is a very important activity in this cross-border area. In particular, the area sees its future lying in eco-tourism. There are already a number of walking trails, forest parks and outdoor activity centres in the area. In addition there is a wealth of lakes and rivers to cater for angling holidays and geological features such as the Marble Arch Caves GeoPark and the Cavan Burren. Properly packaged and marketed – together with a growth in tourist accommodation provision – it is widely held that this cross-border micro-region would become very popular with tourists. Regular meetings are already taking place in the wider area on developing the tourism potential of Lough McNean and its surrounds in a symbiotic manner.

However, to capitalise on this opportunity arising from the beauty of this area, action must be taken by the relevant authorities to stem the illegal dumping that is taking place; particularly in the scenic lay-bys around Belcoo. In addition, the tensions that exist between some of the stronger personalities in each village, particularly in Blacklion and Belcoo, will have to be addressed.

7.2. Collaboration in Practice: Focus, Remit and Processes

This cross-border area is characterised by the presence of many active and enthusiastic community development associations. The Glenfarne Community Development Trust has been a major player in all community based activities in the area; including the development of a local playground, lakeside walks in Glenfarne Demense and small enterprise units in an old national school based locally. In Blacklion, the Killinagh Community Council has a long history of working for the betterment of the area. Its members are all very knowledgeable – not only about the area itself but also about the various funding programmes and bureaucracies involved. The McNean Community Partnership in Belcoo is, in effect, an umbrella group of three local development agencies; each of which are responsible for overseeing different initiatives in the area. These include the management of the local community centre, the restoration of Mullycovet Mill, and general improvements to the village. While Glenfarne and Belcoo have a strong working relationship, as would Blacklion with Florencecourt, Marlbank and Killeshel (County

“**You can get anyone to an area once; the challenge is getting them back for a second visit**”

Community Activist, Belcoo

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47 The Blacklion Enterprise Centre was built with the support of PEACE II monies (£600,000).
48 The Cavan Burren is located next to the Marble Arch Caves and Marlbank and is considered by many to be the finest integrated geological and archaeological landscape in Ireland (Interview, Community Activist, Blacklion).
49 Established in 1975 – primarily because the area felt isolated from the rest of County Cavan.
Fermanagh), cross-border cooperation is not their main objective. There are, in fact, few organisations with a cross-border brief or focus in this area. While the local Active Age Groups and Irish Countrywoman’s Associations (ICA) do operate on a cross-jurisdictional basis, the main cross-border player identified for this region was Community Connections.

A Community Development Project (CDP) working in West Cavan, North Leitrim and West Fermanagh, Community Connections was established in 1991 (see www.communityconnections.ie/). It has adopted a developmental approach to addressing the issues facing the cross-border community it serves. Through this model, projects and programmes are encouraged to become independent and sustainable entities. With an interest in policy, and changing how agencies deliver their services in rural areas, Community Connections has tended to adopt a strategic approach in identifying priority areas of action and developing responses to these. The organisation concentrates on the identified social needs of the area and the benefits of how social stimulation and activity keep people and communities healthy. Its programme of activities are rolled-out on a local, cross-county and cross-border basis and are aimed at youth, elderly, carers and society in general (see Box 7.1).

Box 7.1. Community Connections: Working with Youth and Elderly

Over the years, Community Connections has supported a number of innovative cross-border programmes of activity; primarily aimed at the youth and older members of society in its constituent area.

Youth Initiatives
The Cleenish Youth Club, Arney, Co. Fermanagh has developed a cross-border partnership with the Localise Youth Group in Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. Through joint activities, the youth from both communities have discussed what life is like for young people on both sides of the Border.

Older People’s Groups
Age Concern, Irvinestown, Co. Fermanagh and Club Cluainin, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim – both older peoples groups – received funding in 2006 from North South Rural Voice Ltd to hold a series of networking events to promote mutual understanding, break down stereotypes and encourage new and emerging friendships. One of the workshops organised focused on ‘Looking Back at the Troubles’.

Active Age in Blacklion has opened its membership to older people living in Belcoo. Plans are afoot to open membership to other cross-border communities in the area and to organise outings on a cross-border basis. The Group has participated in the ‘Positive Ageing – Age has no Borders’ programme.

Box 7.2. Community Connections: Breaking Moulds, Building Friendships

The Breaking Moulds, Building Friendships programme has been in existence for four years. Piloted in association with St. Clare’s Comprehensive School, Manorhamilton, this project involves transition year students and older people working together. This innovative project came about by accident; carers working with Community Connections held a meeting with the school principal who, in turn, was interested in developing a community project as part of Transition Year.

The programme involves developing a series of activities which bring the students and elderly together in small, facilitated workshops. Examples of activities in which they engage together include curling, creative writing, wax and bronze sculpting, kite making, gardening, and carpentry. These activities are designed with ease of participation in mind; a key part of the programme is that the students and the elderly stand on an equal footing.

Almost 300 people have taken part in this programme to date; from 2004 to mid-2007. These have included Glencar Active Age, Blacklion/Belcoo Active Age, Manorhamilton, Active Age, Arus Breffni Nursing Home and the Day Hospital Manorhamilton. The project is already engaging with cross-border organisations but scope exists to widen this further; and in the future involve other schools on a cross-border basis.
Its emphasis is on the creation of long-term sustainable structures so that communities can begin to address their own needs. The organisation has, for example, long had an interest in the educational side of projects and would like to see greater emphasis on such initiatives in funding programmes. One innovative cross-county initiative which has the potential to be rolled-out on a cross-border basis is the ‘Breaking Moulds, Building Friendships’ project which involves transition year students meeting and working with older people (see Box 7.2.).

While the number of cross-border community development organisations in this Border area is small, the number and range of activities being undertaken on a cross-jurisdictional basis is not. Arts and heritage is an area that has received great attention in this cross-border region. It has been recognised as a way of reconciling communities – both cross-border and cross-community – in a non-confrontational manner. A number of these initiatives relate specifically to the communities of Glenfarne, Blacklion and Belcoo; while others relate to the wider area but indirectly bring benefits to this micro-region. For example;

- The Bréifne project is a relatively new initiative that is growing in importance to the area. It markets the Breifne region – involving counties Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Cavan and Fermanagh – as a whole in tourism terms; and as part of this has produced a high quality guide and DVD highlighting what the wider area has to offer (see www.breifne.ie)

- The Cathal Bui Festival is an annual arts and heritage festival that, traditionally, was jointly organised by the communities of Blacklion and Belcoo but which, in recent years, has primarily become a Blacklion event. The festival commemorates the poet Cathal Bui who it is believed was a native of this area. Events include drama, music, talks on local history and archaeology, and poetry readings

- The Glenfarne Gala Festival is a weekend-long event that is organised and run by the local community but which serves a cross-border catchment. The festival has a strong family ethos; in that there is something for everyone – children’s events, underage football, fishing competitions, drama and music. A key element of this year’s festival is the production of William Trevor’s ‘Ballroom of Romance’ in the actual Ballroom of Romance (see Footnote 39). The organisation and development of the festival is also emerging as a platform for the advancement and promotion of youth engagement in community development

- The Lough McNean Sculpture Trail Committee is a partnership between the Manorhamilton Arts Group and the Belcoo and District Development Group. In 1999, the Committee approached Coillte to discuss the possibility of developing a sculpture and visual arts project in the Glenfarne Demense; its objective being to promote reconciliation between the communities of counties Leitrim, Cavan and Fermanagh. This project involved ten artists who worked in close collaboration with the surrounding local communities, residents associations, womens’ groups and special interest groups. The resulting sculptures are located around the shores of Lough McNean, stretching from Letterbreen to Kiltyclogher; with three of the sculptures located in Glenfarne Demense.

51 Taking place from 31st July to 4th August 2008.
As noted by Peter Quinn, Consultant and former GAA President, “Businesses in the Border region are experiencing difficulties taking up the innovation challenge – lack of resources, fragmented information and advice being some of the main obstacles” (Conference Presentation, 7 March 2007). However, there are a number of initiatives underway which are addressing these deficits and promoting economic growth and development. And irrespective of whether they have a local or cross-jurisdictional focus, they are leading to mutual benefits on a cross-border basis through the proximity of the neighbouring counties involved and the towns and villages themselves. For example:

- **The Cavan Innovation and Technology Centre (CITC)** is an innovation, training and events centre which was established in 2001 (see [www.cavanitc.ie](http://www.cavanitc.ie)). The Centre operates as an outreach and distance learning centre through a number of academic partners; including University of Ulster and University of Limerick. Courses are primarily focused on business development and marketing. The CITC is also involved in a number of cross-border projects. In association with Omagh College, Sligo County Enterprise Board and the North West Institute, the Centre has rolled out a programme entitled *Women Stepping Up*; funded under PEACE II, this provided management skills training to female entrepreneurs in the SME sector.

- **Launched in January 2007, the West Cavan / Fermanagh Development Project** is a two-year initiative being driven by the Cavan County Enterprise Board and Fermanagh University Partnership (see [www.cavanenterprise.ie/funded_programmes/other_funded_programmes.51.html](http://www.cavanenterprise.ie/funded_programmes/other_funded_programmes.51.html)). Its focus in on helping disadvantaged and structurally weak areas to develop socially and economically (see Box 7.3.). It stems from a study carried out by the Enterprise Board in 2005 on *Fostering an Enterprise Culture in Swanlinbar*. Focusing on social and economic needs, the findings of this study were thought to relate to the West Cavan area in general. A project manager has been appointed to oversee this initiative; having a worker ‘on the ground’ is seen as key to the success of this programme.

**Box 7.3: West Cavan / West Fermanagh Development Project**

Funded under PEACE II, and in part by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan, the West Cavan / West Fermanagh Development Project is a joint initiative between Cavan County Enterprise Board and Fermanagh University Partnership.

The Project aims to implement a strategic economic development programme in this cross-border area which will redress the high levels of economic and social disadvantage in existence. The areas covered by the project in West Cavan are Bawnboy, Swanlinbar, Blacklion, Dowra and Glangevlin; and in West Fermanagh, Derrylin, Florencecourt, Kinawley and Belcoo.

Its main areas of activity are:

a) The provision of a mentoring service and supports to new businesses
b) The provision of training for women wanting to establish their own business
c) The development of training courses to meet the needs of local enterprises at various stages in their development
d) The encouragement of business networking on a cross-border basis.

One of the first actions has been to prepare an economic profile of each area. An inventory of infrastructure is also to be prepared. Together these will inform businesses and potential investors of the resources available locally – as well as the gaps.
Cross-border initiatives are also being rolled out to address the infrastructure and service deficit in this region. As rural services continue to close down (banking, post offices), it is becoming increasingly important for neighbouring communities to work together to arrive at an alternative solution. And where this is not proving possible on a cross-border basis because of legislative, taxation and insurance issues, innovative alternatives are being unearthed. For example;

- Established in 1995, *Rural Lift* is a rural transport provider around the Blacklion area (see [www.rurallift.ie](http://www.rurallift.ie)). During the Troubles, the only road in County Cavan to cross the Border was that linking Blacklion and Belcoo; and the only public transport provider to cross the Border was Bus Eireann. Funded under PEACE II, *Rural Lift* trained a number of drivers (32 in total) to provide a local bus service on six routes and to employ a local transport coordinator. The service is now cross-border in nature; *Rural Lift* has a sister organisation in County Fermanagh – also called *Rural Lift*[^52], and the training provided is recognised in both Northern Ireland and Ireland.

### 7.3. Lough McNean: Leading to Informal Cooperation

Unlike the previous case studies (see Chapters 5 and 6), there is no cross-border organisation whose remit specifically applies to the development of Glenfarne, Blacklion and Belcoo. Therefore, this section will focus on a recently concluded cross-border initiative in which all three villages were involved – and which demonstrates the possibilities open to this area if they were to establish a more formal collaborative structure.

The wetland and upland habitats of the Lough McNean Basin is a uniting factor in this cross-border region. Its potential is recognised by those living and working in North Leitrim, West Cavan and West Fermanagh. Under the leadership of the Glenfarne Development Trust, the *Lough McNean Tourism Initiative*, involving the communities of Glenfarne, Blacklion and Belcoo, received funding under INTERREG IIIA and commenced in 2003 (see [www.visitmacnean.com/](http://www.visitmacnean.com/)). As well as the Glenfarne Trust, this community-based initiative involved the Killinagh Community Council and the McNean Community Partnership – all of which had a pre-existing relationship with each other. The key objectives of this economy building initiative were:

- To unite the three villages as one tourism destination
- To raise awareness, and the profile, of Lough McNean as a tourist destination
- To raise awareness of local conservation and biodiversity issues
- To bring the community and business sectors together under one common goal – the development of the local economy
- To improve access to places of interest (through better signage for example).

The Project was overseen by a Board of Management which included representatives from all three partner organisations. Membership included community activists and business people, all with an interest in the regeneration and development of the wider area.
Delivery of the objectives has meant working closely with tourist boards, local authorities, agencies such as the Ulster Wildlife Trust and the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Green Box. Therefore, one of the first actions undertaken by the community-based partners was to appoint a project manager whose role it would be to ensure that all objectives were met and that all proposed actions were delivered on. Appointed in February 2004, it became clear from the outset that the manager would be challenged each step of the way during the lifetime of this project; for it was envisaged that the work programme would be regularly reviewed in association with the local communities to ensure the right activities were being pursued, the funds were being spent appropriately and value for money was being generated.

Interestingly – and rather challenging – the community and business sectors worked very closely together in the roll-out of this three-year project. This was a new departure for both sectors in this cross-border area. The initial struggle was getting the business representatives to take time out of their schedules to attend events – but once they did this, they became active contributors. Of particular interest to the local business communities was the opportunity this project provided to come together on a cross-border basis to share experiences and ideas and consider ‘economies of scope’.

Much of the work undertaken under this EU-funded initiative was cross-border in nature. For example, a wildlife club was established, the emphasis being on local flora and fauna and the hosting of walks and talks on same. A key development which continues to benefit all three villages was the production of a cross-border map which highlights the various places of interest, nature reserves, cycling trails and mountain walks, as well as the location of a wide range of local services such as post office, accommodation and tourist offices. The production of this map was only possible with the support of both Ordnance Survey Ireland and Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland.

Like many other projects in the Border region, this initiative resulted in the upskilling of the local community, and on this occasion, the generation of part-time local employment. For example, tour guides were trained and upskilled for the various walks and talks on local history and ecology. During the course of the project, the Killinagh Community Council opened a tourist information office in Blacklion – an action that primarily stemmed from the interest being generated by the Lough McNean Tourism Initiative locally and throughout the island.

This short-term project succeeded in raising the profile of the Lough McNean catchment area both regionally and nationally; an outcome that has been aided also by the promotional campaign being rolled out by the Bréifne project over the past 18 months. The challenge now is to build on the successes of this project and ensure that this micro-region remains ‘visible’ and continues to widen the range of products it has to offer the eco-tourist. However, with the conclusion of the project in early 2007, the project manager left her post and moved on to a new job.
loss of this ‘driver’ has meant that the three communities have not continued to meet on a regular basis or decided on a new initiative / project on which to cooperate in the future. All three partner organisations realise that this ‘gap’ has to be plugged and that this must happen quickly before the momentum of the Lough McNean Tourism Initiative is lost. But no one partner seems to be willing to take the lead on this – and time is running out.

7.4. Moving Forward: Building on Achievements and Broadening, Deepening and Sustaining Collaboration

As previously noted, there is general consensus among all stakeholders in this cross-border micro-region that its future lies in the areas’ rich heritage and the promotion of this; particularly through eco-tourism programmes. The Green Box (see www.greenbox.ie) and Bréifne (see www.breifne.ie) initiatives are already in existence and, as such, the communities are in the beneficial position of having something on which to build. In addition, the presence of a number of nationally recognised institutions in the immediate surrounds can be capitalised on and built upon – the Marble Arch Caves GeoPark in Florencecourt (see www.marblearchcaves.net), the Cavan Burren and McNeans Bistro in Blacklion. A number of other renowned tourist attractions in close proximity (for example, a 20-25km radius) include the Glencar Waterfall and Parke’s Castle in Dromahaire. These amenities are already attracting people to the region; the challenge for the villages of Glenfarne, Blacklion and Belcoo is enticing these visitors to travel that bit further (from Counties Sligo or Fermanagh for example), stay for longer and to return in the future.

With the presence of a number of organic farms in the area, the aforementioned McNeans Bistro in Blacklion, the Belle Isle Cookery School in Lisbellaw (see www.irishcookeryschool.com) and Fermanagh College in Enniskillen (a campus of the South West College – see www.swc.ac.uk/), potential exists to develop and market this region based on quality food production, preparation and presentation. One proposal put forward involved the development of a programme of cookery courses – of various lengths – using local and seasonal produce and / or using local recipes.

This cross-border region needs a flagship project; similar to the Ballinamore-Ballyconnell Canal in South Leitrim / West Cavan. A number of potential future projects, on which the communities could come together to develop, were identified during the course of this research programme. These include:

- The development of mountain bike trails in the Glenfarne Demense
- The development of the Ballroom of Romance as a museum to the showband era (the only current information banks being internet-based; for example www.irishshowbands.net)
- The development of walking trails in the Claddagh Glen (located beside the Marble Arch Caves GeoPark)
- Improved access to, and promotion of, White Fathers Cave
- The development of fishing facilities for anglers (including jetties, boat hire).
There are already a number of activity centres in situ which would compliment many of these proposed projects. On this basis, there is a strong argument to be made for developing a strategy and business plan focusing on ‘the activity break’; in terms of outlining what exists, what gaps there are, the potentials in the region and the benefits of pursuing such a strategy to the local economy.

To develop any of these proposals, counties Leitrim, Cavan and Fermanagh will have to work closely together in moving forward; for neither area can develop its ‘borderless’ potential on its own. Joint action is also required in the area of accommodation provision; in the immediate case study area, all three communities favour the development of guesthouses and Bed & Breakfasts. However, further consideration and discussion is needed on this as the national trend is that these types of accommodation are falling out of favour with today’s tourist.

The youth of the area is also recognised as a valuable asset to the region – and there are concerns that there is little for them to do in their spare time or to keep them in the vicinity in the longer-term. All three communities believe that this is an area where they need to come together and collaborate in the short- to medium-term future.

During the course of the research, there was widespread agreement among participants that future cross-border actions should be rolled-out using the area-based approach; and that the community sector should remain one of the key drivers behind such initiatives. To ensure mutual benefits and the long-term sustainability of any such future programmes, the private sector and local

Table 7.4: Stakeholders and their Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Key Roles / Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belc oo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Groups</td>
<td>Develop collaborative working agreement; Work together to prepare a strategic spatial plan for cross-border area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Support cross-border partnership building; Develop links with neighbouring councils – increased dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>Road Improvements – jointly plan for projects and secure funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector (incl. Statutory Agencies)</td>
<td>Improve access to public services; Commit to continued funding of cross-border projects and partnership building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>Promote cross-border trade and economic development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Government (RoI &amp; Nire)</td>
<td>Commit to the development of an East-West transport corridor linking Sligo with Dundalk. Complimentary priorities; Joint marketing and promotion of the micro-region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
authorities will need to engage more in the process; this is not a case of ‘like-with-like’ (council-with-council) but rather a cross-disciplinary partnership needs to be established (see Table 7.4).

The communities in the wider area are also quite clear on what type of initiatives need to be rolled out in the future – and who needs to be actively involved. As noted above, ‘potentials’ are already being tabled and investigated. At a county and regional level, discussions are starting to take place between Cavan Institute (see www.cavancollege.ie/) and Fermanagh College on the possibility of working together on the delivery of some courses; in particular in the fields of finance and insurance54. A feasibility study is being carried out on the impact of an air ambulance for the Cavan-Leitrim-Monaghan-Fermanagh area. The local councils continue to promote and insist on the need for an East-West road link between Sligo and Dundalk which will open up the central border area and encourage better links with Belfast and Larne.

7.5. Synthesis

The community groups within this case study area have, in their own right, an abundance of experience, knowledge and skills in local development. The micro-region is characterised by a strong community spirit and a commitment to the regeneration and development of the many small towns and villages within its borders. As is the case with many voluntary organisations, the community groups and organisations profiled in this chapter do not appear to be aware of the range of skills and capacities that exist within their small groupings (for example, project and finance management, facilitation, counselling and training). Yet, were they to come together and combine these skills, they could become more strategic and long-term in their thinking and actions.

54 A growing employment sector in this region; largely due to the growth of the Quinn Group (Quinn Insurance, Quinn Life, etc.).
There is a long history of cross-border cooperation in this region; but it is a mixed history. Much of the documented cooperation has been community-led; but with the primary objective of these community groups being local development and cross-border cooperation, therefore, being an ‘add-on’ or ‘trickle-down’ activity. The more recent dedicated cross-border initiatives have been either council- or enterprise board-led; thus demonstrating the change in focus that is taking place from purely social capital to socio-economic capital development. The majority of cross-border initiatives to date have tended to be issue or project-based and largely informal in nature. In some instances, they have specifically involved the three villages of Glenfarne, Blacklion and Belcoo and, in others, the partnership has been wider. The community groups in each village, it seems, have yet to find a ‘space’ in which they feel confident collaborating with each other on an on-going basis. A tension or nervousness exists between them – particularly between Blacklion and Belcoo – and it is not clear what the focus or cause of this is; although indications are that it relates to the earlier funding programmes and the unequal split of funding on a North-South basis. Between the villages of Blacklion and Belcoo, many would describe the level of cooperation as inactive; while others explain it as the outcome of the very close physical and day-to-day relationship between both villages – a proximity that gives rise to a sense / belief that there is no need for formalised cooperation processes to be put in place as collaboration ‘just happens’.

As a follow-on to the Lough McNean Tourism Initiative, a window of opportunity now exists for this micro-region to come together again and further develop and nurture its cross-border relationship. With the changing emphasis of the INTERREG IV funding programme and the focus of PEACE III on reconciliation (including addressing local tensions) and shared space, there has never been a more opportune time to come together and identify common areas of interest in which they can cooperate – to their mutual benefit – in the future. But this is a limited window and it is becoming increasingly vital that the villages make a decision on their future together; for the shared ‘potentiality’ of these villages and their spectacular surrounds can only be untapped if the local stakeholders can come together to (a) negotiate a plan of action for moving forward and (b) agree on a structure for overseeing and driving that plan.
Prior to the establishment of the Border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, the area of Clones-Lisnaskea and its surrounds were intrinsically linked – economically, socially and culturally. Clones was this micro-region’s main market town and was a significant regional transport hub for both rail and canal traffic. The advent of the Border in 1921, however, posed a number of difficulties for the area; the arbitrary delineation of the Border cutting through traditional parish and community boundaries and dividing farms. Events between the 1950s and 1980s accentuated the difficulties caused by the Border. Towns and villages in the area became separated from their natural economic hinterlands, thus propelling an economic decline, which has continued into recent times. In 1957 the rail-lines to and from Clones closed, thus severing a vital economic artery. The Troubles, which began in the late 1960s made people more reluctant to cross the Border (in either direction), and this reluctance was heightened by a number of violent incidents locally throughout the course of the Troubles. Differing fiscal policies in both jurisdictions and Ireland’s entry into the European Monetary System in 1979 effectively ended the link between the Irish Punt and Sterling; further dampening cross-border trade. In addition, the road closures and increased security measures of the 1980s added physical barriers on top of these economic and political divides.
The focus of this chapter is the micro-region of Clones in County Monaghan and Lisnaskea in County Fermanagh. It also encompasses the adjoining villages of Rosslea and Newtownbutler, as well as the surrounding countryside (see Figure 8.1).

The legacy of the Border is such that this cross-border area lags behind other parts of counties Monaghan and Fermanagh economically and, also, in terms of social and demographic vitality. Its common experience of peripherality and a perception of exclusion by exogenous bodies has stimulated and fostered cross-border linkages, which over the course of the past decade have become increasingly formalised and inclusive. Border communities became motivated by a common desire to redress the structural imbalances that have disadvantaged their communities and are determined to promote and develop local resources.

In the past decade, intra- and inter-community linkages have been consolidated and, as a result, the area now has a number of very active community development agencies; their emphasis being on the promotion and growth of one or more of the following: social, economic, environmental and cultural capital.

8.1 Context: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities.

Clones and Lisnaskea are the dominant urban nodes in what is an extensive rural area with a dispersed settlement pattern. Clones is a small town located on the N54 route, equidistant from the two county towns of Monaghan and Cavan (i.e. 20km). It was traditionally the main market town for the surrounding rural area, including north of the Border. However, this changed with the Troubles and the ensuing road closures. During the 1980s and 1990s the town experienced significant factory closures, high unemployment and a general economic decline. The town lost - and continues to lose - population. In 2006, the town had a population of 1,767; a drop of one fifth since 1996 (CSO, 2006). Manufacturing and commerce are the main sectors of employment, but the town remains economically depressed with an unemployment rate well above the national average. Lisnaskea is located on the A34 between Clones and the county town of Enniskillen. It has a larger population than Clones – with 2,739 persons in 2001 (NISRA, 2001) – and similarly, its population is ageing (19% aged over 60 years of age). Lisnaskea functions as a retail, health, education, employment and service centre for a rural hinterland. It too experienced economic decline in the 1980s and early 1990s, with a number of factory closures; yet manufacturing remains an important sector of employment, followed by commerce.

Both Rosslea and Newtownbutler are small rural border villages of 554 and 943 persons respectively (NISRA, 2001). Agriculture is the dominant economic activity in Rosslea; but it is facing considerable difficulties in adjusting to the decline in farming. In Newtownbutler, manufacturing and retail are the main employers – though these are not locally based and therefore involve a commute to the larger urban centres. Attempts have been made locally to promote economic diversification, as evidenced by the Rosslea Enterprise Centre, located 1km from the village. Given Rosslea’s and Newtownbutler’s proximity to both Clones and Monaghan towns, cross-border connectivity is an important issue.
This micro-region has a strong local identity. Prior to the Troubles, and particularly during the decades when rail travel was at its zenith, Clones served as the economic, social and cultural focal point for an extensive catchment area on both sides of the Border. Of the seven roads leading from the town, five cross directly into County Fermanagh. People from both sides of the Border worked together on the Great Northern Railway and in factories in Clones. The town was also at the centre of social and recreational activities; its dance halls were especially well renowned between the 1940s and 1960s. Today, many older people from both traditions and from both sides of the Border recall dances and pattern days in Clones with fond affection.

During the Troubles, few would have crossed the Border – in either direction. All roads between Clones and Northern Ireland were closed – with one exception, and on this ‘open’ road travellers faced long delays due to permanent British army and Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) checkpoints. External investment from public and private sources declined considerably, thus stifling economic development and innovation. Factory closures in Clones adversely affected the town and propelled job losses locally and in the surrounding communities, both North and South. Despite the negativities associated with the legacy of Partition and the Troubles, social and community linkages are being renewed and new institutional linkages are emerging. Today, with the cross-border roads now re-opened and sectarian tensions easing, more and more people are crossing the Border and making the journey to Clones and Lisnaskea.

8.1.1. The Issues
Outside of Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and South Armagh, South Fermanagh witnessed some of the worst loss of life and greatest destruction during the Troubles. The Boundary Commission Report of 1924 had recommended that much of this area – including Rosslea, Newtownbutler and Donagh – be transferred to the Free State; given its predominantly nationalist / Catholic profile. However, this did not materialise and most people in the affected communities felt isolated within the Northern state, and abandoned by the Southern state. During the Troubles, this micro-region was affected by cross-border paramilitarism, which at times showed a sectarian dimension; lives were lost in both communities and on both sides of the Border. Protestant families and businesses suffered unprovoked attacks while nationalists suffered as a result of the security situation and at the hands of loyalist paramilitaries.

Some community workers and volunteers report that Catholic / nationalist communities have tended to be more proactive in promoting cross-border and inter-denominational linkages, as they are generally more united – in contrast to members of the Protestant / unionist community, in both counties Monaghan and Fermanagh, who have tended to be more fragmented. Thus, current initiatives, such as those promoted by the Clones Community Forum and Clones-Erne East Partnership actively promote and enable equitable cross-community, as well as cross-border, collaboration.

The legacy of economic decline and social exclusion associated with the Border and the Troubles is strongly manifest in the towns of Clones and Lisnaskea. Both have lost businesses due to their separation from parts of their natural hinterlands; thereby having a reduced critical mass to support local enterprise. More recently, both towns have begun to feel the negative impacts of rural economic restructuring.

58 The Boundary Commission was established under Article 12 of the 1921 Treaty. The role of the Commission was to determine the boundary between the Free State and Northern Ireland based on the wishes of its inhabitants and their compatibility with economic and geographic conditions (Harvey et al., 2005).
and a decline in traditional agriculture. Moreover, Clones and Lisnaskea are now in a position of having to play ‘catch-up’ with the larger urban centres of Enniskillen, Cavan and Monaghan Town, all of which have experienced rapid growth in recent years. Public sector investment in Clones and Lisnaskea is, therefore, required in order to advance balanced spatial development in both counties Monaghan and Fermanagh and avoid centralisation.

The stop-start nature of some funding streams has inhibited the deepening of inter-community relations. Several interviewees expressed the view that cross-border projects need to deliver benefits to both jurisdictions, and that they need to be seen to be equitable in their delivery to both sides of the Border.

At present, there is a perception in Lisnaskea that Clones received greater benefits from projects that involved both towns. Whether or not this is actually the case in terms of the financial breakdown of project resources, the fact that such a perception exists has resulted in a situation where “People from Lisnaskea are iffy about getting involved with people from Clones” (Interview, Local Development Consultant). As a result, and despite their many similarities, Clones and Lisnaskea have developed little in the way of strong bilateral linkages. Indeed, aspects of the relationship between the two towns remain strongly characterised by competition than collaboration, particularly in respect of the retail sector and other commercial services.

Rural residents in the Fermanagh communities of Newtownbutler, Donagh and Rosslea view Clones as their ‘local’ town – despite it being located across the Border. Geographically, it is closer to them than Lisnaskea and, as noted above, since the re-opening of cross-border roads there has been a marked increase in cross-border trading and commuting. However, residents of the Northern villages remain obliged to access most public services within Northern Ireland; this can necessitate travel to Lisnaskea and / or Enniskillen. Addressing the current deficits in public service provision (see Table 8.1) and enabling the citizen to access services on the basis of proximity rather than on the basis of jurisdiction of residence are very topical issues locally.

Public transport provision in the east of the micro-region is limited, with Rosslea relying on a once-weekly bus service to and from Enniskillen. Broadband has been rolled-out throughout most of the area. At town / village level, each of the centres in this case study area has a range of community services, including community centres, re-cycling facilities and sports fields, although the latter are mainly GAA pitches. There are groups for older people in each of the four communities. Young peoples’ groups are less well developed, although Monaghan Youth Federation is active in the area and is committed to supporting youth development. However, the operation of many local services and community development initiatives is contingent on short-term EU funding and there is now an onus on national authorities to mainstream and support successful and essential projects and services.
The development of this micro-region is being hampered by poor public service provision, threats of further service depletion, limited cross-border connectivity among service providers and government bodies, disjointed approaches to spatial planning, a weak economic base and a sense of isolation and peripherality which stem from the area’s rural character, but moreso from its location on the Border.

The outstanding main issues facing this micro-region relate to (a) strengthening and consolidating inclusive local development and collaborative local governance, (b) promoting further economic renewal and diversification, and (c) deepening connectivity and linkages between communities, specifically between Lisnaskea and Clones.

8.1.2. The Challenges

It is widely held that central government, North and South, has little interest in this area and, as a result, has been reluctant to commit the funding needed to enable it to overcome the disadvantages caused by the Border. The Urban and Rural Electoral Divisions (EDs) of Clones and the Ward of Rosslea are among the most disadvantaged areas in Ireland and Northern Ireland respectively59, and Rosslea and Newtownbutler have the highest Economic Dependency Ratios in Northern Ireland. Improved accessibility is seen as essential in promoting economic competitiveness – not only for the region but for the island as a whole. In the ongoing debate over the provision of an East / West transport corridor, there is some disquiet locally that the Irish National Roads Authority (NRA) may designate the N3 via Cavan and Belturbet (and on to Derrylin) as the main route between Sligo/Enniskillen and

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59 Based on multi-variate measures of affluence / deprivation.

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Table 8.1: Services Available in Clones-Rosslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service / Amenity</th>
<th>Clones-Rosslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea Available / Accessible Locally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Transport</td>
<td>Bus Eireann services connect Clones with Monaghan and Cavan. Ulsterbus connects Lisnaskea with Enniskillen. Rural areas outside these two centres have very limited transport services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadband Access</td>
<td>Broadband connectivity has improved in recent years, but rural areas, particularly in Northern Ireland have very poor coverage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling / Bring Centre / Waste Management</td>
<td>Limited facilities available in the villages; with communities in Northern Ireland faced with the problem of people from the South crossing the Border to dump their waste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Centre</td>
<td>There are meeting facilities in all the communities, most of which have been developed through PEACE and other cross-border programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Grounds</td>
<td>Each community has a GAA pitch, but other sporting interests are poorly catered for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Recreation Amenities</td>
<td>As the ‘Gateway to the Upper Lakes,’ Lisnaskea has angling and boating facilities. Recent cross-border initiatives have supported the development of shoreline infrastructure and amenities. The re-opening of the Ulster Canal will add value to current amenities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly Clubs</td>
<td>Each community has a group for older people, and the Clones Community Forum facilitates inter-group networking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Clubs</td>
<td>Clones and Rosslea both have youth groups, and Monaghan Youth Federation is active locally.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The development of this micro-region is being hampered by poor public service provision, threats of further service depletion, limited cross-border connectivity among service providers and government bodies, disjointed approaches to spatial planning, a weak economic base and a sense of isolation and peripherality which stem from the area’s rural character, but moreso from its location on the Border. The outstanding main issues facing this micro-region relate to (a) strengthening and consolidating inclusive local development and collaborative local governance, (b) promoting further economic renewal and diversification, and (c) deepening connectivity and linkages between communities, specifically between Lisnaskea and Clones.

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It is widely held that central government, North and South, has little interest in this area and, as a result, has been reluctant to commit the funding needed to enable it to overcome the disadvantages caused by the Border. The Urban and Rural Electoral Divisions (EDs) of Clones and the Ward of Rosslea are among the most disadvantaged areas in Ireland and Northern Ireland respectively59, and Rosslea and Newtownbutler have the highest Economic Dependency Ratios in Northern Ireland. Improved accessibility is seen as essential in promoting economic competitiveness – not only for the region but for the island as a whole. In the ongoing debate over the provision of an East / West transport corridor, there is some disquiet locally that the Irish National Roads Authority (NRA) may designate the N3 via Cavan and Belturbet (and on to Derrylin) as the main route between Sligo/Enniskillen and...
Dundalk. However, the preference locally would be for a route via Monaghan, with the trajectory to Enniskillen being on the eastern side of Upper Lough Erne; that is via either Clones or Rosslea.

Cross-border linkages involving the productive sector are not as strong as those relating to community groups and local government. While a small number of traders, mainly in the hardware, building and construction sectors, have increased their levels of cross-border activity, most businesses in Clones or Lisnaskea have not changed their trading patterns or become involved in cross-border collaborative actions; for a number of obstacles remain. These include having a smaller personnel base on which to build linkages, differences in various economic regulations (e.g. taxation and insurance) and in local government and planning systems between both jurisdictions, and the perception locally that Clones and Lisnaskea are competing for an overlapping customer base. Moreover, actors in both towns have divergent viewpoints on the results of / benefits to be gained from joint projects under programmes such as PEACE and INTERREG; with stakeholders from both towns expressing the view that the ‘other town’ benefited more from previous collaborations.

Clones is gradually regaining its position as the main market town for communities within a 15km radius on both sides of the Border. The population of its commercial hinterland has more than doubled since the commencement of the Peace Process and the town itself has gained a renewed sense of optimism. However, it is challenged in transiting this optimism into sustainable economic development; particularly as it has to compete with the larger urban centres of Cavan and Monaghan which were less affected by the Troubles and which have an attractive and extensive range of commercial outlets. Thus, the need for extensive economic diversification is an important issue in Clones and throughout the locality.

Shortcomings in local services emerge as a significant concern among citizens in both jurisdictions, particularly those in the rural communities of Rosslea, Donagh, Newtownbutler, Magharaveely and Aghdrumsee. Rosslea is located 12km from Monaghan and 6km from Clones. Yet, the nearest point at which Rosslea citizens access such public services as a library or local government office is Lisnaskea, located 20km away. For many other services, such as medical / hospital services, citizens are obliged to travel 40km to Enniskillen (see Tables 8.2 and 8.3).
The Tables show that in many instances, the Border prevents citizens from accessing the service that is most practical for them. The anomaly between location and distance is most pronounced in the eastern part of the area; where Monaghan and Clones are the nearest urban centres, but for where Lisnaskea and Enniskillen are the main points of service provision. There is huge concern locally regarding the proposed rationalisation and amalgamation of primary schools in Northern Ireland. This would adversely affect communities such as Aghdrumsee and Donagh; the loss of a school could perpetrate a broader and deeper social and demographic decline.

Table 8.2: Locations at Which Citizens Currently Access Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Clones</th>
<th>Rosslea</th>
<th>Newtownbutler</th>
<th>Lisnaskea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s Surgery</td>
<td>In Town</td>
<td>In Village (part-time)*</td>
<td>In Village</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency Service / A&amp;E Unit</td>
<td>Cavan (25km) / Monaghan (20km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (36km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (26km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (16km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>In Town</td>
<td>Lisnaskea (20km)</td>
<td>Lisnaskea (10km)</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Level School</td>
<td>In Town</td>
<td>In Village</td>
<td>Lisnaskea (10km)</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>In Town</td>
<td>Lisnaskea (20km)</td>
<td>Lisnaskea (10km)</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>In Town</td>
<td>In Village</td>
<td>In Village</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>In Town</td>
<td>Monaghan (12km)/ Lisnaskea (20km)</td>
<td>Lisnaskea (10km)</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Full-time service located in Lisnaskea (between 10-20km away).

Table 8.3: Proximity to / Distance from Selected Essential Services in Clones-Rosslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea: Locations of the closest service (geographically)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Clones</th>
<th>Rosslea</th>
<th>Newtownbutler</th>
<th>Lisnaskea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s Surgery</td>
<td>In Town*</td>
<td>In Village (part-time)**</td>
<td>In Village (part-time)**</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency Service / A&amp;E Unit</td>
<td>Cavan (25km) / Monaghan (20km)</td>
<td>Monaghan (12km)</td>
<td>Cavan (21km)</td>
<td>Enniskillen (16km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>In Town</td>
<td>Clones (6km)</td>
<td>Clones (8km)</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Level School</td>
<td>In Town</td>
<td>In Village</td>
<td>Clones (8km)</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>In Town</td>
<td>Clones (6km)</td>
<td>Clones (8km)</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>In Town</td>
<td>In Village</td>
<td>In Village</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>In Town</td>
<td>Clones (6km)</td>
<td>Clones (8km)</td>
<td>In Town</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* But reliant on Castleblayney (50km) for out-of-hours service.
** Full-time service located in Clones (between 6-8km away).

The recent rationalisation of medical services is a major cause for concern locally. Out-of-hours G.P. services have been curtailed and communities in the study areas (on both sides of the Border) are now reliant on medical bases that are at a considerable distance from them. Clones is dependent on a service that is based in Castleblayney – 50km distance, while Rosslea and Newtownbutler are reliant on an Enniskillen-based service – a distance of 36km and 26km respectively.
of rural communities. The second-level school in Rosslea is also under pressure due to declining student numbers. Were the school to close, and were the present differences between the arrangements for transfer from primary to second level between the North and the South to continue, second level students from Rosslea would have to travel 20km to school in Lisnaskea or 40km to Enniskillen; yet Clones, just 6km away, has a new community college.

Back-to-back planning and the lack of collaboration between local authorities represents a significant challenge for this cross-border micro-region. As a result of administrative and institutional differences North and South, local government in Northern Ireland has a narrower range of functions and less autonomy than local government in the Republic of Ireland. Local stakeholders from all sectors (business and community) noted that within Northern Ireland, local authorities cannot engage in joint ventures without establishing a joint committee, which in turn must be comprised of councillors and be issue-based in its focus. Council budgets in the North are restricted and do not stretch to cover extensive projects in social and economic development. In the case of Fermanagh, the District Council is obliged to fund initiatives in the County as a whole; with central government expecting the Council to allocate resources on the basis of population (per capita), thereby re-enforcing the strength of the core relative to the periphery.

In policy terms, the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland provide a combined framework for cross-border spatial planning and balanced regional development. The NSS and RDS both recommend that most activities be directed towards designated Gateways and Hubs; and advocate cross-border linkages in the central border region. However, neither prescribes a specific role for medium and small towns such as Clones or Lisnaskea. Rather, the NSS identifies Clones as being in the tier of towns that requires urban strengthening – and this includes the development of small-scale indigenous enterprises i.e. retail, services and tourism. Such activities are to be supported through the provision of local business incubator units, supports for local start-up enterprise and the provision of broadband. In terms of employment generation, the RDS aims for a diversification of the rural economy. In this context, it promotes ‘pluriacitivity’, which involves combining farming with off-farm employment or on-farm diversification. Areas of opportunity include forestry, fisheries, aquaculture and tourism. The Border Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) promote the development of strategic radial and linking corridors as set out in the NSS. Clones, located on the NS4, is one of those proposed strategic ‘linking’ corridors with Northern Ireland; linking the designated ‘hubs’ of Cavan and Monaghan with Armagh and Belfast.

The County Monaghan Development Plan 2007-2013 reflects the principles of the RPGs. Among its provisions are the promotion and development of Monaghan as a hub town and as the main residential, retail, service and employment centre in the county. The Plan also promotes the development of second and third tier towns as residential, retail, service and employment centres (this includes Clones) and advocates controlled expansion of fourth and fifth tier settlements as residential and local retail centres. The Plan encourages all towns and villages to develop specialist niche activities or roles that could help distinguish them and thereby promote their development. Clones, for example, is seen to have a largely under-
developed tourism potential and, to address this, the Plan promotes the development of the town’s important archaeological and historical sites, together with the Ulster Canal as significant tourist attractions.

The Fermanagh Area Plan 2007 presents an overall settlement strategy for the county, which is based on the consolidation and expansion of the three main towns. It is envisaged that new large-scale housing and industrial / retail development will be concentrated in the larger urban centres, notably Enniskillen. Lisnaskea, as the second largest town in Fermanagh, is projected to continue its steady population growth leading to a population of 3,000 by the end of the plan period. In this respect, the plan encourages new retail development and the refurbishment of existing floor space for retail purposes within the town centre boundary. For villages such as Newtownbutler and Rosslea, the plan allows for small-scale housing and small-scale industry/retail development that meets the needs of the local community and encourages regeneration.

The Clones Town Development Plan 2007 calls for the continuous support and facilitation of cross-border cooperation and trade between County Monaghan and Northern Ireland; and this includes the development of improved cross-border networks in the areas of tourism and business.

8.1.3. The Opportunities
Both towns have benefited considerably from the Peace Process and from the upturn in economic activity since the mid-1990s. Lisnaskea has a strong retail and construction sector, and identifies itself as ‘The Gateway to the Upper Lakes’. It has tremendous potential as a centre for eco-tourism and, to date, a number of conservation projects have been initiated using cross-border funding, namely INTERREG and the Peace & Reconciliation Programme. Clones has succeeded in attracting state investment over the past decade for town renewal and for the development of public services, including a new secondary school (community college), fire station and enterprise centre. The newly-opened County Monaghan Library is located in Clones and subject to inter-jurisdictional arrangements, this could benefit citizens North and South. The town is also beginning to attract customers from its natural hinterland; which includes north of the Border. This has helped redress some of the negative effects of the Troubles. Improved infrastructural connections are important in enabling the towns to realise their potential as vibrant centres for this cross-border micro-region.

In geographical terms, the absence of an inter-agency strategic spatial plan for this micro-region is regarded as a limitation for the development of this area. The development plan formulated by the Clones-Erne East Partnership (see Section 8.3), however, represents a very positive development and has the potential to be a blueprint for further collaborative approaches.

The area is relatively well defined and its physical delineation has contributed to the emergence of area-based approaches to development, the strengthening of local identity and the development of inter-community networking. Physical features such as the Upper Lough Erne and the Sliabh Beagh Uplands separate the area
from other parts of counties Monaghan and Fermanagh, thereby consolidating local identity. The physical landscape, with its many loughs and glens, provides a rich tapestry that allows one to appreciate the many legends and rich folklore associated with the area. The Fermanagh Lakelands, located near the case study towns/villages, are identified as an important tourism resource related to environmentally sensitive water-based recreation. The re-opening of the Ulster Canal, which both governments announced in 2007, represents a major boost for tourism development in the entire study area. These natural and built heritage resources are increasingly recognised as having the potential to generate new types of economic activity and social cohesion.

Connectivity between rural communities in this area is generally strong; with each of the case study towns and villages demonstrating a strong community spirit. This micro-region has, to a large extent, put behind the sectarian tensions that marked it during much of the Troubles; cross-community projects feature strongly in local development. It is envisaged that the further deepening of cross-community relations, building local capacity and promoting civic participation in local development and decision-making will create many more opportunities going forward.

8.2. Collaboration in Practice: Focus, Remit and Processes

Like most of the other case study areas presented in this report, cross-border collaboration in Clones, Lisnaskea, Newtownbutler and Rosslea has emerged from the bottom-up and been driven by the community and voluntary sector. Over recent years, collaboration between endogenous organisations and the local government sector has begun to crystallise. Moreover, cross-border collaboration in the area has benefited from resources, facilitation and guidance provided by Border Action – an intermediary support structure under PÓBAL management66 – and local area partnerships. The PEACE Programme, which Border Action implements, has generated many opportunities for sub-regional cross-border collaboration, and recent moves to reduce levels of funding available through PEACE will make it difficult for many projects to sustain themselves.

In practice, cross-border collaboration in this area tends to focus on local endogenous potential. Collaborative approaches have been most prominent among smaller rural settlements and between Clones and the rural communities in its environs; and these have contributed to the enhancement of local capacity and the fostering of improved inter-community relations.

- The Sliabh Beagh Community Partnership began in the early 1990s. Its birth was very much a reaction to the security situation along the Border, and in particular the road closures that had adversely affected the wider area. The impetus for the partnership came initially from community associations in Rosslea, Scottstown and Knockatallon67. Having recognised the need to address connectedness (or the lack thereof) between communities in counties Monaghan and Fermanagh, the three community associations invited neighbouring communities to a meeting to discuss possible courses of action. As a result, nine communities came together in 1993, and in 1994 the Partnership was officially constituted (see Box 8.1). Today, there are twelve community and voluntary associations affiliated to the Partnership.

66 For information on Border Action and Póbal, please see http://www.borderaction.ie and www.pobal.ie
67 Scottstown and Knockatallon (both in County Monaghan) are outside the immediate area covered by this case study.
Clones Community Forum is a representative network of community and voluntary associations in Clones and its environs – on both sides of the Border. Its main objectives centre on promoting networking and capacity-building among community groups, fostering volunteerism and civic pride, improving cross-community relations and improving the areas social infrastructure. The Forum has facilitated community and voluntary groups in sharing information, availing of training and facilitation and undertaking networking activities. As a result of community development approaches pursued by the Forum, bilateral cross-border and inter-denominational linkages have emerged and developed between communities. The Forum has actively fostered inter-religious reconciliation and dialogue at community level on both sides of the Border. This work is particularly important for members of the Protestant community as they are in a minority in the area generally and the tradition of local action tends not to be as well developed among Protestant communities as it is among Catholics. The Forum’s approach to development is underpinned by the promotion of cross-community and inter-denominational collaboration, so that religious and political labels dissipate. The Forum has been successful in enabling local communities to avail of funding opportunities presented by the PEACE Programme. Some community activists in the area note that Border Action and other funding bodies have become more adamant about emphasising the centrality of cross-border linkages in the development of projects and this is something they welcome. However, in their interactions to date, community representatives have tended to avoid speaking about the Troubles. It is anticipated that the upcoming rounds of cross-border projects and initiatives – PEACE III for example – will enable citizens and communities to address the legacies of the Troubles and find a sense of personal and collective healing following the many years of political conflict.

Box 8.1.: The Sliabh Beagh Partnership

Spatially defined by the Sliabh Beag Mountain and the surrounding valleys and lowlands, the Sliabh Beagh Partnership covers a peripheral area spanning counties Monaghan, Fermanagh and Tyrone. The physical geography of the area influences the nature of the relationship between the communities that participate in the Partnership; with the Partnership enabling inter-community collaboration around many local resources.

The focus of the Partnership’s work has been on providing local economic and social development. All its directors are community volunteers, and when it was initially formed, the Partnership contracted Peter Quinn (Fermanagh-based entrepreneur and former president of the GAA) to undertake a study, which would inform the Partnership’s strategy. Quinn’s study pointed to the potential that lay in developing asset-based tourism – the area has several lakes and uplands suitable for angling and walking holidays. Since its inception, the Partnership has focused on valorising local resources, particularly in the area of rural tourism, rather than seeking to attract external large-scale investment. Among the projects that have emerged are a heritage centre in Rosslea, a community hotel in Knockatallon and the Sliabh Beagh Walking Trail – a 46km cross-country route from Altadaven Wood (County Tyrone) to Donagh (County Fermanagh), with extensive stretches in County Monaghan. It has also equipped a training and resource centre in Rosslea, which includes a suite of computers.

The Partnership has assisted communities in compiling and implementing development plans and in accessing funding and other external supports, such as those provided by the IFI and PEACE.

Despite these successes, members are disappointed that their efforts in respect of rural tourism have not realised their full potential. They point to the lack of a marketing budget as a factor that has impeded the development of walking tourism. The Partnership has also faced challenges in terms of reconciling local needs and perspectives with the criteria laid down by some funding agencies.

- **Clones Community Forum** is a representative network of community and voluntary associations in Clones and its environs – on both sides of the Border. Its main objectives centre on promoting networking and capacity-building among community groups, fostering volunteerism and civic pride, improving cross-community relations and improving the areas social infrastructure. The Forum has facilitated community and voluntary groups in sharing information, availing of training and facilitation and undertaking networking activities. As a result of community development approaches pursued by the Forum, bilateral cross-border and inter-denominational linkages have emerged and developed between communities. The Forum has actively fostered inter-religious reconciliation and dialogue at community level on both sides of the Border. This work is particularly important for members of the Protestant community as they are in a minority in the area generally and the tradition of local action tends not to be as well developed among Protestant communities as it is among Catholics. The Forum’s approach to development is underpinned by the promotion of cross-community and inter-denominational collaboration, so that religious and political labels dissipate. The Forum has been successful in enabling local communities to avail of funding opportunities presented by the PEACE Programme. Some community activists in the area note that Border Action and other funding bodies have become more adamant about emphasising the centrality of cross-border linkages in the development of projects and this is something they welcome. However, in their interactions to date, community representatives have tended to avoid speaking about the Troubles. It is anticipated that the upcoming rounds of cross-border projects and initiatives – PEACE III for example – will enable citizens and communities to address the legacies of the Troubles and find a sense of personal and collective healing following the many years of political conflict.
• The cross-border organisation, Fáilte Cluain Eois, works with ex-prisoners and their families and seeks to promote their re-integration into the community and workforce. Based in Clones, it provides counselling and family supports and has recently received funding for the development of a childcare service. Members come from a wide catchment area covering counties Monaghan, Cavan, Fermanagh and Leitrim.

Cross-border collaboration in sporting circles is also well developed. The Clones Athletic Club, which has members on both sides of the Border, is actively involved with local GAA clubs and County Boards in promoting the development of a multi-purpose sports arena which, when developed, will benefit the entire area.

While inter-community linkages pre-date and exist in parallel to emerging linkages between local government actors which have the potential to drive integrated strategic planning in the area, one of the striking and innovative features of cross-border collaboration in this area is the existence – on a formal basis – of a network of local authority members, namely The Clones-Erne East Partnership. This acts as a catalyst for cross-border collaboration; it promotes project development and acts as a conduit through which local stakeholders can access external resources.

8.3. The Clones-Erne East Partnership

Several international studies have identified the importance of collaborative local governance in promoting sustainable local development (OECD, 2005). Collaborative governance implies partnership between top-down and bottom-up agencies. It involves power-sharing, negotiations, trade-offs and having the flexibility to respond to local needs and potential. Local government is an important actor in any arrangement for collaborative governance. The Clones-Erne East Partnership, formally constituted in 2003, successfully brings local government representatives together in a cross-border collaborative forum that promotes area-based development (see www.cloneserneeast.com/). The aims of the Partnership are to:

• Maximise the synergies within its three constituent councils (Monaghan County Council, Clones Town Council and Fermanagh District Council)
• Promote the holistic development of the Clones-Erne East Area
• Enhance cross-border working relationships between the councils
• Avail of funding opportunities for the benefit of the area.

As a legally-constituted entity, the Clones-Erne East Partnership has been able to apply for funding and to act as an intermediary for projects, promoted by other organisations, which fit within the Partnership’s overall strategy. At present, the Partnership is comprised entirely of county and town councillors and, while it has secured buy-in from representatives of nationalist and unionist political entities, some challenges remain in respect of engaging more fully with Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) representatives. The Partnership represents a significant advance in the
promotion of collaborative local governance. While citizen engagement in its activities and in its decision-making processes need to be further enhanced in the medium- to long-term, current priorities ought to continue to focus on growing the Partnership’s current role – that of providing a vehicle for local government collaboration.

In 2004, the Clones-Erne East Partnership published a strategic plan for the economic, social, cultural and environmental regeneration of its catchment area. The plan was formulated through an extensive consultation process which engaged community and voluntary groups, local businesses, state bodies and various interest groups on both sides of the Border. The plan is underpinned by agreed targets and it identifies key strategic partners for the implementation of specific actions and projects; such as Chambers of Commerce, local business associations and community groups. As a result, the Clones-Erne East Partnership maintains strong linkages with bottom-up organisations, particularly the Clones Community Forum, and state agencies; thereby ensuring that it is process-orientated as well as task-orientated.

The Clones-Erne East Partnership has already been successful in delivering and coordinating a number of projects, including:

- The establishment of a Shadow Youth Partnership to engage second-level students in community development projects
- The development of a local website and the publication of a newsletter, highlighting and showcasing the strengths and potentiality of the area, the work of community groups, innovations in business and progress on cross-border cooperation
- The provision of technical support to local groups, community associations and leaders in brokering resources, enhancing public service provision and improving local infrastructure and amenities.

One of the most striking projects promoted by the Clones-Erne East Partnership is known locally as ‘The Chairs’ project. This involved the placing of sandstone chairs in prominent locations in each of the towns and villages in the Clones-Erne East area; with each chair containing a time-capsule with essays written by local schoolchildren. Thus, the Partnership has engaged children from both traditions and from both sides of the Border in compiling material for this innovative project. Moreover, the unveiling of the various chairs provided occasions for cross-community and cross-border interaction and celebration.

In addition, the restoration of Clogher Church Hall (“a stone’s throw from the South”68) - and renovations of orange halls have been a great boost to promoting Protestant participation in cross-border ventures.

The Clones-Erne East Partnership represents a very important step forward for this area, not just in terms of cross-border collaboration, but also as an example of collaborative cross-border governance by local authorities. In this

68 Grant aided through the Rural Community Network (RCN).
way, the Partnership represents an innovative approach to territorial planning and local decision-making. Its initiation by the local government sector represents a shift away from exclusively hierarchical approaches, with agencies acting in isolation, to a new more collaborative system of local governance which is based on inter-agency information-sharing, networking and collaboration. However, while the Clones-Erne East Partnership has had many notable successes, there are some concerns that its catchment area may be slightly too large. There are also some problems getting businesses to commit time to networking activities. Furthermore, Fermanagh-based councillors have more difficulties (than Monaghan-based councillors) in raising Partnership issues at council level; as Fermanagh District Council has a narrower remit than Monaghan County Council. At present, decision-making in the Partnership is the exclusive domain of local government; yet good practice in collaborative governance implies a more inclusive approach to decision-making, whereby civil society actively participates (Davoudi, 2005).

This Partnership interfaces with regional and national bodies on both sides of the Border and, as such, it provides a degree of horizontal and vertical coordination of development activities. Its linkages with the statutory sector stimulate top-down agencies to respond to issues that have been articulated from the bottom-up. The Partnership is one of a very small number of bodies that have managed to put in place a working model that co-ordinates bottom-up and top-down actions on a cross-border basis. Although relatively new, the Partnership has the potential to provide a conduit for further and more sustained exogenous supports for the area.

8.4. Moving Forward: Building on Achievements and Broadening, Deepening and Sustaining Collaboration

Most of the benefits that have derived from cross-border linkages to date relate to the community and voluntary sector. Inter-group networking and the transfer of good practices and ideas have been facilitated by the various partnership bodies and by funding received from the IFI, the PEACE Programme and INTERREG. Community representatives are able to instance several examples of ways in which cross-community and cross-border relations have benefited from community-based projects, with many of these projects taking active steps to successfully include religious minorities.

Cross-border linkages through initiatives such as the Sliabh Beagh Partnership have begun to market the areas unique natural features and deliver investment in the local tourism infrastructure, particularly in amenities at the areas many lakes. The installation of walkways, fishing stands and other amenities has attracted increased numbers of visitors and has provided resources for local people (e.g. Killyfole). There is a very strong sense of optimism throughout the case study area, and particularly in Clones, that the recently announced re-opening of the Ulster Canal will be a tremendous boost to the area.

Enterprise centres on both sides of the Border have attracted investment, supported the establishment of SMEs and are anchoring jobs locally; thereby contributing to reversing the economic downturn of previous decades. Increasingly,
scope exists for enterprise centres on both sides of the Border to join forces in terms of marketing the space, the local skills-base and the opportunities that exist in this cross-border region.

Clones, in particular, has benefited from investment in its physical infrastructure. As a result of accessing various cross-border funds, Monaghan County Council and Clones Town Council have invested in the town’s streetscape and are currently developing new services such as a fire station and library.

In terms of economic development and the provision of public services, some practical / tangible benefits of local authority collaboration are evident. Local communities benefit when councils co-operate on roads projects; such as re-surfacing/gritting/applying salt in winter. Emergency services are more likely to cross the Border than was previously the case and the Clones-Erne East Partnership is encouraging agencies to focus more on the area. Local government, state agencies, citizens and community leaders are more knowledgeable about whom they should consult with ‘on the other side of the Border’ and increasingly recognise the importance of inter-sectoral collaboration on socio-economic issues (see Table 8.4).

There is increasing awareness and acknowledgement that local government support is essential in promoting the development of their respective areas. It is further acknowledged that most councillors have been pro-active in supporting local development and cross-border collaboration. Within some communities, however, there remain divergent views on the roles played by government officials and councillors beyond the immediate Clones-Erne East Area. In Fermanagh, for example, there is a perception that the lower lakeland areas, especially Kesh (see Chapter 10), are benefiting to the detriment of the Upper Lakes and that the guidelines on rural housing (for example, Draft PPS 14th), will, if implemented, have a devastating effect on the area. Local government needs to continue to develop its cross-border working relationships and address these perceptions – real or not.

Table 8.4: Stakeholders and their Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Key Roles / Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Groups</td>
<td>Commitment to addressing agreed local needs; Develop collaborative working agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Integrated area planning; Active engagement with community &amp; voluntary sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>Increased dialogue on cross-party and inter-jurisdictional basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector (incl. Statutory Agencies)</td>
<td>Improved access to services; Building on local knowledge base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>Enhanced engagement; Establishing cross-border trade networks; Widening patterns of business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Government (RoI &amp; Nlre)</td>
<td>Commitment to East/West Road link; Incentivising collaboration – providing sufficient resources and back-up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is increasing awareness and acknowledgement that local government support is essential in promoting the development of their respective areas. It is further acknowledged that most councillors have been pro-active in supporting local development and cross-border collaboration. Within some communities, however, there remain divergent views on the roles played by government officials and councillors beyond the immediate Clones-Erne East Area. In Fermanagh, for example, there is a perception that the lower lakeland areas, especially Kesh (see Chapter 10), are benefiting to the detriment of the Upper Lakes and that the guidelines on rural housing (for example, Draft PPS 14th), will, if implemented, have a devastating effect on the area. Local government needs to continue to develop its cross-border working relationships and address these perceptions – real or not.
There is a strong commitment locally to further and deeper cross-border collaboration between community and voluntary groups. Moreover, the dominant sentiment in this micro-region is that future cross-border collaboration ought to be needs-led and asset-based. The following thematic areas were identified as the foci for future collaborative actions:

- Retention and development of local services and amenities, particularly schools and post offices
- Creating and sustaining conditions for local economic development
- Provision of supports to small and medium enterprises and new entrepreneurs
- Tourism – developing additional facilities and marketing them
- Town and Village Renewal and the improvement of infrastructure
- Access to services on a cross-border basis
- Implementation of a fishing strategy.

The delivery of projects in respect of these themes necessitates collaboration, not just at community level but also at the level of state agencies and local government. The promotion of inter-agency collaboration places an onus on national authorities to provide agencies and local government bodies with the necessary back-up and resources. Collaboration needs to be incentivised from the top-down. At a local level, representatives from agencies have generally concurred with community representatives in advocating the formulation of a multi-sectoral, cross-border strategic area development plan. The current Clones-Erne East Partnership Plan, *Laying the Foundations*, represents a positive step towards renewing and consolidating a shared, cross-border territorial identity and this will serve to underpin area-based vision planning.

### 8.5 Synthesis

Since the commencement of the Peace Process, and in particular over the past ten years, considerable progress has been made in re-establishing social and
community-level connectivity across the Border. The community and voluntary sector has been the main protagonist, and inter-community relations have progressed from being project-led initially to being concerned with a range of economic, social, cultural and environmental issues today. Inter-community collaboration has delivered benefits in terms of better relations between North and South and unionists and nationalists. In addition foundations have been laid for work on the promotion of sustainable peace, reconciliation, tolerance and pluralism.

Collaboration between the areas three local authorities under the aegis of the Clones-Erne East Partnership is serving to promote cross-border infrastructural connectivity, improvements in public service provision, statutory support for endogenous initiatives and the emergence of new economic opportunities. However, the functional and temporal differences at local authority level between both jurisdictions continues to pose difficulties for, and militate against, collaboration.

The establishment of mechanisms for vertical coordination to improve linkages between local government, the statutory sector and civil society is important in building-on achievements to date and in sustaining more collaborative approaches to area-based development in this area. Consultation with citizens is an important step in engaging them in collaborative local governance and steps need to be taken to ensure greater involvement of civil society in all aspects of spatial planning.
Cross-Border Cooperation in Castleblayney-Crossmaglen

Castleblayney-Crossmaglen is the most easterly of the five case study areas presented in this report (see Figure 9.1). It is adjacent to the Dublin-Belfast Corridor and the Newry-Dundalk City Region, which are among the most dynamic parts of the island of Ireland in terms of economic development and demographic vitality. Thus, Castleblayney-Crossmaglen is relatively well positioned to capitalise on the benefits accruing from the development of the all-island economy and from the considerable improvements in North-South infrastructural connectivity that have occurred over recent years, and those that are currently being constructed and planned. The challenge for Castleblayney-Crossmaglen is ensuring that the benefits resulting from the improved connectivity between Belfast-Dublin and Newry-Dundalk are not simply delivered along a narrow urban corridor, but rather are dispersed over a more extensive area which includes both these towns and their rural hinterlands.
The current opportunities presented by all-island economic cooperation stand in stark contrast to the situation in both towns prior to the Peace Process. During the height of the Troubles, South Armagh in general, and Crossmaglen in particular, became synonymous with republican paramilitary activity. The area was frequently stereotyped as a haven for lawlessness, smuggling and subversive activity and while many representations of South Armagh were overly negative, the area was the scene of some of the bloodiest encounters of the Troubles. Crossmaglen has a deep association with Irish republicanism and republican activists and leaders are commemorated and celebrated in the many monuments and displays that adorn the town and surrounding countryside. The town and the adjoining Wards are overwhelmingly nationalist / Catholic (Gleeson et al, 2008) and local citizens have always ‘looked South’. Consequently, people in Crossmaglen have consistently sought to maintain their linkages with southern communities, including the towns of Dundalk and Castleblayney. Thus, commuting, trading, social and community linkages between both towns have remained strong in spite of Partition. There is even a sense locally that the presence of the Border actually encouraged people, particularly those on the Northern side, to be more overt than they might otherwise have been in showing their linkage to the communities in the ‘Free State,’ and by extension their Irish identity.

Despite the continuity of informal and cultural cross-border linkages, Castleblayney-Crossmaglen has – and continues to – experience negative economic and social effects emanating from the Border and the Troubles. Today, this cross-border area is challenged to diversify its economic base, develop and promote east-west linkages connecting them to the Dublin-Belfast corridor, improve local infrastructure, valorise heritage and local amenities and to project a positive and entrepreneurial image, internally and externally.

9.1 Context: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

Castleblayney, with a population of 3,124 (CSO, 2006), is the larger of the two towns in this study area. Located on the N2, this east Monaghan town has benefited from the recent opening of a bypass and its improved connectivity to Dublin over the past five years. The affordability of real estate locally, relative to the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), has made the town and its surrounds attractive to persons working within the GDA. Thus, long-distance commuting is becoming an issue for Castleblayney and adjoining villages. The town is a service and employment centre for the surrounding agricultural area; with a retail centre that is significantly larger than that of Crossmaglen. The town’s current population growth is starting to result in an expansion of local services which, in turn, will strengthen its role as a retail centre and a potential service centre for populations on both sides of the Border. The town experienced considerable employment losses during the 1980s and 1990s. Major closures included the furniture manufacturer, McElrois, with a loss of over 100 jobs. However, since the late 1990s, the town’s fortunes have begun to change; with some inward investment taking place. Manufacturing remains an important sector locally with big employers including Castleblayney Steel Production, Cargill Integer, Shabra Plastics, Kingspan and Roadstone.

Crossmaglen is the largest town in South Armagh with a population of 1,459 recorded in 2001 (NISRA, 2001). It is situated 2km north of the Border with the Republic on the B30, between Newry and Carrickmacross. Until recently, Crossmaglen was rather isolated but the accessibility of the town has significantly
increased due to the construction of the M1 between Dublin and Newry. The dominant land use in this largely rural area is agriculture – the town established originally as a trading centre for the surrounding farmers (Planning Service for Northern Ireland, 2006). Employment declined during the 1980s and the last major factory, Newcell, closed as a direct result of the Troubles. Crossmaglen now functions as a service centre; with the main services including a local health centre, GP, post office, secondary school, two bank branches, local newspaper, a number of small scale retail outlets and taxi cabs. Given the scale of these enterprises, the town has very limited employment opportunities. During this research, it was suggested that 50% of the town’s workforce is employed in the Republic, notably in construction. Going forward, tourism and high-tech SMEs are two of the main targets for economic development.

Cultural, community and family bonds across this cross-border micro-region are strong but face-to-face contact continues to be hampered by the weakness of the transport linkages within the area. Improving connectivity between South Armagh/East Monaghan and onwards to Dublin is perceived as important in developing the areas economic and tourism potential.

8.1.1. The Issues

During the Troubles, people from both communities were wary of crossing the Border for social or economic reasons. Farmers had land on both sides of the Border and this necessitated daily treks and encounters with the army patrols. Despite the checkpoints, smuggling became a common activity – first with food products, then livestock and more recently, fuel – and citizens in Crossmaglen and Castleblayney maintained strong social linkages. They currently perceive that the main issues for them centre on developing equally strong linkages in respect of the physical connectivity between the two towns; and between them and the rest of the island. They argue very strongly for improved connectivity to Dublin and to Belfast; so as to encourage city-dwellers and overseas visitors to holiday in the area and to experience the wealth of natural and heritage resources it has to offer. The development of the areas tourism potential requires commitments from central, regional and local government in both jurisdictions to safeguard the natural environment and local amenities. It also necessitates a coherent and joint approach to marketing and promotion. As a result, local citizens perceive a need to engage the public sector more in developing the potential of, and promoting, Crossmaglen and Castleblayney.

A further issue for both towns is that the level of unemployment remains stubbornly high. Agriculture and traditional manufacturing sectors are in decline and, together with – and as a result of – the peripheral Border location, the lack of critical mass, the impact of the Troubles and relatively low education / skill levels, no investment is being made to support a process of economic restructuring. As part of the legacy of the Troubles, this cross-border area, and Crossmaglen in particular, has suffered from having a ‘bad image’. Young people are inclined to leave the area, leading to a ‘brain drain’. The different currencies in operation on both sides of the Border reduce economic efficiency; they can hinder local business transactions and can be awkward for people who work on a cross-border basis. For example, although the Euro is used in local business transactions in Crossmaglen, bank accounts and all official records are kept in Sterling.
Poor public transport connectivity is an obstacle to enabling people to live locally and work/study elsewhere. Local roads are of poor quality and there are no bus connections between the two towns (see Table 9.1). Connections to Newry are of limited use to commuters. The lack of rural transport hampers access to services for citizens living in the rural countryside. Although other local services such as schools, post offices, banks and civic offices are comprehensive, people in rural townlands can have difficulties in accessing them. Thus, internal transport connectivity and provision, together with external transport and infrastructural links, emerge as significant issues for people in Crossmaglen and Castleblayney. The development of these linkages is seen as essential in driving economic development and social cohesion.

### Table 9.1: Services Available in Castleblayney-Crossmaglen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service / Amenity</th>
<th>Castleblayney-Crossmaglen Available / Accessible Locally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Transport</td>
<td>No bus connections between both towns; Bus connections between Newry-Crossmaglen but concerns about timings; likewise connection from Castleblayney-Monaghan and Dundalk but concerns about times. Journey from Castleblayney to Crossmaglen would consist of: (a) Castleblayney-Dundalk, Dundalk-Newry, Newry-Crossmaglen or (b) Castleblayney-Dundalk, getting off at Cullaville and walking 3 miles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadband Access</td>
<td>Available in both towns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling / Bring Centre / Waste Management</td>
<td>Available in both towns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Centre</td>
<td>Both towns have community centres; No designated sports centres in either town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Grounds</td>
<td>Both towns have GAA grounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Recreation Amenities</td>
<td>Not available – Swimming pool in Monaghan and Newry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly Clubs</td>
<td>Available in both towns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Club</td>
<td>Available in both towns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overcoming the negative perceptions of the area associated with paramilitarism is a very significant issue for both towns and for the surrounding communities. Despite the Peace Process, the images of the area which were effectively captured and eloquently expressed by Colm Tóibín in 1987 are still the images that are projected by the popular media – and these images need to be challenged. Tóibín recorded that he “passed by a shop which was in the South, the doorway itself was the Border, the outside of the shop being in the North; every entry and exit involved smuggling” (p.143-144) and “Every time the army blew up bridges or put concrete blocks on Border crossings, the locals came out in force and replaced them” (p.143). Today, there is a sense locally that collaboration between local government, involving counties Monaghan and Louth and Newry and Mourne District Council representing South Armagh, offers the best way opportunity in terms of rebranding this part of the Border area.
9.1.2. The Challenges
As members of a predominantly nationalist and strongly republican community, citizens in Crossmaglen felt extremely alienated within the state of Northern Ireland. There was strong local resistance to the presence of the security forces and especially the British Army. The large army base and watch tower beside the grounds of the local G.A.A. Club (Crossmaglen Rangers) was a particular point of contention for nationalists and its removal was frequently advocated during discourses on decommissioning and demilitarisation. While the army base has been significantly downsized, and elements of the security apparatus have been removed from the local landscape, many people in Crossmaglen and the surrounding areas remain sceptical of the Northern State. The political alienation and strong military presence experienced by local people have engendered a degree of suspicion of statutory agencies, particularly of those that are UK-based. As a result of negative perceptions of officialdom and a lack of engagement in South Armagh on the parts of many agencies, the area has little or no experience of collaborative governance and partnership approaches to development are not well developed. Going forward, developing local capacity to engage in partnership and encouraging state support for local initiatives are major challenges facing the area.

Alienation from the Northern State which was heightened by the Troubles led to the growth of the informal economy. A culture of transacting in cash in order to minimise taxation liabilities emerged and this further fuelled the disconnect between citizen and State. As well as not being conducive to collaboration between the bottom-up and the top-down, the legacy and part-persistence of the informal economy is that innovation is stifled and social problems, such as early school leaving, are more likely to occur. Thus, inter-generational reliance on the informal economy becomes internalised.

The intense security situation along the Border between South Armagh and the Republic of Ireland during the Troubles militated against inward investment; a scenario heightened by this cross-border area not been prominent on the agendas of most State bodies – North or South. In common with other areas along the Border, people who do business in both jurisdictions and those who work on one side of the Border and reside on the other (i.e. European Frontier Workers) are faced with operating two currencies and are liable for considerable bank transaction charges and currency conversion fees. Today, local citizens are anxious to highlight the positive features of South Armagh and East Monaghan and are willing to work in mutual collaboration and with others.

In terms of service provision (see Tables 9.2 and 9.3), the main cross-border disconnect that local people perceive relates to access to Medical Emergency Services. Daisy Hill Hospital in Newry is the nearest major hospital with an Accident
and Emergency Unit for Crossmaglen and Castleblayney – 25km in both cases (although via different routes). In practice, however, citizens in Castleblayney are obliged to travel over 45km to either Cavan or Drogheda to access major hospital services.

As regards spatial planning policy for the Castleblayney-Crossmaglen area, both the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland support cross-border cooperation which contributes to balanced and sustainable development. While neither town is specifically mentioned in either strategy, inferences are made as to how the Eastern Border Region, in which both towns are located, should develop. Within the NSS and the associated Border Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs), most population growth, infrastructure and employment creation is to be directed towards the designated Gateways and Hubs; with a number of other settlements providing a strong support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Castleblayney</th>
<th>Crossmaglen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s Surgery</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>Within Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency Service / A&amp;E Unit</td>
<td>Cavan (45km) / Drogheda (59km) / Monaghan (25km)*</td>
<td>Newry (25km)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Level School</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Range of services being reduced in Monaghan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.2: Locations at Which Citizens Currently Access Services</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Castleblayney</th>
<th>Crossmaglen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s Surgery</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>Within Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency Service / A&amp;E Unit</td>
<td>Newry (25km)</td>
<td>Newry (25m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Level School</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>In town</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
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* Range of services being reduced in Monaghan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.3: Proximity to / Distance from Selected Essential Services in Castleblayney-Crossmaglen: Locations of the closest service (geographically)</th>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Castleblayney</th>
<th>Crossmaglen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor’s Surgery</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Emergency Service / A&amp;E Unit</td>
<td>Newry (25km)</td>
<td>Newry (25m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Level School</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Library</td>
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<td>Post Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>In town</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
framework. Castleblayney, as a medium sized town, is noted as a centre with ‘urban strengthening opportunities’. Such towns perform an important role in driving development of a particular spatial component; for example small-scale indigenous enterprise, retail, services and tourism. Such activity is to be supported through the provision of local business incubator units, support for local start-up enterprise and the provision of broadband. In terms of physical infrastructure the RPGs promote the development of strategic radial and linking corridors as set out in the NSS. In the RDS, the sub-region in which Crossmaglen is located is charged with developing a vibrant rural Northern Ireland with balanced development spread out across a polycentric network of hubs/clusters; based on main towns that have a strategic role as centres of employment and service provision. The RDS aims to diversify the rural economy and to this end, small towns such as Crossmaglen are encouraged to secure new diverse indigenous and small scale foreign direct investment and promote endogenous tourism-based enterprises.

Within the **County Monaghan Development Plan 2007-2013**, Castleblayney is designated as a Tier Three settlement i.e. a town that provides a more limited range of services than Tier One and Two settlements. Services provided generally include a range of retail and educational services, but limited financial, health and community services. Moving forward, such towns are designated for further development as residential and employment centres as well as service and local retail centres for their surrounding hinterland. Complimenting this objective, the **County Monaghan Retail Strategy (2003)** identifies Castleblayney as a Level 2 Retail Centre. The County Development Plan acknowledges the need to develop new sources of employment to replace jobs in traditional manufacturing and agriculture; with new employment opportunities identified in specialist farming, forestry and farm diversification and tourism. The local manufacturing sector is to focus on more profitable (value added) employment and the growth and/or expansion of existing locally based small-scale industry. In the draft **Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015**, it is recommended that Crossmaglen grow modestly over the plan’s period. Designated as a “Town”, it is proposed that a further 460 new dwellings will be built within the town limits; the designated greenbelt preventing further sprawl. Within Crossmaglen, opportunities for new retail activity are also identified; with retail, industry and tourism all identified as generators of employment opportunities. Tourism is noted as an important industry in the area. Opportunities exist for future development based on forest parks, historic houses, monuments, the mountains and Carlingford Lough. Potential also exists for Crossmaglen to build on its attractive townscape.

The integrated **Castleblayney Development Plan 2007-2013** aims to renew and regenerate the town as an economic driver for the area; Castleblayney being highlighted as a strategic location on the main transport corridors – N2 and N53. In addition, the town is located within relatively short travelling distances of the ports and major centres of population – Belfast, Newry, Dundalk – and this offers significant potential for growth in the industrial sector. One of the policies within the Plan is to promote Castleblayney as a key industrial centre and to encourage the provision of hi-tech industries.
9.1.3. The Opportunities

Despite some persistent negative representations of the area, people in Castleblayney and Crossmaglen are intensely proud of their locality. They have demonstrated this pride through their high levels of participation in community activities. The G.A.A. is very strong in the area and Crossmaglen Rangers are among the most decorated club teams on the island of Ireland. Their successes have given great cause for celebration locally and have projected a positive, albeit tenacious, image of Crossmaglen.

Infrastructure connections in South Armagh and East Monaghan have improved considerably in recent years. The area is relatively well connected to the Dublin-Belfast Corridor which facilitates business and tourism development. Journey times to Dublin have shortened since the opening of the M1 and Dublin Airport can be accessed in about one hour (depending on traffic). The further upgrading of the N2 – as part of Transport 21 – will further enhance the accessibility and connectedness of this cross-border area.

Local stakeholders are keenly aware of the importance of indigenous and micro-enterprises in assisting the area to improve its economic fortunes. They point out that the LEADER Rural Development Programme, which is operated at local level, has supported a number of projects in enterprise and community development in the area. LEADER is implemented by a tri-partite structure that brings together representatives from community and voluntary groups, the productive sector and state agencies. It signifies a partnership approach, the expansion of which offers prospects for the development of more collaborative and inclusive approaches to local development and decision-making.

The County Monaghan Partnership is active in the area in promoting community development and social inclusion. The Partnership’s Jobs’ Club, based in Castleblayney, provides a vehicle through which individuals can access training and employment opportunities – thus increasing the local skills-base.

Since the devolution of power from Westminster back to Northern Ireland in May 2007, the ongoing improvements in the political climate will allow the area to develop its potential. There is scope to further extend and deepen networking between community groups on a cross-border basis and to improve linkages between civil society and the statutory and private sectors.

Crossmaglen, Castleblayney and their hinterlands have a wealth of sites and artefacts associated with many of the best-known and best-loved Irish legends, including those relating to Fionn Mac Cumhaill, Fianna Eireann and Cú Chulainn. The nearby Ring of Gullion is hugely significant in Irish heritage and this and other resources remain very much under-exploited. Rural and heritage tourism are perceived as central to enabling diversification of the local economy. Opportunities are identified for small and medium-sized businesses and the community sector in tourism (based on the close proximity of scenic attractions such as Slieve Gullion and Lake Muckno).
The areas capacity to deal with these issues and challenges and to avail of the many opportunities the micro-region has to offer is contingent on a supporting and complementary spatial policy framework in both jurisdictions.

9.2. Collaboration in practice: Focus, Remit and Processes

There have always been strong connections between the towns of Castleblayney and Crossmaglen – irrespective of Partition and the Troubles. The interviews and focus groups as part of this research programme provide evidence of strong “natural connections” in the form of marriage, socialising (birthdays, pubs), cross-border land ownership, cross-border retail activity and cultural links. These links persisted during the Troubles; although people from Castleblayney were sometimes reluctant to cross the Border to visit Crossmaglen.

Partition and the Troubles had a more negative impact on the links between local authorities in the area. For a long time, there has been very little co-ordination in planning between the local County, Town and District Councils; mainly as a result of the differences in the remits of local government on both sides of the Border.

Despite these many challenges, the improvement in the political climate and the growing availability of funding for cross-border initiatives (through the International Fund for Ireland and PEACE, for example) has resulted in a strong rise in the number of cross-border projects and relationships. More often than not, these involved and were ‘driven’ by the community development sector. Community groups on both sides of the Border successfully applied for funding to develop cross-border projects and create more structural links between the community groups and networks on both sides of the Border. Initiatives have included cross-border social events, cross-border conferences on funding opportunities, cultural festivals, literary projects, rural and tourism development projects and skill development and training.

- **Regeneration of South Armagh (RoSA)** is a rural support network for South Armagh, providing community development support to local community groups (see [www.rosa.ie](http://www.rosa.ie)). The network was founded in 1989 after a series of public village meetings throughout the area and was partly driven by the new opportunities in the funding environment; for example the International Fund for Ireland (IFI). With a remit in social and economic development, the networking programme is currently funded through the EU Building Sustainable Prosperity Programme. The network comprises 87 affiliated rural community groups and most of the work to date has focused on social issues (see Box 9.1)

- The **Castleblayney Enterprise Group** started in 1988 as a community initiative in reaction to the closure of a major manufacturing plant in Castleblayney. The first activity of those who came together was to establish the Castleblayney Community Enterprise Centre, thus creating office workspace for
CHAPTER 9: Cross-Border Cooperation in Castleblayney-Crossmaglen

Box 9.1: Regeneration of South Armagh (RoSA)

The RoSA Network covers both the Armagh City & District and Newry & Mourne District Council parts of South Armagh. Membership includes a wide variety of organisations, including: Darkley Resource Centre, Keady Women and Family Centre, Lurgan Residents Association, Milford Community Development Association and Mullagbrack Luncheon Club. It is managed by a Board of Directors that are elected annually and which are broadly representative of the wider community in geographical, gender and religious terms. Since its establishment, RoSA has been involved in several cross-border initiatives:

Cross-border IT Project
In collaboration with the County Monaghan Community Network, RoSA secured PEACE funding for a cross-border IT project in 2000. Under this project, IT training is provided by qualified trainers to community groups in Armagh and Monaghan. It involves people from Crossmaglen receiving training in Castleblayney. The aim of the project was primarily to bring people together – the economic development benefits were secondary. Over 500 people from the wider cross-border region received training – with some of the recipients now being tutors.

Developing Communities Project
In collaboration with the County Armagh Grand Lodge Development Committee and the County Monaghan Community Network, RoSA received funding under the PEACE II Extension for a cross-border networking project which provided training, capacity building and community hall refurbishment to 15 groups in Counties Monaghan and Armagh.

Wider Horizons Programme
In the early 1990s, RoSA collaborated with the Monaghan Federation of Youth Clubs and Castleblayney Enterprise Centre in the Wider Horizons Programme (an IFI supported initiative). This training and employment programme is aimed at long-term unemployed young adults. Apart from providing training the programme includes an overseas employment placement in the USA. The programme was also funded through various agencies, including FAS (Ireland) and T&EA72 (Northern Ireland).

Many of the cross-border projects have focussed on improving community relations and they have been very successful in this regard. At the same time, on a local level, many of the cross-border relationships that were stimulated pre-existed the networking projects; and the interviewees identified a need for a shift in focus away from relationship building towards economic development and cross-border service provision.

The engagement of both the private and public sector in cross-border cooperation is an area that requires further investment. The direct involvement of local government, for example, is formally endorsed in the official spatial planning documents at

72 T&EA stands for Training & Employment Agency.
73 Also referenced in Chapter 6.
various levels of government. Within the RDS, for example, the development of cross-border networks and/or clusters is viewed as a way of:

- Exploiting economic opportunities for towns and similar settlements and helping to rejuvenate areas in need of investment
- Stimulating rural revitalisation based on cross-border joint initiatives that will provide cumulative benefits in terms of employment, services, tourism and infrastructure and cultural understanding.

Within this case-study area, the relevant local authorities and elected members have, in recent years, become important drivers for cross-border cooperation projects. Informally, members of the Newry and Mourne District Council, Monaghan County Council and Castleblayney Town Council have been coming together since the early 1990s to discuss relevant cross-border cooperation issues. In 2003, this lead to the establishment of the Castleblayney South Armagh Partnership (CASA); this represented a formalising of a nurtured relationship.

9.3 The Castleblayney South Armagh Partnership (CASA) and CASA Linkage Programme

The Castleblayney South Armagh Partnership (CASA) was established in September 2003 by Castleblayney Town Council and Newry & Mourne District Council as a result of a shared concern about the safety of infrastructural linkages on the Ballynacarry Bridge on the N5374 (see www.casalinkage.com). The Partnership covers the following geographical areas:

- Monaghan Electoral Districts (EDs) of Annyalla, Broomfield, Carrickaslane, Castleblayney Rural, Castleblayney Urban, Church Hill, Crematin and Mullyash
- The Newry & Mourne District Council Wards of Bessbrook, Camlough, Creggan, Crossmaglen, Derrymore, Fathom, Forkhill, Newtownhamilton, Silverbridge and Tullyhappy.

Evolving from this mutual infrastructural concern, other areas of common interest were identified; in particular the shared aim of promoting sustainable development policies which would strengthen the traditional economic and social cohesion of this cross-border area. Three particular strategic areas were recognised:

- Tourism, arts, craft and angling
- Business and enterprise
- Community development.

Building on this, the Partnership identified a portfolio of cross-border projects which would benefit and create synergy between the South Armagh area of the Newry & Mourne District and the Castleblayney area; the details of which are spelt out in the South Armagh / Castleblayney Linkage Development Plan, published in December 2004. The Plan not only identifies opportunities which exist under current activities but also considers those which might exist were new contacts and relationships to be forged. Funding for the CASA Linkage Programme was sourced and secured from INTERREG IIIA under the rural development measure in February 2006. The objectives of the CASA Linkage Programme were agreed as:

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74 The N53 is a regional transport artery with a history of poor infrastructural development. Ballynacarry Bridge has been the location of many road fatalities and is locally regarded as an accident black-spot. With the opening of the Dundalk Western Bypass, this route experienced increased traffic flow – and this generated an urgent need for the infrastructural issues with the Bridge to be addressed.
• The funding of infrastructural developments related to fishing within the CASA area
• To support and provide assistance to development and tourism related groups within the CASA area
• To assist joint cross-border festivals within the area through the implementation of marketing guiding principles and product development strategies
• To establish cross-border thematic sub-committees to direct the strategic planning and implementation of economic sustainability measures within the enterprise, tourism and community & voluntary sectors
• To promote the CASA area as a tourist destination
• To attract visitors to the area and encourage return visits
• To increase the economic revenue of the area by increasing bed night stays and the spin off returns
• To increase the skills bases of the tourism service sector within the area and increase employment within the sector.

The core deliverables of the programme are financial assistance and capacity building, in particular the funding of infrastructural works related to fishing – thus leading to increased access and usage and the development of the lake networks within the area – and financial assistance for the marketing and product portfolio of joint cross-border festivals within the CASA area. It was also envisaged that the Programme would lead to increased awareness and uptake of business supports and an increased number of networks in the areas of childcare provision, disability groups, youth cultural activities and women's groups.

The work of CASA has been overseen by a Steering Committee which, as well as involving officials and councillors from the three partners councils, also includes representatives from relevant local agencies such as the East Border Region, the Castleblayney Enterprise Centre, Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency, Monaghan County Enterprise Board, Castleblayney Community Enterprise Ltd., Monaghan Community Network, Monaghan Tourism, Newry & Mourne LEADER and the Ulster Farmers Union. To date the programme has completed three infrastructural projects, two of which encompassed floating jetties and enhancement of recreational areas in Castleblayney and Crossmaglen; with two more fishing related improvements planned before the funded programme ceases its two year lifespan.

In addition to capital projects, the CASA Linkage Programme has successfully administered seven cross-border festivals with the final festival having a craft focus; the promotion of the 'Linen & Lace Heritage’ of County Monaghan and South Armagh. The festival themes have been diverse, ranging from drama to walking, to speed dating to creative music. In quantitative terms, the festivals have been successful by encouraging visitors to stay in the area, hence generating economic advantage. But the strongest benefits lie in the qualitative outputs of the festivals. These include the Iontas Community Centre in Castleblayney being recognised for its theatre facilities; with national and international music artists including Hal Ketchum, Mary Black and Sharon Shannon approaching this community enterprise as a tour venue. Other benefits include the enhancement of the actual product ‘portfolio’ of the festivals themselves, the synergy that arises from a true partnership of people with a shared interest, and the networking between individuals and groups and, to some extent, agencies.
The programme as a whole has greatly enhanced confidence within this cross-border region; an area that was once characterised by fractured relationships and an overall sense of isolation.

The success of the cross-border programmes can be attributed to multiple factors; however, the key factors underpinning the identified accomplishments include:

- Having a full-time officer offering day-to-day support to local community groups and cross-border projects
- Sharing common concerns centred on local needs
- The direct involvement of local authorities and elected members with the community
- A true working partnership based on trust and valuing the most important resource this cross-border area has - its people.

The current funding stream for the CASA Linkage Programme ceases in June 2008. The pending loss of a day-to-day support officer is perceived by several interviewees as one of the main challenges facing this area – and any future cross-border projects going forward. However, irrespective of funding the semi-formal cross-border CASA Partnership structure will remain in place and shall continue to act as a lobbying vehicle for the needs of this cross-border periphery. At present, the CASA Partnership is drawing up a strategy to address the on-going needs of this deprived cross-border rural area and, going forward, shall be sourcing appropriate funding streams to further support enterprise development and address community deficits within the South Armagh-Castleblayney region.

9.4 Moving Forward: Building on Achievements & Broadening, Deepening and Sustaining Collaboration.

Cross-border collaborative initiatives that have emerged since the commencement of the Peace Process are delivering notable benefits to Castleblayney, Crossmaglen and their surrounds. Linkages between community and voluntary groups have been consolidated, and these linkages have strengthened and renewed the personal and social ties that existed on a cross-border basis; despite Partition and the Troubles. Somewhat uniquely, community and voluntary groups have acted collaboratively with elected representatives and local authorities over the past number of years – a partnership approach that will be developed further over the coming years (see Table 9.4). While initially the main focus was on social connectivity, they have in more recent times promoted infrastructural connectivity and economic diversification.

Collaboration between local government bodies on both sides of the Border has crystallised in the form of the Castleblayney and South Armagh Partnership (CASA). This Partnership represents an important innovation in terms of inter-institutional collaboration. To date, CASA has demonstrated what can be achieved when communities and councils come together for the betterment of their area; improved cross-border infrastructure, the joint promotion and marketing of the area, enhanced cultural linkages, stronger networks and more
Effective community development. In addition, it has begun to build the areas tourism potential and this will continue to be an important focus for the Partnership over the coming years (whatever form it may take). Consultations with community leaders reveal broad support for further enterprise development, notably in the tourism sector. There is also a strong local desire to see improvements in road infrastructure and in public transport services.

The emergence of CASA provides South Armagh and East Monaghan with a mechanism through which inter-local authority collaboration can be further pursued. Local consultations point to the need for cross-border collaboration in respect of service provision and spatial planning. CASA’s membership shows a strong commitment to cross-border collaboration, and a strong dedication to the principles of partnership – despite the constraints to which a reliance on funding and the gaps between funding programmes can lead. Thus, the Partnership can be said to be genuinely needs-led rather than funding-led. The efforts of CASA, and those of the various community-led cross-border collaborative linkages, are serving to cultivate and convey a positive image of South Armagh and adjoining areas. Proximity to the Dublin-Dundalk-Newry-Belfast corridor presents the area with considerable opportunities in terms of fostering development - particularly badly needed economic diversification.

The area has much to offer in terms of tourism – natural beauty (Lough Muckno, Lough Ross and the Ring of Gullion), Irish legends and over forty golf courses within a one-hour radius. These attributes are not currently being exploited to the extent they could be in terms of attracting visitors to the area. However, there is widespread agreement among all interviewees that the area should not pin its future economic development on tourism alone as this is a market in flux. Rather the economic base of the area needs to be broadened. In the context of the Lisbon and Goteburg agendas and increasing global competitiveness, the area needs to consider opportunities in the knowledge economy. For example, the area needs to consider if / where it fits with the recent announcement of Irish government

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**Table 9.4: Stakeholders and their Roles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Key Roles / Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Groups</td>
<td>Addressing local needs; Strengthening links with local government and the private sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Increased dialogue and collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Representatives</td>
<td>Development of CASA model; Establishing a cross-border councillors forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector (incl. Statutory Agencies)</td>
<td>Promotion of area and developing potential – with focus on tourism and associated enterprises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>Support enterprise development and increased infrastructure provision; Improved accessibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Government (RoI &amp; Nire)</td>
<td>Commitment to growth of area and protection of environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The area has much to offer in terms of tourism – natural beauty (Lough Muckno, Lough Ross and the Ring of Gullion), Irish legends and over forty golf courses within a one-hour radius. These attributes are not currently being exploited to the extent they could be in terms of attracting visitors to the area. However, there is widespread agreement among all interviewees that the area should not pin its future economic development on tourism alone as this is a market in flux. Rather the economic base of the area needs to be broadened. In the context of the Lisbon and Goteburg agendas and increasing global competitiveness, the area needs to consider opportunities in the knowledge economy. For example, the area needs to consider if / where it fits with the recent announcement of Irish government
support for the location of financial service back offices in Northern Ireland. There is also a need to support locally-based education and training initiatives and to promote inter-business linkages and cooperation. While the area itself does not have the critical mass to support large-scale industry, its strategic location close to the Dublin-Belfast corridor makes it suitable for the development of micro-enterprises that support the economic base of the region.

Initial discussions on establishing a joint cross-border chamber of commerce need to be pushed forward – thus adding impetus to the growing realisation that there are mutual benefits to be gained from clustering / networking. This may assist in the advancement of initial plans that already exist for a cross-border business park.

9.5 Synthesis

Cross-border collaboration has been central to the successful transition whereby South Armagh and East Monaghan have gone from being the subject of some of the worst excesses of Partition and the Troubles to a situation in which the area now stands at the threshold of opportunities for renewal and development. Opportunities have been generated through cross-border linkages in the Newry-Dundalk area which have the potential to improve connectivity to and from South Armagh and East Monaghan.

Local-level inter-community linkages have been strengthened considerably over the past decade and have generated opportunities in rural tourism and improved infrastructure. More recently, linkages at local government level have emerged. The formation of CASA – a partnership involving local authorities from both sides of the Border – represents a massive leap forward in terms of collaborative local governance. This Partnership has the potential to drive forward joint approaches to spatial planning (such as integrated plans) and the enhanced provision of public services.

The findings from this case study emphasise the importance of developing a diversified economic base within a cross-border region; in this case focusing on heritage, fishing or golfing holidays and the development of micro-enterprises. The findings further suggest a need to involve regional and national-level actors in supporting endogenous development and in adding value to collaborative efforts of local authorities. Regional and state-level actors are beginning to engage in partnership structures and processes; demonstrating a move away from back-to-back policy and decision-making. Moreover, local and exogenous agencies are providing increasing levels of support to local and county-level cross-border projects; and the deepening of their involvement in the area will contribute to sustained linkages, the unleashing of greater local development potential and the attraction of inward investment.
Observations of Cross-Border Cooperation in Other Selected Areas

This chapter outlines the cooperation history of two further cross-border communities along the Irish Border: Truagh-Aughnacloy on the Monaghan-Tyrone border and Pettigo-Tullyhummon-Kesh on the Donegal-Fermanagh border (see Figure 10.1). Both these areas are located in close proximity to the previous case study areas but unlike them, they have not been researched in depth as part of this research programme. Rather, the findings and conclusions outlined below are based on a small number of interviews (see Appendix 4), observation and desk-based research. As to why the research team chose to highlight these two areas over other areas in the Border region, the answer is simple: a number of the interviewees from the main case studies referred to these ‘other examples’ during the course of the research programme as areas which have successfully drawn down an inordinate amount of funding and ‘have an interesting story to tell’ (see Chapter 8 for example).
Figure 10.1: Locational Context: Truagh-Aughnacloy and Pettigo-Tullyhummon-Kesh
Both these cross-border areas, and in particular Pettigo-Tullyhummon-Kesh, have actively pursued an agenda of cooperation and collaboration since the Peace Process came into effect; both areas have been successful in drawing down funds in support of social, economic, cultural and environmental initiatives; and in both cases, this activity has been driven by the community and voluntary sector. It is at this point, however, that their paths diverge. The cross-border communities of Truagh and Aughnacloy are still hungry for further collaboration; it has become an integral part of who they are and it is ‘real’. On the other hand, within the cross-border area of Pettigo-Tullyhummon-Kesh, the level of activity has fallen off; despite the local cross-body partnership – Association for the Development of Pettigo and Tullyhummon (ADoPT) – still being regarded as a key organisation in the area. Of the three settlements in this cluster, only Kesh is experiencing any growth.

Taken together, these observation studies demonstrate that while some cross-border communities thrive on the notion of cooperation and working together, for others there is only a limited window of opportunity in which to engage in cross-border activities. There are many reasons for this – the nature of the settlement structure, the size and age profile of the population and the issue of ‘burn-out’ in terms of volunteerism. Of interest, particularly in the Pettigo-Tullyhummon area, is the public perception that exists of these cross-border areas, in terms of their degrees of success in cooperation initiatives, is somewhat at variance to the reality.

10.1. Truagh-Aughnacloy

The communities of Truagh and Aughnacloy are different in many ways: scale, make-up, age-profile, confidence levels and, albeit not to the same extent as in the past, commitment to cross-border cooperation. The community of Truagh has long advocated the need for cross-border cooperation on social, economic, cultural and environmental grounds – and it is only in recent years that it has started to bring the community of Aughnacloy with it on this journey. But rather than leading to an imbalance in this cross-border partnership, the ‘coming together’ of both areas has led to a very interesting dynamic whereby both communities find themselves on a path of discovery, learning and exchange. Where it was the case that burn-out was becoming an issue for Truagh, it has found itself reinvigorated by its growing partnership with Aughnacloy – and this is largely because this cross-border relationship is based on an identified and very real local need.

10.1.1. Socio-Economic Profile

The parish of Truagh is located in north County Monaghan. This area, which includes the villages of Ballyoisin, Carrickroe, Clara and Mullan, was decimated by the Troubles and road closures – with out-migration and rural isolation becoming the predominant characteristics of the area during this era. The village of Mullan, for example, became a deserted settlement. In socio-economic terms, the border patrols, custom posts and bouts of violence meant that business and trading links, together with social relationships, were broken off. The inevitable closure of local businesses and the lack of inward investment resulted in the local unemployment level soaring. The numbers engaging in second level
education dipped; the impact of which – a legacy of high levels of illiteracy – still exists today. Farming remains an important activity in the area, albeit this is primarily on a part-time basis. With it no longer possible to make a living from the small-scale farms that characterise this community, increasing numbers are engaging in part-time employment or establishing farming-based enterprises; for example mushroom farms, pony trekking and motor-bike scrambling.

The main urban centres serving this cross-border community are Emavale and Monaghan Town in County Monaghan and Aughnacloy in County Tyrone; although for the parish of Truagh the tendency has always been to look towards Aughnacloy for its day-to-day needs and service provision (i.e. its natural hinterland). Aughnacloy was, historically, the market town and employment centre for this cross-border community. Up until the late 1950’s, it was served by the Clogher Valley Railway\(^75\) and this brought many salesmen to the area. However, as was the case in Truagh, the introduction of the Border initiated the decline in the significance of this centre – a decline that was further hastened by the road closures of the 1970s. This area is also dependent on agriculture for local employment; with any businesses that do exist tending to be small-scale and locally based.

Since the reopening of the roads in 1995, the community has set about addressing the ‘border marginalisation’ by rebuilding community and business relations. But this is a slow process.

**10.1.2. The Issues, Challenges and Opportunities**

Prior to the Troubles, this cross-border area was entrepreneurial in spirit with its eyes firmly locked on the future; the emphasis being on modernisation and growth. A lot of cross-border movement would have taken place – to work and socialise. Services were shared; for example one GP served both communities. Religious differences were not an issue. However, with the Troubles, eight of the nine local border road crossings would have been closed – mainly through their cratering. A seize mentality was adopted – and this was fuelled by the customs posts and army patrols. Social networks were fractured; smuggling became an economic necessity; and communities became insular. The reopening of roads in the past decade has been welcomed, albeit there are mixed views on the economic benefits this has brought. Socially, the freedom of movement has revitalised both communities; with increased cross-border travel for entertainment, leisure and recreation purposes.

This increase in social interaction is seen as key to the on-going improvements in cross-border relations. There is little sense, however, that the opening of the roads has brought any economic or religious benefits to the wider area. Today, both communities remain characterised by having little local employment and no industrial base. There is a sense of isolation, of having been ‘forgotten’.

The strategic location of this cross-border ‘cluster’ on the main North-South / East-West road transport corridors\(^76\) provides the area of Truagh-Aughnacloy with many opportunities in terms of its future growth and development. There are concerns, however, that the imminent upgrading of the N2 / A5 routeway which passes through the area will result in further economic decline – as the proposal is to bypass Aughnacloy.

\(^75\) In the late 1800s, the railway together with the Ulster Canal would have been the infrastructural backbone of the Clogher Valley area. The road network would have been minimal, particularly in the South.
\(^76\) A central point on the Derry-Dublin and Sligo-Enniskillen-Armagh routes.
Both communities are characterised by having a strong community and voluntary sector with a strong community spirit; their focus and primary concern being the health and well-being of both communities. Both communities recognise the importance of networking and the added-value that can be achieved through same. Both communities have, in the past, engaged in cross-border initiatives; therefore they have a history of working together. There is an awareness of each others’ strengths and weaknesses, a willingness to work together on identified local needs and a growing commitment to share experiences in an open and transparent forum.

Both communities have their own local development association and it is through their active engagement with each other that much of the cooperation to date has taken place. Both organisations bring together an interesting mix of people representing different socio-economic groupings and denominations. And while some would argue that this would have been the downfall of both associations, it has actually been their strength.

10.1.3. Truagh and Aughnacloy Development Associations

The Truagh Development Association was established with the main objective of implementing activities which benefit the community and environs of Truagh, the Blackwater Valley and Sliabh Beag (see Chapter 8). Part of its vision was “to rebuild relationships with neighbours across the Border”. While only incorporated in 1991, the Association has been active in North Monaghan for over 20 years77; and within this time it has provided a wide range of services for the local community. It has actively drawn down monies from EU sources such as LEADER and INTERREG; from national sources such as the International Fund for Ireland (IFI); from regional sources such as the North West Regional Tourist Board; and locally from the County Development Team and County Tourism Committee. Active citizenship is a key principle of the association. Membership of the Board of Management, which meets monthly, is open to the public and is rotated on a three-yearly basis. In addition, the community is regularly informed of the work of the association and upcoming activities/events through regular newsletter updates and public notices.

As noted above, the Truagh Development Association has been involved in a wide range of initiatives to date, some of which have benefited the local community in the main; while others have benefited communities living on both sides of the Border. For example, one of the key projects being ‘driven’ by the Association is TravelNet, the rural transport service for North Monaghan. The main areas covered by this service are Glaslough, Emyvale, Tydavnet and Truagh; and it is hoped that this will eventually become a cross-border service with cross-border routes.

The Aughnacloy Development Association was established in the mid-1990s to address the town’s depressed economic climate and, as a result, much of its initial
work had an economic focus. For example, the Association undertook a number of environmental improvement schemes in an attempt to attract people and investment to the town. More recently, as its relationship with Truagh matures, the Association is engaging in both cross-border and socially and environmentally-based initiatives. One of the first cross-border initiatives both associations came together on, following the reopening of the roads, was the **Aughnacloy Truagh European Studies Schools Project (ATESSP)**. Involving a cluster of six schools – three from Augnacloy and three from Truagh – and funded under PEACE I from 1997 to 2000, this project focused on developing a joint curriculum on environmental studies in the Blackwater Valley (see [www.atessp.ie/](http://www.atessp.ie/)). It involved the use of ICT and video conferencing between the schools to facilitate exchange of learning.

Building on the success of this project and the demonstrated ability of environmental issues to unite communities on a cross-border and cross-community basis, both associations came together again in 2005 for the environmentally-focused initiative, the **Vital Signs Project**. Funded under INTERREG IIIA and launched in 2005, this project involved schools in the Blackwater, Carlingford, Foyle and Melvin River Catchments. Children from the participating schools have been monitoring their local streams and digitally recording details on width, depth, flow, temperature, dissolved oxygen content and surrounding habitats – thus building up a detailed picture of part of their local environment and its current state.

Recognising that access to ICT is a prerequisite for any business in today’s competitive environment, and in an attempt to make the area more attractive to inward investment, both associations established the **Blackwater Valley Broadband Consortium** in 2004. The purpose of this consortium was to look at ways of improving broadband connectivity in the area. Under INTERREG IIIA, the Consortium secured funding to provide wireless broadband to the two communities – and this has since been rolled out in association with Net1, a Drogheda-based internet service company.

As well as the infrastructural deficits facing business development and growth in this cross-border region, both communities have also long recognised that the high level of illiteracy and educational attainment in the area is a barrier to attracting investment. In response to this, both communities, and Truagh in particular, spent thirteen years pushing for the establishment of an educational centre for the wider region. As a result of many battles, much lobbying and securing part-funding, the **Blackwater Valley Community Learning, Cultural, ICT and Peace Centre** – to give it its full title – was officially opened in 2007. Serving the wider region on a cross-border basis, the Centre is host to a number of programmes on peace building and cross-border cooperation; thus supporting conflict resolution and encouraging lifelong learning in the area. In addition, the Centre is home to the Knockconan National School, the Truagh Development Association and the **Tru Beginnings** childcare group. The establishment of this centre has only been possible with the moral and financial support received from a wide range of organisations from both sides of the Border – East Tyrone College, County Monaghan Vocational Education Committee, the Blackwater Regeneration Partnership, Pobal, Regeneration South Armagh (RoSA – see Chapter 9), County Monaghan Partnership and many others.
In May 2006, both associations came together as part of a process of community consultation. Through joint brainstorming exercises and workshops, representatives from this cross-border community highlighted the priority issues and concerns they face and made suggestions on how these should be addressed. It was hoped to work closely with Triskele\textsuperscript{76} in developing a framework for action in moving forward sixteen of these priority themes. Currently these themes are being broken down further into specific actions including: who, when, how and cost.

Over the years, both communities have built up a great momentum around themselves; and this in turn has generated a lot of interest in what they are doing and removed barriers to both internal and external engagement.

10.1.4. Moving Forward
Since 1994, cross-border cooperation in this area has been developing – and it continues to grow. Together, both development associations are working to develop a ‘cradle to the grave community infrastructure’ to enhance the quality of life for those living and working in the area.

It is clear that both communities are dedicated to working with each other in the future and over the long-term. While cautious at the outset, the Aughnacloy Development Association is growing in confidence and strength. Both associations have demonstrated that they are not willing to sit back and wait for others to take the lead. Discussions are already under way on what the focus of future cooperation might be. For example, proposals have been mooted around:

- The formation of a Task Force for the Blackwater Valley to prepare a cross-border collaborative framework for this ‘micro-region’
- Developing a working relationship with the Ulster American Folk Park to develop a memorial to Archbishop John Hughes who hailed from this area and was the first Archbishop of New York.

The area’s proximity to the Border has meant that there has been little or no interest in the cultural wealth of the area over the past forty years. Yet, this area is very historic. Both communities have established a historical society so that this can be collated through records and photographs. Tourism is also considered as a potential area for future development and marketing; and there is growing awareness that the focus of any tourism initiative should be cultural rather than natural / eco-tourism – this area is home to the Bragan Celtic Cross, the Errigal Truagh Graveyard with headstones dating back to the early 1700’s and McCusker’s Cornmill. This cultural wealth is recognised by the community as a potential tool for community engagement, increased pride and local growth.

This cross-border area is regarded as being very entrepreneurial – a characteristic many link back to the days when smuggling was a necessity. During the 1990s, this entrepreneurial spirit resulted in the development of many small-scale businesses in the areas of agri-tourism, mushroom-farming and furniture making. But there is a sense locally, particularly in North Monaghan, that this entrepreneurship is being
hampered by increasing regulations and bureaucracy. In some respects the community welcome this as it once again puts the emphasis on the importance of education and qualifications. On the other hand, there is a sense of anger towards the local councils and enterprise support agencies for failing to work with the communities to prevent this situation arising. This region will never be a major hub of industry – irrespective of its strategic location – so it is dependent on growing its small and medium size industrial base. The communities are willing to diversify and do hope to unearth a ‘niche-area’ for growth which builds on the areas strengths and addresses local needs. And they recognise that for such restructuring to be successful and sustainable, they must work more closely together and with other agencies – both statutory and non-statutory.

10.2. Pettigo-Tullyhummon-Kesh

Spanning the Donegal-Fermanagh Border, the small rural villages of Pettigo-Tullyhummon-Kesh are experiencing mixed fortunes in terms of balanced development and growth. A report in the *Irish Times* on 3 October 2001 noted that “In the Border Town of Pettigo, people feel they face the worst of both worlds, north and south. They have no Bus Eireann service, the banks have pulled out and they have no doctor’s surgery of their own”. This compares starkly with the confidence that existed in Pettigo when the Lough Derg Journey Heritage Centre opened in 1995, and which was regarded at that time as a positive turning point for economic growth in the village.

Kesh is a key settlement in this part of the Border region; being the main location for local service provision, for example primary school education and employment. There are distinct similarities between Pettigo-Tullyhummon and Kesh – each is on the periphery of the respective jurisdiction, each had a railway station which closed in the 1950s and each has a vibrant community organisation which is seeking to bring social and economic development to the settlements. However, in comparison with other case study areas in this research report, no formal cross-border cooperation is currently taking place. These have been replaced by informal connections that continue through social networks and retailing. Pettigo-Tullyhummon is an interesting case study given the scale of each settlement and also the achievements in drawing down funding for specific projects. It is also worth exploring because of the observed interdependency of the settlements with Kesh, with which there is no organised collaboration.

10.2.1. Socio-Economic Profile

Pettigo is an isolated settlement on the extreme southeast fringe of County Donegal which is still heavily dependent on agriculture for local employment. The village has developed along the banks of the River Termon and is an ancient market town. It is the gateway to St. Patrick’s Purgatory, Lough Derg; a famous place of pilgrimage which is still popular today. Despite having an operational train line up until the late 1950s, Pettigo has experienced minimal growth or change for more than a century.
Today, Pettigo suffers significantly from dereliction and the under-utilisation of lands and buildings within the village.

Tullyhummon is, in effect, the area of Pettigo that lies in County Fermanagh. Known locally as High Street, the area of Tullyhummon is elevated and overlooks the rest of the village of Pettigo. Economic activity continues in Tullyhummon, focused on arts and crafts and also a specialist car garage. The settlement further comprises a Post Office\textsuperscript{79}, Presbyterian Church and housing.

Kesh is a rural village in County Fermanagh, 10km from Tullyhummon-Pettigo, with around 1,000 inhabitants. Located close to Lough Erne, it has experienced significant residential growth in recent years in contrast to neighbouring settlements such as Pettigo and Belleek. Alongside population growth, unemployment levels have remained low at around 2.3\% (NISRA, 2001\textsuperscript{80}). Together with farming, the majority of the economically active population are employed in manufacturing and service jobs in Omagh, Enniskillen and beyond. A range of services are available in Kesh including a bank, convenience stores, chemist, and hardware store / builders supplier.

\textbf{10.2.2. The Issues, Challenges and Opportunities}

This cross-border area was badly affected by the Troubles and the ensuing road closures. Natural hinterlands in counties Donegal, Fermanagh and Tyrone were severed resulting in social and economic decline; services were withdrawn, investment declined, unemployment rose and emigration became common. In response to this, the area has benefited from investment by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and the PEACE programme.

One of the first IFI funded cross-border initiatives that uniquely brought the government agencies together from both sides of the Border was the Community Regeneration and Improvement Special Programme (CRISP). Aimed at kickstarting regeneration in the most disadvantaged towns and villages, Pettigo secured funding for a streetscape project aimed at raising Pettigo from the decline and dereliction that occurred as a result of the Troubles. Pettigo also received support from the PEACE fund to enhance shared public spaces. In Phase 1, five projects were approved and of these, two have now gone forward to the second phase. While these various funds have been welcomed and have improved the image of the village of Pettigo and its adjoining neighbour, Tullyhummon, it has not been sufficient to prevent further business closures. There has been minimal indigenous enterprise development and investment has not been forthcoming. Taken together, the stigma of the Troubles and conflict remains and confidence is low; all of this is compounded by peripherality from major urban centres.

As with Lifford, the challenge facing the village of Pettigo is how to avail of the various potential opportunities that exist. To address this, the first local area plan (LAP) for Pettigo is currently being developed by Donegal County Council. This plan currently exists in its draft form; but when adopted, it will include all the policies required for the future development of Pettigo including service provision in the areas of roads, water and planning zones. Neither the Planning Service for Northern
Ireland nor Fermanagh District Council is preparing a similar local plan for Tullyhummon. Furthermore the *Fermanagh Area Plan 2007* does not specifically mention the settlement of Tullyhummon; therefore it exists in a policy vacuum.

The cross-border agenda has to date been driven by local politicians and, as a result, developmental work with the various stakeholders has become an important part of the process of cross-border cooperation. Connections were created between both areas but it is only now that real community engagement is starting to take place. Politically, this case study is a success. Strong links were developed between Donegal County Council and Fermanagh District Council, nurturing a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down process led by central government. The collaboration between Pettigo and Tullyhummon in the late 1980s and 1990s represented a change in direction at this time. There was wide buy-in to the process of collaboration, spatial scales were coming to the fore, and emphasis was on cross-border cooperation rather than investment in each settlement.

**10.2.3. The Pettigo, Tullyhummon and Kesh Development Associations**

The cross-border villages of Pettigo and Tullyhummon have benefited from a strong and active community development organisation, the Association for the Development of Pettigo and Tullyhummon (ADoPT). ADoPT has been in existence since 1991 and was established with the remit of securing and promoting the social and economic development of Pettigo and Tullyhummon (see [www.pettigo.com/](http://www.pettigo.com/)). Its key objectives have been – and remain:

- To establish, promote and operate a community development programme which promotes local educational, cultural and economic welfare
- To aid in the re-establishment of essential services for the area
- To ensure the inclusion of all groups within the community in community development activities
- To aid in the development of community skills, confidence and resources
- To cooperate and form the necessary partnerships to meet these objectives.

The organisation is currently funded under PEACE II extension monies (through Border Action) and it is envisaged that these monies will be used to create structures that can become self-sustainable on a cross-border and cross-community basis.

As an organisation with a cross-border focus, ADoPT has been very successful in drawing down funding over the years. It has been involved in a number of environmental initiatives, FAS Community Employment (CE) schemes, and the provision of services to meet local needs. One of its most successful cross-border programmes has been the **Cross Border 55+ Club**, which has facilitated the re-establishment of old cross-border relationships that were disrupted by the Troubles. Through this club, the elderly in both communities and surrounding areas have obtained a social outlet which stimulates contact, communication and conversation.

More recently, ADoPT has been very active in working with Donegal County Council on the development of the local area plan; and from the Council’s perspective their assistance has been invaluable. Not only are they aware of the issues facing the
community, they have also provided facilities for public events and putting plans and materials on display. ADoPT is also liaising with Donegal County Council and Fermanagh District Council on the development of a PEACE III funding application aimed at rejuvenating both villages (see Section 10.2.4).

The Kesh Development Association has been in existence for much longer, having been established in 1965. Yet many of the issues and challenges it was set up to address then still apply today. In recent years, the Association has been involved in a number of capital build projects, all of which have been aimed at the physical improvement of the area. Through the CRISP programme, supported by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), the Kesh Development Association secured monies to redevelop the old chemist building in the village. Known locally as Bell’s, this building was developed into a mixed facility of two retail units, three offices and five houses. The new centre is now home to a number of local businesses while one of the offices is used as an IT training room for local farmers. The houses are rented out as holiday accommodation. For the locals of this village, this redevelopment programme ‘had a dramatic effect’ as it changed the face of the village and helped re-instil confidence in the local economy.

Through a combination of INTERREG, Konver and Millennium funding, and the support of Fermanagh District Council and Kesh Enterprise Company, Kesh Development Association has developed a £1.1 million marina on the old quay located on the shores of Lough Erne. This flagship project did much to boost local confidence and pride in the area – and its long-term benefits are that it is attracting tourists on an annual basis to the village. In the late 1990s, the Kesh Development Association secured monies under the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (SSPPR) for environmental improvements to the village. These included the removal of all overhead wires, an extensive use of brick paviors, new lighting and seating and a new clock. Again, this programme had the full support of Fermanagh District Council.

The local communities in Pettigo, Tullyhummon and Kesh have invested much energy in the physical renewal of their villages yet the outcomes have been very different. Kesh has benefited from housing growth, which in turn supports the provision of local services and ultimately boosts community confidence. Pettigo and Tullyhummon have continued to stagnate as a result of economic decline due to a dearth of employment opportunities in the area. Despite this, both Pettigo-Tullyhummon and Kesh are examples of community empowerment and how this can have a positive impact on settlements along the Border region.

10.2.4. Moving Forward
This observation of Pettigo-Tullyhummon-Kesh highlights how project funding can have a long-lasting impact on upskilling and community confidence; essential ingredients for the sustainable development of settlements. It also demonstrates how capital expenditure on new or improved facilities does not automatically lead to economic development. But perhaps the most interesting point in the Pettigo-Tullyhummon-Kesh area is that despite the current lack of formal cross-border cooperation, which ended within the past five years, there continues nonetheless to be an inter-relationship between the settlements in both the social (community /
church-based activities) and economic sectors; a factor borne out by the current collaborations between Donegal County Council, Fermanagh District Council and ADoPT on a PEACE III funding application.

The PEACE III funding application, recently submitted to the Special EU Programmes Body, for the development of Pettigo-Tullyhummon as an eco-village is being driven by Donegal County Council, with the support of ADoPT and Fermanagh District Council. Despite its economic stagnancy, this cross-border area is recognised as being highly scenic with a range of activities to offer: fishing, cycling, horse-riding and historical trails. It is also home to St. Patrick's Purgatory and it is this which lies at the core of the PEACE application – the development and enhancement of both villages as a place of secular retreat, sanctuary and refuge. It is envisaged that a new iconic centre and childcare facilities will be developed, together with a nature playground, outdoor multi-use games areas, linear riverside walkway and park and youth café. New street furniture and public art will also be installed. This proposal fits with the current cultural focus of the villages and the nearby 'Green Box' (see Chapter 6).

At the strategic level, however, there is little connectivity between government policies in Ireland / Northern Ireland for this area. Of concern, therefore, is how long informal connectivity will continue in the face of macro-economic trends that influence employment opportunities and the cost of goods and services. In particular, there is a question mark over the impact of central / regional government policy decisions on Pettigo-Tullyhummon-Kesh; for example, in the areas of education and transport (roads) provision. Following this brief analysis and observation, it is suggested that formal cross-border linkages between the settlements would bring benefit to the area through lobbying power that (a) influences policy making for infrastructure provision, and (b) further cements existing cross-community cohesion.
part 3

conclusions & recommendations
Enabling Cross-Border Cooperation

The preceding chapters in this report have documented the structures and processes at play in a number of cross-border towns and villages. Evidence from this study has identified that cross-border cooperation can derive mutual benefits for the partners / actors involved; however, this outcome is not automatic. There are many different models of cross-border cooperation, focusing on different aspects of service and infrastructure provision, community development, economic diversification and environmental enhancement. Initiatives often incorporate both the enhanced delivery of services in cross-border areas such as health care and transport provision, and a social dimension whereby community links are re-established and promoted across the jurisdictional boundary. Indeed, the overarching aim of cross-border cooperation and collaboration, in the context of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), is centred upon the principles of sustainable development, in order to:

- Enhance the quality of life for citizens locally
- Promote inter-nodal connectivity
- Secure territorial economic competitiveness based on ‘potentiality’.

In the context of Ireland-Northern Ireland, the Peace Process and the associated opportunities for economic regeneration and social progress further accentuate cross-border collaboration. This chapter seeks to elaborate on the key messages emerging from the interviews and focus groups held with policy makers, funding agencies, local government representatives and cross-border organisations as part of the research methodology; so as to describe the activity of inter-jurisdictional cooperation, analyse the purpose of cooperation, and identify the processes, structures and factors necessary for establishing successful cross-border and cross-community cooperation.

11.1. Cooperation – Driving Development in Micro-Regions

The insights gained from the initial stages of this research programme show that cross-border cooperation and collaboration can be regarded as an organised set of partnership-based processes and activities with the agreed objectives of:

- Identifying mutual benefits for the participants involved
- Developing connectivity on the basis of socio-economic development
- Emphasising relationship building and understanding of each other
- Adopting a common sense and strategic approach.
Cross-border cooperation occurs when people and groups on both sides of an inter-jurisdictional boundary work together for a common, positive purpose. While inter-jurisdictional cooperation existed across the island of Ireland prior to Partition, cooperation today is largely aimed at overcoming the legacy of territorial and political division in the Irish Border region and redressing the wider economic and social divisions that have caused and accentuated inter-communal conflict. In this regard, and through the process of cooperation and collaboration, the Irish Border can no longer be considered a barrier to development; stakeholders have become ‘border effective’ – also termed by workshop participants as ‘seamless’ – in community thinking and policy delivery.

11.1.1. The Focus of Cooperation
The focus of cross-border cooperation must be on securing mutual benefits for all stakeholders involved; pragmatically described as meeting the needs of people “on the ground”. As the case studies have shown, cross-border collaboration is an integral component of the socio-economic development of “micro-regions” in frontier areas; with the adoption of an area-based approach requiring inter-jurisdictional linkages that transcend national / state boundaries. “Micro-regions” are generally defined by ‘natural’ factors such as physical geography, community / cultural affiliation and a shared sense of place, rather than by administrative demarcations. Thus, cross-border cooperation is the enabling force in the integrated development of these linked towns, villages and communities through facilitating a comprehensive area-based approach to sustainable growth. Examples from the Irish Border region, such as the Sliabh Beagh Partnership and CASA (see Chapters 9 and 8 respectively), demonstrate the opportunities presented by the natural environment for development and growth, whilst other initiatives such as the Strabane Lifford Development Commission (Chapter 5) and the Clones-Erne East Partnership (Chapter 8) seek to reconcile administrative and natural boundaries in the delineation and promotion of micro-regions.

11.1.2. The Objective of Cooperation
The main aim of cross-border collaboration is to reduce, and ultimately to eliminate, the significance of a border as a barrier to economic development, social cohesion and/or environmental conservation. In community development terms, the Irish Border has historically contributed to segregation and a disconnection between Ireland and Northern Ireland and both within and between the two main religious groupings. Cross-border cooperation has a role to play – through the Peace Process – in addressing societal divisions and also in enhancing the capacity of communities in the Irish Border region to advance socio-economic development. Evidence from the case studies documented in this report, for example the KiltyCashel Project (see Chapter 6) and the Lough McNean Tourism Initiative (see chapter 7) indicates that by working towards the ideal of breaking down barriers in service delivery and community cohesion, cross-border cooperation can assist in making the Irish Border region a “better place for all”; by reconnecting and rejuvenating communities that were previously alienated from one another and marginal in their respective states.
11.2. Rationale – Evidence of Mutual Benefits

As well as serving to define micro-regions, cross-border collaboration maximises the range of resources, common knowledge and expertise available for project development and spatial planning. In particular, adopting a micro-level approach optimises the opportunities for mutual benefits through enhanced multi-stakeholder participation, collaborative governance and economic innovation. Moreover, localised approaches to development facilitate growth in social capital and facilitate community involvement in civic activities and decision-making. This has been evidenced – to varying degrees – in all of the case studies.

The evidence from the case studies, such as Lifford-Strabane (see Chapter 5), suggests an association between engagement in cross-border collaboration and the attainment of territorial (economic and social) competitiveness. The benefits of cross-border collaboration can be seen at a number of spatial levels – local / community, county / district and regional.

Local and community-level benefits that have emerged from collaborative actions and given rise to endogenous impacts that underpin public support for the Peace Process include:

- Improvements in relations between neighbours from different political backgrounds
- Greater cultural diversity, as members of minority communities are empowered to express their cultural identity
- Enhancement of local amenities, facilities, community venues and resource centres
- Creation of new opportunities for economic development
- Provision of some new local services.

At the level of counties and districts, cross-border collaboration has contributed directly to the:

- Sharing of information between local authorities, leading to joint projects, a more efficient use of public resources and improved physical infrastructure
- Creation of dialogue between local government bodies, which is beginning to foster discussion on policy matters and the importance of collaborative approaches to spatial planning.

As local authorities engage in cross-border collaboration (horizontal coordination), and as they exchange experiences of collaborative governance and citizen engagement in local decision-making, models of cross-border collaborative local governance, such as the Clones-Erne East Partnership (see Chapter 8), are beginning to emerge; and interfacing between local government, the state sector and local communities (vertical coordination) is beginning to crystallise.

The attainment of regional development objectives requires top-town interventions and supports, including investment in inter-regional connectivity. Regional development also requires strong endogenous development and the growth of micro-regions (in this instance, small towns, villages and rural townlands). Polycentricity implies that each part of a region realises its potential, and thereby contributes, through inter-area collaboration, to the overall development of the region. As a result of micro-level developments, the North West and Border regions of the island of Ireland have, for example, benefited from:
• The development of new amenities and visitor attractions
• Greater local support for, and buy-in to, development initiatives
• A more positive projection and image internally and externally.

Benefits accrue from cross-border cooperation to both sides of the Irish Border, yet a sectoral divergence with a spatial dimension can be observed; with cross-border projects in the west of the Border corridor more likely to emphasise community and social participation and benefits, whereas initiatives in the east are more likely to focus on economic as well as social capital development.

While cross-border collaboration is delivering tangible benefits in terms of community and social development and is making in-roads in respect of economic development and ecological conservation, one of the outstanding issues for communities on both sides of the Irish Border is that of access to public services. The challenge in this respect stems from the fact that micro-regions, and indeed local government units in both jurisdictions, have limited competencies in influencing the delivery of services such as health, education, communications and social services.

Policy-making in Ireland and Northern Ireland is relatively centralised in the European context and opportunities for endogenous inputs are limited. This disconnection between the local and the central is a major point of contention in all of the case study areas. In the course of the research some suggestions emerged that advocate the enabling of service delivery organisations (e.g. An Post and Royal Mail) to operate across adjoining areas, North and South of the Border. Workshop participants in each of the five case study clusters also articulated that local people should be permitted to access the public service that is geographically closest to them regardless of the county / district in which the service is located; an issue that exists within Ireland as well as on a cross-border basis.

11.3. Partnership – Enhancing Linkages and Connectivity

An area-based approach underpins the effectiveness of partnership and promotes the identification of common issues and mutually agreed solutions. Cross-border cooperation must not be considered a short- or medium-term activity. Rather, participants must adopt a long-term perspective and approach. Partnership members must be willing to openly accept the diversity of ideas and cultures that may exist within the group and be in a position to ‘grab opportunities’ as they arise. Local assets (such as knowledge, landscape features) must be recognised as such; and where feasible these should be built upon and developed to the mutual benefit of the partnership.

11.3.1. Distance
It is considered that successful cross-border cooperation is strongly influenced by proximity. This will facilitate face-to-face communication and interaction and crucially the clear identification of local need. Cross-border partnerships should only exist where:
A defined area / locale identifies a local issue and believes this can best be addressed by working closely with a neighbour.

An existing partnership identifies common issues and formally resolves itself to address these effectively.

The opportunity arises for capacity building and rejuvenation through cross-community reconciliation.

11.3.2. Operationalising Cross-Border Partnerships

There are many potential opportunities for cooperation; and in the ‘early days’ it is critical that partners focus on outcomes that are a win-win for the population of both jurisdictions. In terms of operationalising such cooperation, the following aspects were identified:

- Multi-agency approach and inter-agency collaboration
- Top-down and bottom-up working together
- Funding, resources and policy support from local and central government
- Regular meetings and open communication channels, with mechanisms for feedback to nominating bodies and communities
- Shared information
- Shared responsibility.

Any cross-border partnership must be flexible in terms of negotiating how identified local issues should be addressed. Account must be taken of the different pace at which project participants may operate, as otherwise competition may occur from within cooperation (see Box 11.1).

Box. 11.1: Failings in the Partnership Process

In cases of failed cooperation, or cooperation that has not reached full potential, several key elements have been missing from the partnership process. These include a lack of financial support and shared vision. The latter results from the negative impact of local parish politics and is compounded by introverted or insular attitudes from participants who emphasise their own area or scheme instead of promoting mutual and / or reciprocal gain. An outcome of this is that settlements are seen to be competing rather than complementing each other; communities may therefore feel that the partnership is not equal and the agenda is driven by one group of participants.

Indicators of structural problems within the partnership can include a lack lustre approach from the outset that tarnishes future prospects for successful cooperation. Workshop participants indicated that one reason for this is where participants are brought together on the basis of an artificial partnership to access funding. This is compounded by relationships that are not fully developed before entering into cross-border cooperation or whenever the relationship deteriorates due to poor communication or the departure of key personnel.

The lack of a comprehensive and agreed plan and / or set of objectives are critical issues that undermine the potential of success in cooperation, which can occur when cooperation is funding-led without full consideration of how a project or initiative can strategically address the needs of the micro-region. This can often be compounded by a lack of trust, motivation, and commitment from participants and failure to equitably share responsibility, leading to the breakdown of a project or initiative. These latter factors may emerge as the result of apathy on the parts of one or more partnership members or through a failure to address negative history that may exist among particular partners.

Other issues here include:

- Dependence on a small number of key people
- Short- versus long-term objectives
- Perception of imbalance in participation and / or hidden agendas
- One group, partner or individual within the partnership bearing a disproportionate responsibility for the delivery of actions.
11.3.3. Widening the Partnership
Any cross-border partnership must have the maximum support of its constituent base to be successful and deliver mutual benefits; as demonstrated by the KiltyCashel Project (see Chapter 6) – this includes the support of local people, the business community, local elected representatives, and the relevant county (Ireland) and local (Northern Ireland) councils. There must be willingness within the communities to advocate and actively engage in cross-border collaboration; for example, volunteering, offering financial support and attending events. An entrepreneurial spirit is also important. This may involve a willingness to take risks, meeting the challenge head-on and, crucially, working on a cross-border basis – as demonstrated by the Strabane Lifford Development Commission (see Chapter 5). To be entrepreneurial, the partnership must be innovative and creative which is why the involvement of a broad mix of representatives, as highlighted above, is essential. It must also be in a position to generate income and become self-sustainable; a factor currently being hampered by the conditions of EU funding.

11.3.3.1 Incorporating National, Regional and Local Government
In each of the five case study clusters, focus group participants highlighted the need for political interest in cross-border cooperation initiatives at both local, regional and central government level; as demonstrated by the Clones-Erne East Partnership model (see Chapter 8). Where there is a lack of top-down interest this can lead to barriers in accessing key policy makers and also funding. While national governments have taken steps to promote cross-border collaboration, and have themselves become more involved in specific initiatives, questions arise from this research regarding the varying levels of commitment exhibited by agencies at local and regional level, and the absence of mechanisms to monitor agency buy-in to partnership processes and collaborative structures. A lack of buy-in can result from ‘remote’ government both in the geographical sense and in terms of accessibility to key decision-makers by stakeholders involved in collaborative programmes. This is compounded by differences between service delivery in local government in Ireland / Northern Ireland; leading to difficulties in delivering an action agenda which involves cross-border partners and local government.

Because of the different governance arrangements in Ireland and Northern Ireland, it can be difficult to develop links amongst councillors and between local council staff. Roles and functions tend to be different and some councils can be more reticent than others. The North-South disconnect between election dates and terms of office for councillors inhibits the development of sustainable relationships among councillors. As a result of there being different operating procedures in both jurisdictions, links tend to be informal and time-restricted. Party-political agendas often result in mutually beneficial proposals being shelved, or the exclusion of political representatives from certain Boards and committees.

Cross-border partnerships must be aware of the local and regional stakeholders and key actors. Where there is a lack of policy or political endorsement, specifically at central government level, successful cooperation is more difficult to secure as this type of approval can often lead to financial and other support for projects/initiatives. The current positive political climate in Ireland and Northern
CHAPTER 11: Enabling Cross-Border Cooperation

Ireland is seen as crucial in the promotion of further cross-border collaboration. There is a political impetus for collaboration on a cross-border basis and support structures are increasingly being put in place to assist in the implementation of such initiatives.

11.3.3.2. Working with the Private Sector
The private sector has historically had a peripheral, and largely informal role in cross-border collaboration and partnerships. There has been an unwillingness to share ideas with businesses which, in the past, were considered ‘the competition’. However, there is increasing recognition across all sectors – through the efforts of InterTradeIreland and the IBEC/CBI Joint Business Council81 – that there must be a better balance between social and economic development and to achieve this, links with the private sector must, where appropriate, be formalised; although this is filtering only very slowly down to local businesses. New working arrangements are needed to encourage greater private sector involvement in economic development issues on a cross-border basis. Initially, there will need to be a ‘carrot’ offered e.g. financial incentives; but there are concerns that the current Irish Government is moving away from this methodology following negative publicity and concerns regarding value for money.

11.4. Action – Moving from Cooperation to Collaboration

A shift in mindset is necessary across all sectors whereby neighbouring towns and villages no longer see themselves as being in competition with each other, but as collaborators in search of mutual benefits. The Irish Border corridor straddles two jurisdictions with different currencies, taxation systems, institutional arrangements and legislation. For decades, it has been hampered in its development by back-to-back policy development in each jurisdiction. Prior to the Peace Process, there was very little policy assessment or coordination between jurisdictions - planning, for example, is not a function of local government in Northern Ireland. During the Troubles, the economy of the Border region went into decline with a lack of Government investment North and South in the region - and many would argue that this still continues today, with the Central Border Area largely omitted from Ireland’s Transport 21 and cancer-care strategy.

In areas where the economy has remained stable, this often results in a continued focus on the particular specialist services, function(s), or employment sector(s) for which the town or village is regionally or nationally recognised. Examples of this type of settlement include Lifford and Strabane (administrative functions) and Lisnaskea (industrial employment). Furthermore, there are examples on a cross-border basis where settlements have been forced into competition with each other to access funding, resulting in ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ in the Irish Border region. Yet, an aim of cross-border cooperation is to move towns and villages from competition through complementarity and cooperation to collaboration in socio-economic development. And this movement can occur when a real need exists.

11.4.1 Real Participation leading to Real Change
Having identified real needs, a common and agreed action plan and set of aims and objectives is required from the stakeholders involved. Whilst central and regional government support for cooperation – provided through a ‘top-down’ approach – is important, a further message emerging from the evidence is that gains are maximised where endogenous or ‘bottom-up’ approaches are applied and

81 Involving the Irish Business and Employers Confederation and the Confederation of British Industry.
strategies are based on a valorisation of local assets: current, latent and potential. Furthermore, where local actors are actively involved in the decision-making processes, policies and action agendas cannot be ‘parachuted in’ or imposed.

It is essential that clear and regular lines of communication and networking exist between stakeholders – ensuring participants and the wider community are aware of current developments and that interest levels are maintained during all stages of the development process. Partnerships also need to make provision for internal review and evaluation, and to take on board the recommendations arising from any objective review.

Meaningful cross-border cooperation occurs through participants working together towards a common set of objectives and particularly by ensuring organisations in the public, private and community sectors collaborate to meet the needs of local people; as demonstrated by the Cross Border Opportunities Project (see Chapter 6). Cross-border cooperation should be dynamic and must be underpinned by good working relationships between organisations. This approach includes the principle of compromise. It requires sensitivity towards partners involved in cooperation, and involves enabling freedom of expression by all stakeholders. Relationship building is therefore critical and can be facilitated by conferences and networking events.

Evidence from the focus groups demonstrate that cross-border cooperation is generally a ‘positive concept’; a ‘necessity’ for sustainable development and territorial cohesion. However, any attempt to contrive cross-border project activity is negatively received, particularly as cooperation may artificially develop on the basis of finance availability, as discussed above, rather than growing organically through inter-personal, inter-community and / or inter-agency contact. Beyond the lifespan of projects, workshop participants noted that existing long-term relationships will continue but on a day-to-day operational basis; there is no incentive for real spatial cooperation due to differing government systems in Northern Ireland / Ireland.

Notwithstanding these challenges and the need to focus on achievable outcomes, significant support exists for the concept of cross-border cooperation as:

- Creating an opportunity to generate links and generating a stronger voice in lobbying – critical mass
- Identifying strengths of each participant and using these to work together
- Providing a forum for inter-agency dialogue, engagement and collaboration
- Bringing about a focus on rural development in the Border context
- Promoting inter-nodal connectivity, and thereby, the potential for polycentric development.

11.4.2. Dialogue

There must be real participation and dialogue in the cross-border partnership if it is to be effective and lead to mutual benefits. All stakeholders – irrespective of roles and / or ages – must have a voice and be ‘kept in the loop’ in terms of what activities the partnership is engaged with. Established lines of communication and dialogue between partners ensure that there is no ambiguity in decision-making or misinterpretation of actions. This places an onus on each stakeholder to contribute proactively to the attainment of agreed aims and objectives. Personal agendas must
be kept off the table; any action must result in ‘win-win’ for the areas in question. Networks such as Rural Community Network (RCN), Chambers of Commerce and LEADER Partnerships, have a role to play in terms of ensuring all stakeholders are involved. These bodies generally have the capacity (e.g. staffing, technical know-how and financial resources) to co-ordinate holistic approaches to decision-making, both internally and in response to government consultations.

11.4.3. Time
Restricted funding periods, commonly 3 years, make it difficult for partnerships to be nurtured, as demonstrated by the Lough McNean Tourism Initiative (see Chapter 7) and the CASA partnership (see Chapter 9). Irrespective of the quality of ideas or of the people brought together, cross-border partnerships can only be effective if sufficient time is given to allow buy-in at various scales; for members to get to know each other and build confidence; and develop working and personal relationships. Time is needed to develop effective lines of communication, particularly where the partnership may involve organisations with little experience of collaborative working e.g. county councils (Ireland) with local councils (Northern Ireland), and local government with community groups among other stakeholders. Furthermore, sufficient time is essential to the development of a joint working brief and mission statement.

11.4.4. Promoting Collaborative Governance
The need for ‘champions’ to take forward an initiative was identified at the workshops as an important aspect in cross-border cooperation. Indeed, there is a requirement for strong, resilient and committed leadership within the partnership structures; as demonstrated by the Strabane Lifford Development Commission (see Chapter 5) and the KiltyCashel Project (see Chapter 6). At the same time, though, it was emphasised that processes must not be dominated by one group or person. Where this does occur, this can impact negatively upon the initiative, potentially leading to an inability to negotiate and fractures in cooperation – as evidenced in the Blacklion-Belcoo area (see Chapter 7). Furthermore, it can lead to the perception of bias around the organisations involved and sensitivities as to why particular agendas are being pursued. To counteract against this situation arising in cross-border cooperation, significant buy-in is required from communities and individuals within those communities. It is suggested that communities in border areas need to “decommission mindsets”, particular in terms of mental barriers to cross-border cooperation. For collaboration to be successful, those involved must widen their perspectives – only then can the positive benefits that can be derived from cooperation be perceived.

11.4.5. Working Relationships
Workshop participants identified trust as a critical factor for cross-border cooperation. Without this, the close working relationship required of participants involved with the project or initiative will not occur. It is further considered that ‘hidden agendas’ will undermine cooperation (see Box 11.2). Therefore, honesty and openness are regarded as essential ingredients for securing cooperation that is genuinely a ‘joint effort’. In nominating a representative to a committee or partnership, an agency must select an individual who has the capacity to make decisions on behalf of his/her organisation and who can guide the agency’s inputs.

Stakeholder involvement means: “Equity invested by government and people from both jurisdictions to meeting the needs for sustaining and developing the social, economic, and cultural life of a cross-border area.”

Workshop Attendee – Community Sector
Participation factors are equally important for successful cooperation, drawing upon ‘quality’ in the social capital that exists in the cross-border areas. These human aspects include:

- A willingness to compromise
- Having a similar work ethic - evidenced by dedication and commitment from all involved
- Being enthusiastic
- Honesty and trust
- Having a broad support base (and age profile where appropriate)
- Utilising the local skills-base.

Other key organisational components include:

- Having a multi-agency partnership that is responsive to micro-regional spatial scales and which combines the best elements of top-down and bottom-up
- Engaging in community / stakeholder consultation
- Taking the long-term perspective; having a long-term plan based on common interests which meet real needs and which focuses on developing territorial competitiveness through the valorisation and sustainable development of local assets and potential
- Having access to funding - whilst working towards self-sustainability
- Having clear lines of communication
- Bringing together well-matched partners
- Being able to deliver projects and initiatives.

Workshop participants also identified the need for positive and on-going public relations; such as regular newsletters as employed in Truagh-Aughnacloy (see Chapter 10). It is anticipated that this will ensure good communication and, crucially, ongoing community support and motivation for further developing the cooperation. Successes should be noted and celebrated; thus highlighting the mutual benefits derived.

Box 11.2: Weakness in Participation

This includes weaknesses in how cooperation is constructed, and the mechanisms by which partnership operates, particularly in situations where cooperation becomes a ‘tick-box’ exercise:

- Lack of coordination, transparency and (poor) communication
- Diluted or lack of involvement by statutory agencies and local government
- Lack of clarity in identity; for example questions arose as to where Monaghan ‘fits’ given its relationships with North West Tourism, the East Border Region, Louth/Monaghan, Cavan/Monaghan (all covering different areas)
- Forced collaboration between parties on a project basis
- Lack of long-term commitment
- Funding cuts or complete loss of funding
- Cooperation based solely or largely on accessibility to funding
- Long-term economic benefits for both parties not tangible
- Interest wanes as result of project moving forward too slowly.

Lack of dialogue and / or the existence of ‘gatekeepers’ has also resulted in some individuals / agencies not realising that there is a dedicated cross-border organisation or network in existence whose remit it is to assist social and economic development.
11.5. Participation – Structures and Stakeholders

Evidence gathered during the course of the focus groups emphasised that cooperation involves the joint delivery of actions involving input from across a wide range of stakeholder organisations. Therefore, with cooperation identified as a mechanism for addressing socio-economic challenges that exist in border areas, operationalising cooperation requires a joined-up approach to decision-making and delivery.

The action-oriented aspect of cross-border cooperation is evident in the responses from workshop delegates who identified the broad participatory components that should be in place for cross-border cooperation:

- Having a multi-level and multi-sectoral (economic, social, community) remit
- Being led from the bottom-up and supported from the top-down
- Receiving strategic buy-in from central / regional government
- Promoting joined-up and integrated development, based on inter-agency information sharing and collaboration
- Focusing on complementarity between participating nodes and areas
- Being committed to rural-proofing and the principles of equitable public service delivery.

11.5.1. Positive Relationships

Positive relationships, and the elements that make this happen, are essential in cross-border cooperation. All participants must work in equal partnership with each other. In tandem with good practice in communication is the need for openness and transparency amongst partners leading to real trust. With these elements in place participants can identify and address issues at an early stage, before these develop into problems that might undermine the partnership.

11.5.2. Leadership

To secure the delivery of cross-border cooperation, high quality leadership is necessary - with experience in conflict management. Whilst it may not be practical to have multiple or rotating chairpersons appointed from all stakeholder groups involved, representation from across the board (and Border) is required to ensure that negative perceptions do not develop around the group or individual who is ‘lead partner’ and therefore has ‘control’ of the project or initiative.

The basis for cooperation must also be clear. Workshop participants considered that successful cooperation is typically built upon existing relationships that have naturally emerged around a common geographical area or issue; with stakeholder connections given time to develop organically rather than in a forced manner.

11.5.3. The Role of a Project ‘Driver’

Organisations operating on a purely voluntary basis are ultimately limited in what can be achieved. The employment of a local development worker is a vital factor in ensuring the success of a cross-border partnership as demonstrated in the KiltyCashel (see Chapter 6) and CASA (see Chapter 9) initiatives. Such workers:
• Are a ‘driver’ in terms of ensuring that projects / ideas are turned into actions
• Advise and guide partnerships / committees and support volunteers
• Reduce the administrative burden on volunteers
• Liaise between the various sectors that contribute to collaborative ventures
• Have a role to play in raising the profile of the partnership and its catchment
• Have a role to play in achieving a balance between strategic and local initiatives being undertaken, and in sourcing monies to deliver same
• Have a role to play in nurturing informal links (e.g. with council departments, private sector) and in both building local esteem and the strength of the partnership.

Through experience, they will know to collaborate first on the ‘sure successes’ before extending their interests wider and, where necessary, to withdraw from a potential project that is proving to be a drain on resources and difficult to get underway. In addition, it is important that they be politically objective and sensitive to varying political perceptions and religious traditions and beliefs.

11.5.4. Evidence-Based Decision-Making
The identification of potential areas for collaboration should be evidence-based. This implies that it is backed up by research findings and output from other projects; as demonstrated by the past work of Leitrim County Council and Fermanagh District Council on the Cross Border Opportunities Project (see Chapter 6) and the ongoing work of Cavan County Council and Fermanagh District Council on the West Cavan/Fermanagh Economic Development Project (see Chapter 7). Where funding is being sought to support a joint action, the existence of this evidence – together with local knowledge – will aid the application. In the case of community-based partnerships, where financial resources are often limited, consideration should be given to the establishment of a central fund for the part-payment of training and capacity building for staff members so that they are in a position to undertake this type of fact-finding as and when required.

11.6. Funding – Translating Ideas
Funding programmes are a critical component of cross-border collaboration – but can only be fully effective if the potential areas of cooperation are identified prior to the funding streams being selected. They facilitate the translation of ideas into actions on-the-ground and increase the capacity of voluntary and community organisations by providing funds to hire staff such as local development workers and office managers. Within the community sector, there is a call for funding applications to be simplified and for all funders to use the same type and style of application form.

11.6.1. The Continued Role of Funding Programmes and Support Agencies
Access to public and private funding is recognised as an essential component in successful cross-border cooperation, but workshop participants cautioned that access to funding must not be the sole reason for establishing a project or initiative. The funding structures were viewed by many as being responsible for creating competition, rather than enhancing collaboration, between neighbours. A number of the programmes did not equally allocate funds between organisations based in Northern Ireland and Ireland, for example the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) & PEACE – with Northern Ireland largely tending to get the ‘lion’s share’. This created
some tensions and resentment between Border towns and villages; the case, for example, between Blacklion and Belcoo. Many of the earlier funded initiatives are now considered as being less successful than more recent projects; largely, it is argued because not enough thought went into how the monies could be most beneficially allocated and spent in ‘the early days’ by some of the funds. In more recent years, funded initiatives have built on the many lessons and experiences of these initial projects and are more geared towards being sustainable and meeting an identified local need.

However, concerns persist at the:

(a) Increasing amounts of match funding that now need to be sourced
(b) Amount of ‘red-tape’ involved in both drawing down and accounting for monies received
(c) Short timeframe for delivery of projects
(d) Lack of flexibility in programmes in adapting to changing needs and circumstances.

In light of the new funding programmes now commencing (PEACE III, INTERREG IV), concerns have been expressed over their changing focus to large-scale, agency-led projects which will potentially exclude / inhibit participation by community and voluntary groups. There are concerns that the focus of funding bodies is changing too fast and that a lot of the positive work achieved to date in terms of social and economic renewal will suffer as a result. There are further concerns that PEACE III is pushing communities into the area of reconciliation and challenging issues of sectarianism and racism; an area that many communities, for obvious reasons, have dealt with in the past in an obtuse way (under the radar through community development initiatives). European funding levels are decreasing for regions such as the Irish Border area; and this is beginning to raise questions at the local level on the future input of the British and Irish Exchequers.

On the other hand, some pending changes in the funding environment enjoy support from local actors involved in cross-border cooperation. For example, the changing focus from improving the social base to more directly stimulating economic development in the new INTERREG IV funding programme is generally positively received.

11.6.2. Streamlining the Funding Application Process

The business sector, and to a lesser extent the community sector, consider that there should be a guidebook issued jointly by both Governments which details the type of funds available to the various sectors; what these funds can be used for; when applications should be submitted; and who administers the funds. There is also widespread support for greater emphasis being placed on project appraisal and review at various stages during an initiative’s lifespan. This can help ensure that all objectives are being met and, where relevant, facilitate a change in direction of the project to reflect changing circumstances, both locally and regionally.

11.6.3. Visioning: From Funding to Being Self-Sustainable

There is widespread consensus that any funded initiative, with the potential to operate long-term, must have developed and adopted a sustainability strategy by the time it is mid-way through its funding period. Such a strategy should outline how the partners will bridge the transition from being a funded initiative to a self-sustainable partnership. This process should be undertaken in association with the
project partners, the funding administrators and, where appropriate, local and central government.

11.7. Synthesis

There are many processes and factors associated with cross-border cooperation. The table below (Table 11.1) summarises the key components discussed in this chapter, which are required regardless of scale, range and level of stakeholder involvement.

The case studies presented in this report are all situated in the rural milieu, and the issues they focus on come within the broad gambit of promoting sustainable rural development. While the processes for successful collaboration articulated in this chapter have arisen from, and are directly associated with rurality, they represent good practice for partnership-working in a variety of spatial contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Ingredients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical Proximity</td>
<td>Necessary</td>
<td>Action plan: direction; goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are-based</td>
<td>Sharing information / consensus</td>
<td>Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis / Focus on Local Needs and Potential</td>
<td>Mutual benefit</td>
<td>Open and transparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling of belonging</td>
<td>Combining bottom-up and top-down, and ensuring strong local ownership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lead to Success</td>
<td>Equal / real partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publicity / awareness</td>
<td>Relationship / trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to testifying to the merits of partnership, rather than traditional exogenous approaches, the case studies crystallise the value and relevance of the ‘micro-region’ as a unit of spatial analysis and as an arena for the promotion of sustainable development and territorial cohesion.

This chapter has reiterated the clear rationale that exists for cross-border cooperation and, by drawing on evidence from specific case studies in the Irish Border region, has identified and analysed the core components necessary for enabling cooperation. The following chapter (Chapter 12) explores the transferable lessons that can be applied to other cross-border initiatives, both on the island of Ireland and elsewhere in Europe.
Conclusion: Moving Forward – Potentiality and Future Capacity for Cross-Border Cooperation

The case studies presented in this report provide insights into the many facets of cross-border collaboration. They show how European Integration, EU programmes and European influences on national policies have come to shape approaches to cross-border collaboration between Ireland and Northern Ireland. Most of the projects or organisations discussed are between eight and fifteen years old; this is consistent with the findings of Harvey’s audit of community development in the Irish Border region (2007). Experiences along the Irish Border Region are similar to those in other rural border regions throughout Europe, and there are many parallels between experiences on the island of Ireland and those along the borders between Spain and Portugal and Hungary and Romania among others. In all these areas, recently-developed cross-border initiatives focus on promoting community development, diversification of the rural economy and enhanced access to public services.

The Irish Border was among the most heavily militarised in Europe up to the mid-1990s. Because border communities were the subject of many paramilitary attacks, and were physically restricted by state security apparatus prior to the Peace Process, the context for cross-border linkages between Ireland and Northern Ireland is, therefore, unique in the modern European context. Cross-border collaboration is influenced and shaped by progress on the normalisation of political administration and governance systems in Northern Ireland and enhanced cooperation between both states on the Island – resulting from the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement and, more recently, the St. Andrew’s Agreement and increased European Integration. At the same time, local level cross-border cooperation contributes towards the more general resolution of political conflict in Northern Ireland, and improved relations between both states. The uniqueness of the Irish and Northern Irish situation is further underscored by the fact that communities on both sides of the Border are not generally ethnically, religiously or politically homogenous. Thus, successful cross-border collaboration on the island of Ireland implies meaningful inter-community and cross-jurisdictional collaboration.

This chapter draws out some of the transferable good practice emerging from the examples of cross-border cooperation and collaboration featured in Chapters 5 through 9. During the course of the research programme it was noted that not enough promotion of successful cross-border cooperation projects and partnerships has – or is – taking place; and this lack of information heightens an
organisation’s or community’s fears around participating in such a programme of activity. At a more strategic level, the chapter goes on to consider what developments are necessary in the Irish Border context to make cross-jurisdictional and inter-community cooperation and collaboration more effective and sustainable.

12.1. Building on Existing Good Practice

There are many good examples of what cross-border cooperation and collaboration can achieve across the Irish Border region. Chapters 5 to 9 of this report highlight a number of examples of cross-border and cross-community cooperation from this unique area. These initiatives have operated at different scales, involved a varied range and number of partner organisations, dealt with a diverse range of issues and covered different timelines. Their achievements have brought a mixed variety of mutual benefits to all those involved, although on some occasions to varying degrees. But what they all have in common is that they have informed the process of cross-border and cross-community cooperation. The projects and partnerships themselves, or elements of them, have demonstrated both good and bad practice. They provide lessons in what, and what not, to do. The examples outlined in this report, whether in brief or through detailed study, provide a rich tapestry of information for both practitioners and policy-makers alike.

Examples of good practice emerging from this research programme include:

**Establishing a Board of Governance**

The approach adopted by both the Kiltyclogher Community Council and the Cashel Community Association (see Chapter 6) is an example of good practice in community governance as it involves the whole of the community in the process of election.

- Board members are elected through open ballot
- Every resident within the organisation’s boundary who is over 18 years of age is issued with a ballot paper
- To ensure gender balance, an equal number of men and women are elected to the Board (if feasible).

In adopting this approach, the Project not only keeps the community involved and engaged with what they do, they increase their possibilities of attracting ‘new blood’. The Board and its officers consult with citizens and local voluntary organisations on an on-going basis, and citizens are enabled to participate in project decision-making and strategic planning. Thus, the KiltyCashel Project combines elements of representative and participative democracy. By electing a gender balanced Board, commitment is given that issues facing the wider community – for example, male, female, elderly, youth and single parents – will be addressed.

**Recognising All Stakeholders**

The Castleblayney-South Armagh Partnership (CASA) is the result of local government collaboration on a cross-jurisdictional basis (see Chapter 9). But rather than limit membership of its Steering Committee to officials and councillors, the Partnership has invited representatives from a wide range of local agencies to sit on the Committee and, therefore, contribute to the design, delivery and monitoring of an extensive programme of activities. Members of the Committee include
representatives from regional development agencies, local enterprise support groups, farming organisations, community networks and tourism bodies. Thus, CASA represents a partnership approach to area-based development that combines the strengths of a range of organisations and perspectives. This multi-agency approach is more efficient than when an agency tends to act without reference to other bodies – the ‘silo approach’. The successful operation of partnership requires agencies to be willing to share information, resources and power with one another and with other partners.

**Establishing an Umbrella / Coordinating Organisation**

The community of Belcoo represents a good example of local-level coordination and inter-group cohesion (see Chapter 7). Good practice in community development behoves community / voluntary organisations to avoid fragmentation and, to pursue instead, joint approaches to realising the ‘common good’. Recognising this, the village of Belcoo organised its three existing community groups under one umbrella, the McNean Community Partnership. In this context, it then became important to secure a mandate which met the needs of the original organisations and their members. Therefore, the Partnership established a working committee which represented their individual make-up and was acceptable to all. A key challenge was to retain the active stakeholders involved originally with their own groups in this wider context while at the same time preventing any possible personality clashes.

**Taking the Lead**

Both the Strabane Lifford Development Commission (see Chapter 5) and the Clones-Erne East Partnership (see Chapter 8) are good examples of ‘taking the lead’ in addressing the issues and challenges facing their communities.

The Strabane Lifford Development Commission (SLDC) involved a number of local businessmen and women from both sides of the Border coming together to tackle the economic decline facing their towns.

The Clones-Erne East Partnership (CEEP) involved three councils – Fermanagh District Council, Clones Town Council and Monaghan County Council – coming together to support local community, business and tourism initiatives. Rather than waiting for interventions from other agencies to happen, both organisations have consciously decided to ‘push forward’ and take up the challenges facing their communities.

The evidence from these two case study areas, and indeed from most rural areas along the Border, is that top-down interventions have generally been tardy and have tended to focus on larger population centres. However, where initiatives have emerged from the bottom-up, as is the case in Lifford-Strabane, Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh (see Chapter 6) and in Clones-Erne East, projects have been characterised by high levels of commitment, energy and a strong work ethic. The emergence of bottom-up structures, and their evolution into more broadly-based partnerships, as is the case in Castleblayney-Crossmaglen (see Chapter 9) and Lifford-Strabane, provide a vehicle through which the bottom-up and top-down can interface and work collaboratively. In addition, their non-political status means they are in a stronger position to operationalise projects in an efficient and effective manner.
Putting the Emphasis on Local Need and Development Potential

The Castleblayney-South Armagh Partnership (CASA) Linkage Programme and the Cross-Border Opportunities Project have both demonstrated – albeit in different ways – what can be achieved when local needs are put at the heart of a programme of activity.

The CASA Linkage Programme resulted in the partner agencies and steering committee members coming together to produce an integrated development plan for the area (see Chapter 9). This plan clearly stated the social, economic and environmental issues facing the community in the short- to medium-term and the actions necessary to address these; and provided this micro-region with an action plan for going forward.

The Cross-Border Opportunities Project (as profiled in Box 6.1) demonstrates the added-value of organisations working together to identify areas of common interest and where they could potentially work together, to their mutual benefits, in the future; if or when funding could be sourced. The resulting partnerships were not generated by a thirst for funding but rather by a commitment to address identified local needs on a cross-border basis. There is potential for this model to be adopted by all local councils and / or local development agencies where a database can be established and regularly updated; and from which organisations with an interest in cross-border or cross-community work can make links.

Some economic perspectives, such as central place theory, put considerable emphasis on the notion of critical mass as a driver of economic development. While a solid customer base is essential in growing and sustaining any service, ‘critical mass’ perspectives do not generally offer a realistic model for the sustainable development of most rural communities, particularly those with low population densities. Instead, approaches that are based on valorising and developing unique local identity, assets, features and resources (i.e. potentiality) enable rural areas to develop a niche in terms of new product development, economic activities and the attraction of inward investment. Clones and its hinterland, for example (see Chapter 8), is increasingly valorising its waterways and moving towards restoring its position as a traditional transport hub – albeit for new and emerging types of water-based traffic. Similarly, many entrepreneurs in the Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo area (see Chapter 7) recognise the uniqueness of local geology and topography as a development resource, while CASA and local tourism interests in South Armagh (see Chapter 9) view their areas folklore and angling lakes as valuable assets with the potential to contribute to sustainable development.

Working on an Intra- and Inter-Jurisdictional Basis

The Strabane Lifford Development Commission (SLDC) established itself as a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) to facilitate cross-border development. The Commission represented two independent agencies located in different jurisdictions – the Lifford Commission and the Strabane Commission – who could, as circumstances and funding dictated, undertake joint initiatives to the benefit of both areas and / or initiatives that would address the priorities of one settlement.
only (see Chapter 5). This structure gave the Commission important operational flexibility when addressing the long-term impacts of the social and economic disconnect of the Troubles.

EEIGs can be formed by companies, firms and other legal entities governed by public or private law; the argument being that by working together, they will produce better results than organisations / members acting alone. More recently, the EEIG approach has been replaced by EGTCs – European Groupings for Territorial Cohesion. This updated approach / instrument facilitates cross-border, transnational and/or inter-regional co-operation between regional and local authorities of various Member States, without requiring a prior international agreement to be signed and ratified by national parliaments. Members of an EGTC must be located on the territory of at least two Member States; their primary objective being the facilitation and promotion of territorial cooperation to strengthen economic and social cohesion.

Gathering Public Opinion
The KiltyCashel Project conducted a survey of every household living in the area in 2003; the purpose being to determine the local needs of the communities of Kiltyclogher and Cashel. Through these surveys, it was possible for the KiltyCashel Project to identify those areas where both communities had shared concerns (see Chapter 6). The findings from these surveys have since informed the joint action plan for this cross-border area as adopted and employed by the KiltyCashel Project.

Building on an Evidence-Base
The West Cavan/Fermanagh Development Project (as profiled in Box 7.3) arose out of a study commissioned by the County Cavan Enterprise Board on the economic development needs of a structurally weak area; in this instance, Swanlinbar. The findings of this study were recognised as having implications not only for this village itself but also for all of West Cavan and the neighbouring parts of Fermanagh. With evidence to hand to support the case for a joint cross-border economic development programme, Cavan County Enterprise Board and Fermanagh University Partnership are engaging, and working closely, with a number of towns and villages; the objective being to address their social and economic disadvantages and develop a profile which will demonstrate what these areas have to offer potential investors in terms of, for example, infrastructure, skills-base and office space.

Friendship and Trust
Community Connections (see Chapter 7) has long acknowledged the importance of nurturing relationships as part of cross-border, cross-community and cross-generational interaction. For the past four years, this concept has been piloted through the “Breaking Moulds, Building Friendships” programme (see Box 7.2.). While this programme has concentrated on bringing second-level students and elderly groups together to share experiences and work together, this model could be adopted by cross-community and peace and reconciliation programmes. Its emphasis is on the people involved getting to know each other, learning to trust and respect each other, and seeing the positives / skills that everyone brings to society. In addition, and equally beneficial, it promotes and encourages the development of new skills through the range of activities in which participants engage; thus introducing an educational element to the programme.
While each cross-border micro-region is distinctive in terms of issues, challenges and opportunities, all of the above examples of good practice are transferable processes and procedures which can be adapted to suit local needs and potential. By learning from the experiences of others, future partnerships will save time, energy, effort and expense in the initial stages of set-up and throughout the implementation of area-based approaches to development. The experiences from all the case study areas underscore the importance of local collaborative governance; the maximum numbers of stakeholders are enabled to participate in decision-making and agencies and organisations work collaboratively across sectors and administrative and jurisdictional boundaries. A strong bottom-up orientation and an emphasis that valorises local assets and resources contributes to the effective delivery of projects. The case studies demonstrate the relevance and potential of the micro-region as a spatial unit in strategic planning and project development and they point to the need for policy approaches to be supportive of inter-jurisdictional micro-regional development and polycentric networking between rural communities.

12.2. Policy ‘Fit’: Achieving Horizontal and Vertical Integration Through Spatial Planning and Cross-Border Integrated Plans

Regional and spatial development policies are becoming increasingly important in both jurisdictions. Up to the 1990s, most government policies (on the island of Ireland) tended to be exclusively sectoral and lacked a spatial approach; with agencies and public bodies tending to adopt a ‘one size fits all approach’. However, local area-based initiatives such as LEADER and URBAN, and bodies such as Area and District Partnerships, have – since their emergence in the early 1990s – clearly demonstrated the merits of policy approaches that are based on spatial / territorial differentiation, and through which national policy objectives are tailored in line with local conditions, potentialities and priorities. The expansion of the EU’s regional development budget since the late 1980s has added an impetus to the application of territorially-differentiated approaches in both Ireland and the UK, with national authorities now recognising that different areas develop differently and require different levels and forms of support and intervention. Thus, the spatial (geographical) is beginning to replace the sectoral in shaping several aspects of policy.

The growing emphasis on the spatial at EU and national levels is most clearly articulated in the publication of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). Governments, North and South, have clearly articulated the need for all aspects of policy and all state actions and projects to comply with and contribute to the overall attainment of the objectives of the ESDP and the respective national / regional spatial strategies and frameworks. In Ireland, for example, funding for local government projects is now contingent on a demonstrable ‘fit’ with regional planning guidelines and the NSS.

The successful implementation of the ESDP and the various national spatial development policies is contingent on robust vertical and horizontal coordination. This implies that regional and local priorities need to fit within the ESDP and national frameworks. By the same token, regional and national policies need to take account of the potential of the local. While the top-down aspects of vertical coordination are in place, the evidence from the case studies in this report is that institutional
arrangements on both parts of the Island lack a mechanism through which bottom-up inputs can be brought to bear on regional and national policies and actions. To date, priorities have tended to be set at the centre and, while the respective Departments of the Environment have shown a clear commitment to local consultation and participation, the absence of a middle-tier of governance in both jurisdictions, but particularly Ireland, deprives the micro-region of a space or mechanism through which local issues, concerns and spatial development priorities can be articulated upwards.

Horizontal coordination implies that agencies that operate at the same spatial scale or which have similar levels of policy competence (e.g. state agencies, local government units) actively engage in inter-agency communication and collaboration. The case studies presented in this report show several examples of horizontal coordination, particularly among locally-based actors, community and voluntary groups and among some local government bodies. However, the extent to which agencies meaningfully engage in horizontal coordination varies considerably, and the processes involved can be shaped by factors such as personalities, agency budgets, some latent ‘silod mentalities’ and the priorities of middle-tier management. Such lack of uniformity in the commitment to and engagement in horizontal coordination is clearly unhelpful to the attainment of national and European policy objectives and to the promotion of local development. The complexities surrounding horizontal coordination are more accentuated along the Irish Border, given the differing remits of agencies North and South. Moreover, many agencies indicate a lack of motivation – internally and / or from their parent body or lead government department – to engage in partnership with another agency; particularly if that agency is located in another jurisdiction. At present, there are no incentives for local authorities to engage in joint approaches to spatial planning and officials are not encouraged to look beyond the boundaries of their own county or district. Against this background, the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) and other regional networks are helping to promote collaboration, but this needs to be further resourced and supported. Therefore, the experiences emerging from these case studies point to the need for national authorities to be more supportive and encouraging of agencies that engage in cross-border and inter-agency collaboration. The case studies suggest a need for a ‘carrot and stick approach’ with budgetary allocations from the centre being linked to evidence of engagement in partnership / horizontal coordination.

National and regional strategies need to be further integrated and development plans linked – thus ensuring there is joined-up planning and development between local government bodies and on a cross-border basis. Going forward, an opportunity exists in the Irish Border region to create better ‘fit’ between different border cooperation activities across geographical scales by applying the spatial planning concept. This would provide the step-change necessary in current development plan processes – moving from trend planning to vision planning and placing an emphasis on integrated coordination.

Cross-border partnerships must be aware of the local and regional stakeholders and key actors. This can best be achieved through the development of an organogram; a chart showing both existing and potential linkages between like-minded and focused organisations. Within the county and local councils (in Ireland

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83 For the past four years, the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) has been facilitating a Cross-Border Spatial Planners Forum involving representatives from its member councils and the relevant government departments in both jurisdictions; the Department for Regional Development (DRD) in Northern Ireland and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) in Ireland.
and Northern Ireland respectively), there is a need for clearer reporting structures and communication lines on a North-South basis. Furthermore, consideration must now be given to the implications of the Northern Ireland Review of Public Administration (RPA) for local government and the consequential cross-border impact on issues such as the delivery of services.

There is currently a North-South disconnect in terms of responsibilities for spatial planning. In the South, local authorities are responsible for planning and each council produces a county plan and series of area plans. In the North, the Planning Service which is a centralised agency takes responsibility for spatial planning, including the formulation of district-level plans. Were district councils in Northern Ireland to be given a role in planning, similar to that exercised by their Southern counterparts, cross-border collaboration between local authorities would have an added *raison d’être* and focus. The devolution of planning functions as part of the RPA would be consistent with approaches advocated by the ESDP and would ensure a spatial, rather than an exclusively sectoral, approach to development.

Globally, cross-border and inter-jurisdictional area plans are utilised as an important tool for promoting territorial competitiveness, for example as already occurs across a number of state boundaries in Europe and between Ontario and Nova Scotia in Canada. What has yet to happen in a meaningful way in the Irish Border region is the development of cross-border and cross-community action plans. The forthcoming publication of the non-statutory collaborative framework for the island of Ireland, which has been devised by both governments, paves the way for such an action. This framework will address such areas as service provision, roads infrastructure, shared municipal services and environmental challenges. While the cross-border networks do bring together the County Managers and Chief Executives (in Ireland and Northern Ireland respectively) and in some cases, the planning officers, this has not yet led to the development of any cross-border framework or action plan. Rather such meetings tend to be issue-, or project-specific.

A next logical step would be for clusters of cross-border towns and villages to work together to prepare their associated action plan under the same headings used in the collaborative framework; with emphasis being on such areas as access to health, elder care, shared community facilities, education, increasing connectivity (broadband, roads) and management of the natural environment. These frameworks or plans should, in turn, influence and shape local and regional planning and development policies. This would go some way towards supporting the Irish Border towns and villages in adopting a strategic vision and ensuring that actions are coordinated and address local needs. However, it must also be noted that this will require identification and development of the skills base across the community, business and public sectors necessary to deliver spatial planning at the sub-regional level.

### 12.3. The Role of Good Infrastructure Linkages

Back-to-back planning in both jurisdictions has exacerbated peripherality and has deprived border communities of infrastructural connections and transport linkages. The current lack of connectivity (i.e. transport links of high quality) between Irish Border towns and villages and the nearest large urban centre, Gateway or Hub, has resulted in both practical and mental barriers to collaboration.
According to the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (2006), a good transport network is necessary “to support the development of areas which have historically enjoyed less economic success” (p.3) – that is the Irish Border region. Other critical enabling factors to collaboration include telecommunications, R&D, energy, business alliances and critical mass. Linkages need to be vastly improved in the Irish Border region to foster cooperation and particularly infrastructure delivery. Therefore, the full implementation of the cross-border provisions expressed in the NSS and the RDS is essential in improving connectivity.

Some of the identified linkages in need of improving include:

- Developing the road links to and within the Northwest (as highlighted in the National Development Plan 2007-2013)
- The N2-A5 upgrade; improving links between Dublin-Monaghan-Londonderry/Derry (supported under Transport 21)
- The M3 Motorway and N3 upgrades; improving links between Dublin-Cavan-Border-Ballyshannon (supported under Transport 21)
- The development of a high quality East-West Route linking Sligo and Dundalk
- Conclusion of realignment of the N16 linking Sligo with Enniskillen, some phases of which are still at feasibility study stage
- Develop public transport throughout the Irish Border Region to make up the deficit relative to the rest of the Island, and to ensure that the Region has a sustainable (economically and ecologically) transport system.


While border areas may have been separated by political and administrative boundaries, they generally share a common ecosystem, common cultural associations and modes of expression and are often bonded by common experiences associated with distance from capital cities, peripherality and the challenges of rural economic revitalisation. These environmental, cultural, economic and social bonds frequently provide the basis on which cross-border collaboration is based. So-called ‘soft linkages’ have the potential to lead to harder linkages; associated with joint approaches to economic development, cross-border service provision and investment in infrastructure. Yet, infrastructural connectivity represents only part of the process of achieving territorial competitiveness; border regions also need to promote connectivity in governance so that decisions affecting the region are made within the region rather than imposed from outside. Were this possible, the maximum number of local citizens and relevant stakeholders would be enabled to participate in shaping the development process.

During the course of this research programme, a number of examples were tabled of such ‘soft linkages’ that need to be established, supported and promoted. These included:

12.4.1. Cross-Border Councillors’ Forum
Currently there is no dedicated forum for local elected representatives to meet regularly on a cross-border basis. In all case study areas, the lack of such a facility
was highlighted as being a deficiency in both the identification and redress of common issues. The establishment of such a space would ensure that councillors, North and South, better understand each other’s mandate and the priorities of particular areas. It could potentially become a place for the delivery of joint briefings, training and seminars.

In moving forward, it has been suggested that a British-Irish Councillors Forum be established as part of the already existing British-Irish Council (also known as the Council of the Isles)\textsuperscript{84}. Members of the British-Irish Council cooperate on bringing work forward in the following areas of mutual interest: environment, knowledge economy, social inclusion, tourism, transport, demography, e-health, language, culture and the prevention of misuse of drugs. In 2007, it was proposed that energy be added to this list. Through this Forum, information is exchanged, discussed and where appropriate, agreement is reached on future cooperative action. Given its membership base, issues are addressed on a North-South and East-West basis. Establishing a councillors’ forum as part of this non-statutory Council would enhance vertical policy coordination, by ensuring local inputs into policy formulation. Indeed, the councillors would bring an added dimension to the discussions around the areas of identified mutual benefits – as these are areas of concern not only at national and regional level, but also at local level. The alignment of election dates and terms of office for councillors between both jurisdictions would facilitate further collaboration between local authorities.

\textbf{12.4.2. Civil Society Forum}

Good governance and sustainable regional development are contingent on active citizen participation in decision-making and inter-area and inter-sectoral networking and collaboration. Thematic and / or geographically-based networks of community and voluntary groups, traders, business interests, tourism providers, local development agents and other actors serve to promote the transfer of ideas and good practices. Collaborative structures also forge new synergies and give momentum to projects. By networking, groups and associations can develop ‘common causes’ and can find solutions that would not be possible were a group to pursue an isolationist approach. Inter-community networking offers a means of addressing some of the practical issues that volunteers and community workers face on a day-to-day basis. Thus, with increasing concerns being expressed regarding the changing focus of funding programmes and the increased levels of bureaucracy in applying for, drawing down and accounting for funds received, representatives of the community and voluntary sector voiced a need for the establishment of a cross-border forum.

Inter-sectoral networks could ensure the adoption of a holistic approach to the development of the micro-region they represent. Such networks could also offer support and advice on the formation of further cross-border partnerships on a cross-disciplinary basis. Potential exists for such stakeholder networks to be promoted and supported through the existing cross-border sub-regional networks – the East Border Region, ICBAN and the North West Region Cross-Border Group. One option in moving this forward would be for the existing sub-regional networks to adopt and mainstream the approach used by both Leitrim County Council and the Fermanagh Local Strategy Partnership in the Cross-Border Opportunities Project (see Box 6.1).

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\textsuperscript{84} The British-Irish Council was established under Strand Three of the Belfast Agreement, 1998 to promote positive and practical relationships between the Government of Ireland and the devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Jersey, Isle of Man and Guernsey.
The new unified LEADER and Area Partnerships in Ireland and District Partnerships and organisations such as RCN (Rural Community Network) in Northern Ireland ought to take a lead role in coordinating and promoting inter-community collaboration and the development of civil society platforms. By linking themselves to existing governance structures, civil society platforms will have greater opportunities for interfacing with the statutory sector and with local government – thus increasing their ability to affect change. Through this medium, the concerns and suggestions of the community and voluntary sector around the development and operation of funding programmes – and other cross-border schemes – could be articulated. Political leaders have acknowledged the need to support civil society networking, and under the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement 1998 and the St. Andrew’s Agreement 2006, provisions exist for the establishment of the North / South Consultative Forum (Harvey, 2008; Harvey 2007).

12.4.3. Business Networks
Connections between councils and the business community must be strengthened and promoted; one way of doing this is through the establishment of cross-border networks. This is already happening at a strategic level; for example, through InterTradeIreland and the IBEC/CBI Joint Business Council. However, there is scope for further developing this at the sub-regional and local level. Such business networks could facilitate and nurture the creation of linkages, and potentially lead to accelerated growth in targeted micro-regions through the generation of economies of scale and critical mass. Such networks could also offer support and advice on the formation of further cross-border partnerships.

12.4.4. Exchequer Investment
With the changing number and scale of funding programmes supporting cross-border cooperation, there are increasing calls for central government, North and South, to commit further resources to the development and growth of cross-border relationships. Such resources – primarily financial – should support, among others, the establishment of the aforementioned Networks and Forums. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Programme of Quick Impact Projects (2004) offers a possible approach to funding cross-border initiatives. If this funding model was applied to the proposed networks—the Cross-Border Councillors’ Forum, the Civil Society Forum and the Sub-Regional Business Networks—these programmes could be:

- Funded on an inter-jurisdictional basis (at central department or local government level)
- Focus on identified cross-jurisdictional needs and priorities
- Receive one-time funding to: support the set-up / nurturing of the cross-border relationship; the development of a mission statement, strategic vision and action plan; and the recruitment of a manager who will ‘drive’ the initiative forward
- Demonstrate a commitment to becoming self-sustainable in the medium- to long-term.

85 Similar to the Cross-Border Business Innovation Centre which was established in 1990 by the two EC-Business Innovation Centres (BIC): NORIBIC and WESTBIC.
For those cross-border organisations working at the local level through community development and the provision of services that contribute to the ongoing viability of small border towns and villages, the UNHCR model can be applied in a more creative and flexible manner; for example:

- Funding should, again, be organised on an inter-jurisdictional basis (preferably at regional government level – with funds coming from central government)
- Programmes should promote interaction and collaboration between local authorities, local businesses and local community networks on identified local needs and priorities
- Funding should be aimed at the provision of services in areas with a demonstrated or potential cross-border catchment
- Funding should be sustained over the medium-term (for a period of not less than five years); with this being conditional on positive feedback from regular monitoring and evaluations by external agencies with a knowledge of border development
- Programmes should have a long-term vision of cooperation; with an end goal of becoming self-sustainable.

12.5. Conclusion

Community and voluntary groups, business leaders, politicians, some local authorities and a number of regional and national bodies – both North and South – demonstrate huge commitment to micro-regional development and cross-border collaboration. Generally, collaborative approaches have tended to be driven by the community sector but increasingly other stakeholders are becoming involved – not only as partners but also as ‘drivers’ of cooperation and collaboration. While questions have been raised regarding the financial and social sustainability of some of the initial cross-border initiatives, it must be acknowledged that these have contributed to instilling confidence back into those communities that were adversely affected - socially, economically and physically – by Partition and the Troubles. There is an increasing awareness that future collaborative projects must be strategic in their focus, address local needs and ‘fit’ with wider policy and regional/local plans. To achieve this, the stakeholder base must be widened to include representatives from all sectors of society; the added benefit of this also being a reduced risk of an over-reliance on the same volunteers, particularly in less populous communities. Thus, collaborative governance and greater collaboration between the local and the centre is integral to the realisation of sustainable and spatially-balanced development on the island of Ireland.

Cross-border cooperation and collaboration faces challenging times ahead. Funding programmes are changing direction while some schemes are coming to an end. The island of Ireland no longer qualifies for Objective 1 transfers from the European Union. With this drop in financial supports, increasing emphasis is about to be placed on activities becoming self-sustainable. Realistically, any such movement towards self-
sustainability must be supported by both governments – initially financially and socially, and thereafter through continued investment in evidence-based policy and decision-making.

The findings from the case studies show that where agencies have similar functional remits, they are more likely to engage in cross-border collaboration. Therefore, central authorities in both jurisdictions need to take the lead in promoting a more seamless ‘institutional fit’ between public agencies, North and South. Greater alignment of the delivery of services and of operational functions in local government, health authorities, education services and infrastructure providers would provide a context that is conducive to inter-agency collaboration and greater efficiencies.

Inter-agency collaboration has the potential to improve access to and from areas along the Irish Border, which will be essential in promoting long-term economic development. Collaborative vision-planning involving local government, planning authorities and infrastructure providers from both jurisdictions is essential in redressing the very significant gap in transport and communications that currently exist between Border areas and the rest of the island. Thus, mechanisms for inter-jurisdictional co-planning and co-funding of projects will have to be formalised and put on a statutory footing. Public bodies on both sides of the Border can also emulate many of the practices on the European mainland; whereby citizens access a public service at the point which is nearest to them rather than on the basis of the district or jurisdiction in which they reside. The case studies show instances of citizens accessing commercial, library and educational services based on proximity rather than on administrative divisions, and these examples reflect good practice that ought to be extended to other sectors.

The benefits of cross-border collaboration are most visible at local level, with friendships being renewed, travel and communications improving, access to services being enhanced and new economic development opportunities emerging. Consequently, local actors, such as community and voluntary leaders, traders, entrepreneurs and county and district councillors, have emerged as the strongest advocates of cross-border collaboration. The benefits of collaboration need to be more closely documented and must be highlighted beyond the level of the micro-region so that a broader range of agencies and associations are encouraged to engage in joint-approaches. Central government needs to encourage agencies to be more innovative and to take a certain level of risk in pursuing innovations and in forging linkages with bodies on the ‘other’ side of the Border.

A number of the cross-border initiatives highlighted in the case studies are reasonably well-established and have a considerable depth of knowledge and expertise. This report has sought to capture some of that knowledge so that good practices are accentuated. In addition, one of the key findings from this study is that the current projects and structures represent more than a bank of knowledge and personal commitment; they are the foundation on which more broadly-based and
better-supported frameworks for economic development, social inclusion and peace and reconciliation can truly be built.

Despite historical legacies of under-development and political conflict, stop-go funding streams, institutional differences and the persistence of some back-to-back planning, organisations in each of the case study areas have succeeded in delivering tangible local economic, social and ecological benefits. Were these micro-regional initiatives to receive greater regional and national support going forward – in line with the recommendations presented above (including mechanisms for vertical and horizontal coordination and enhanced collaboration between agencies) – such area-based approaches would be even more effective.

Political, sectarian and inter-ethnic conflict between the 1920s and 1990s has left a scar on the island of Ireland and in particular on communities along the Irish Border. The various collaborative initiatives described in this report have all contributed – directly and indirectly – to the healing of that scar. Collaboration has been most rapid and profound in areas where the majority of the population on both sides of the Border is of a nationalist persuasion. Yet, all projects show a determination to be genuinely inclusive of persons from all political backgrounds and significant progress has been made in reaching out to and involving members of the unionist community. A commitment to community development approaches at local level and institutional support from national authorities serves to make cross-border initiatives less-threatening and truly all-embracing. These principles, and the good practices presented here, ought to be central to future approaches; thus ensuring that processes and projects continue to promote development, consolidate peace, promote reconciliation and understanding and nurture mutual respect and a lasting peaceful co-existence.
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part 4 appendices
Appendix 1: The International Centre for Local and Regional Development

A registered charity based in Armagh, Northern Ireland, the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) is a North-South-US partnership established in 2006 to explore and expand the contribution that planning and the development of physical, social and economic infrastructures can make to improve the lives of people on the island of Ireland and elsewhere. The partner institutions began working together in 2004 and currently include: the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth; the School of the Built Environment at the University of Ulster; the Institute for International Urban Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts; the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Armagh and the Athlone Institute of Technology.

Each of these partners brings together complementary expertise and networks on both a North-South and East-West basis – creating a unique, all-island and international centre. ICLRD continues to expand its collaboration with other institutions and has built up close working relationships with individual faculty and researchers from Harvard University, Mary Immaculate College Limerick and Queens University Belfast. It is also developing its international linkages, particularly with those organisations that have an interest in cross-border cooperation and collaboration; for example, Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) in France.

What does the ICLRD do?
- Provides independent joined-up research and policy advice on cross-border and all-island spatial planning and local and regional development issues (economic development, transport, housing, the environment, service provision, etc.)
- Offers capacity building programmes for communities and local, regional and national government representatives and officials
- Assists local governments / communities in translating policy into ‘on the ground’ action
- Acts as a catalyst to bring relevant public and private actors, North and South, together to work on common goals
- Promotes international cooperation and exchanges.

How does the ICLRD do this?
The ICLRD uses a variety of strategies to undertake its work, including:
- Engaging in action research with local governments, communities and central agencies that contributes to the practical understanding of the complex inter-jurisdictional and cross-border dynamics and drivers of change
- Undertaking case study research to evaluate / develop good practice models
- Hosting workshops / fora on key themes; the development / delivery of training modules
- Facilitating community groups and local governments in the identification and roll-out of local development initiatives
- Acting as a repository for key documents
- Providing sustained strategic cooperation, rather than ‘one-off’ projects, among academic institutions and the public / private sectors.
What is the value of the ICLRD?
The ICLRD is an effective means of developing economic, social and intellectual capital:

- Economic capital – stimulating economic growth and competitiveness, and considering more efficient and effective spatial planning solutions across the island
- Social capital – fostering peace and reconciliation, empowering and regenerating communities, and promoting well-being
- Intellectual capital – developing the skills and capacities to understand, generate and implement effective development policies.
Appendix 2: European Examples of Cross-Border Cooperation

For over fifty years, Europe’s border territories have been actively engaging in cross-border cooperation and strategic planning; largely in recognition that development trends on one side of a border has implications for the adjoining jurisdiction – and these can be positive and / or negative. Initially, cross-border cooperation would have been largely informal and taken the form of memorandums of understanding but more recently, with the evolution of the European Union, cross-border partnerships are increasingly centred around funding programmes such as INTERREG and are taking the form of more complex agreements.

Through engagement in cross-border cooperation, Europe’s border areas found that they could:

- Adopt and implement policies for a natural hinterland or trading area (i.e. a functional area)
- Achieve harmonisation of policies thus reducing the possibility of back-to-back development taking place
- Generate economies of scale by jointly providing services and infrastructure (InteTradeIreland, 2006).

Cross-border cooperation has taken place at many scales – national, regional, local – and this often determines the subject matter / activity around which the alliance is based; for example, public transport, health services, education, waste management and tourism. Over the decades, the focus of cross-border cooperation in Europe has evolved from relatively specific, issue-based projects to more ambitious and strategic initiatives and frameworks; a progression which is most encouraging in the Irish context.

The following examples focus, for the most part, on the regional and / or the local (the micro-region) as this is the scale with which this report is most concerned. As well as addressing those examples noted in Chapter 2, the Table below includes other notable examples of cross-border cooperation in rural and peripheral micro-regions.

Table A2.1.: Examples of Cross-Border Cooperation in European Regions and Micro-Regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title (Counties Involved)</th>
<th>Operational Level</th>
<th>Funding Programme</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| NETWORK OF FRAGILE AREAS (Italy-Spain) | Regional Involved region of Murcia (Spain) and Sardinia, Sicily, Basilicata, Liguria, Lazio, Umbria and Val d’Aosta (Italy) | INTERREG II Began in 1999 | - Focusing on areas located away from major urban centres  
  - Recognising role of communication technology in access to information  
  - Objective of setting up IT access gates for consultation and online assistance  
  - Continuing under INTERREG III; slightly different focus (economic development) with intensive use of IT services |
| FROM VALLEY TO VALLEY | Focusing on Mont Blanc | Opening up border | - Eco-friendly tourism  
- Promotion of cross-border hiking routes (around thematic itineraries)  
- Development of different attractions along routes: glaciers, forests, mines, etc.  
- Since 2001, border no longer exists for mountain rescue operations  
- Use of single radio channel |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---|
| LAKE constance       | Regional              | The University of Hohenheim in Ravensburg (Germany) and the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule of Zurich (Switzerland) | INTERREG I  
Began in 1994 | - Study and promote environment-friendly methods to grow fruit and vegetables; develop new marketing methods to make Lake Constance area more competitive at EU level.  
- Creation of a cross-border extensive farming area (more land, less pesticide)  
- Harmonisation of farming methods on the Swiss and German sides led to a series of...  
- Recommendations included the continuation of cross-border cooperation through the setting-up of a new operation network that includes Bavaria and the Austrian region of Vorarlberg and more sharing of agricultural and scientific information and knowledge |
| SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT | Local & Regional | Managed by North Calotte Council  
Involves provinces of Lapland (Finland), Nordbotten (Sweden) and Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark (Norway) | INTERREG II  
Began in 1997 | - Areas characterised by scattered population and long distances from EU markets  
- Objective was to improve people’s living conditions, create jobs, increase international competitiveness, improve trade  
- Led to links between firms, establishment of trade networks, etc.  
- Continuing under INTERREG III |
| CROSS-BORDER FAIR | Local | Areas of Zafra, Estremadura in Spain and Beja, Alentejo in Portugal | INTERREG II | - Zafra renowned for hosting largest fair / livestock market in Southern Europe  
- Cross-border fair since 1994  
- Aim of intensifying agricultural relations & promoting marketing of farmed products  
- Technical workshops  
- Promotion of quality gourmet products to hoteliers and restauranteurs |
| CROSS-BORDER RURAL DEVELOPMENT – A CHANCE FOR FUTURE (Romania-Bulgaria) | Local & Regional Involving Giurgiu region in Romania and Rousse district in Bulgaria | - Working with local authorities and civil society  
- Focus on development of a cross-border cooperation network with emphasis on sustainable rural development  
- Activities including exchange of good practices between local administrations, civil society (on rural tourism, environment and culture). |
|---|---|---|
| COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN THE ESTONIA/RUSSIAN BORDER AREA (Estonia-Russia) | Local Estonia: counties, small towns, parishes; ranging in population from 1870 to 96500; rural communities involved in farming, fishing, textiles  
Russia: small counties, towns and districts; ranging in population from 315 to 205000; main economic activities include agriculture, forestry, fishing and manufacturing | Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs - People once move freely between the two countries; now strict visa regime in place  
- Decline in cooperation – increased social and economic instability in cross-border region  
- Funds available for cross-border cooperation programmes but people lacking skills to plan, prepare and implement a project; need training  
- Denmark to share positive experiences of Danish/German border; offer solutions  
- Areas of cooperation include tourism development, addressing environmental issues, cultural festivals and improved telecommunications |
Appendix 3: Research Survey Instrument

Questions/Issues for Research Interview with Key Stakeholders

1. Background
   (a) On a cross-border basis, with what town(s) / village(s) does this area have links?
   (b) How long have these links been in existence?
   (c) Would you describe these links as:
       • Natural / spontaneous (covering natural hinterland)
       • Planned / artificial?
   (d) What is the catchment area for these cross-border linkages?
   (e) Does your town / village have connections with other towns / villages on this side of the Border? And if so, how strong are these linkages?

2. Nature of relationship
   (a) Regarding the cross-border area identified as being connected, on what is this ‘connectedness’ based?
       • Business and economic development
       • Service provision
       • Transport hub
       • Rural development
       • Tourism
       • Other (state what ‘other’ is)
   (b) How was this connectedness brought about?
       • Group driven
       • Person driven
       • Organisation driven
       • Funding driven
         - Public monies
         - Private monies
       • Other

       Please elaborate on your answer.
   (c) Has the peace process had any role in generating these linkages?

3. Delivery
   (a) Who, if anyone, is currently responsible for overseeing / managing the existing linkages?
   (b) To what degree has institutional and contextual issues facilitated or created barriers to the development of cross-border linkages?

4. Mutual benefits
   (a) What is the main value of this cross-border relationship?
       (e.g. economic advantage, improve community relations, improve services, etc.)
   (b) Are the existing links equally beneficial to the cross-border linked towns / villages? If not, why is one area benefiting more than the other? Is this giving rise to concerns within the affected community?
   (c) What are the impacts deriving from the current level of collaboration between the cross-border towns / villages?
   (d) Do the regulatory and fiscal differences between the two jurisdictions have any impact on the roll-out of collaborative actions?
5. **Factors for success - locally**
   (a) Would you classify the existing cross-border linkages in this area as being a success? If so, what factors have led to this success?
   (b) Is sufficient use being made of the cross-border supports available?
      • Funding supports
      • Institutional supports

6. **Factors for success - generally**
   (a) In more general terms, what, in your opinion, are the factors associated with successful cross-border collaboration?
   (b) Have these changed over time with the evolution of the peace process?

7. **If I could change anything……**
   (a) In your opinion, what have been the three main benefits resulting from cross-border linkages?
   (b) In your opinion, what have been the three worst elements of cross-border linkages?
   (c) If doing this again (developing links), what if anything would you do differently?

8. **Sustaining cross-border linkages**
   (a) In your opinion, are the existing links
      • sustainable / long-term in nature
      • practical?
      • Other (please describe)
   (b) In your opinion, is there scope for widening the existing links to cover other areas? If so, around what ‘potentials’ would you like to see further connectivity developed?
      • Shared infrastructure / services
      • Labour markets
      • Economic development opportunities
      • Tourism
      • Energy
      • Transport corridors
      • Social links
      • Other (state what ‘other’ is)
   (c) In terms of agencies, groups, persons, etc., who do you believe should take on the role of scoping and developing actual/specific cross-border collaborative actions?
   (d) How important do you consider the following in the development and delivery of cross-border linkages?
      • Collaboration between government agencies in policy development and delivery
      • Collaboration between local government and community agencies
      • Collaboration between voluntary / community agencies and other bodies
      • Funding mechanisms being linked to meeting national, regional and local policy
      • Information sharing at all levels
   (e) Going forward, what institutional or other organizational linkages are required to facilitate and coordinate linkages?
(f) Is there a role for spatial planning in the development and/or delivery of cross-border collaborative actions?
(g) Are there mechanisms you would propose for particular sectors or activities?
(h) Are you aware of any examples of good international practice on connectivity between cross-border towns that the Research Team should review?
Appendix 4: Schedule of Interviews and Workshops

Lifford-Strabane

Alan Moneypenney, Strabane Lifford Development Commission
Breedge McMenamin, Lifford-Clonleigh Resource Centre
Brenda Morris, Strabane & District Community Network
Brian O’Brien, Strabane & District Community Network
Councillor Ivan Barr, Strabane District Council
Councillor James O’Kane, Strabane District Council
Councillor Jarlath McNulty, Strabane District Council
Councillor Tony McDaid, Donegal County Council
Dr. Chris Boomer, Western Planning Division, Northern Ireland
Donal MacLochlainn, Strabane Lifford Development Commission
Eunan Quinn, Donegal County Council
Flora McGee, Derry & Raphoe Action
Francie Coyle, Donegal County Council
Geraldine Stafford, Strabane District Council
Gillian Graham, Old Lifford Courthouse
Heather Torrens, Strabane District Council
Hugo Sweeney, Tyrone-Donegal Partnership
Joe Barber, Strabane Chamber of Commerce
Loretto Gillespie, Lifford RehabCare
Mark Conway, The Venture Network
Mary Crossan, St. Johnson Family Resource Centre
Michael McLoone, Donegal County Council
Paddy Harte, International Fund for Ireland
Pat Doherty, MP, MLA (West Tyrone)
Paul Anderson, Dergfin Partnership
Peter Hunter, Independent Consultant, Strabane 2000
Philip Faithfull, Strabane District Council
Roisin Connolly, Strabane District Council
Simon Harron, Donegal County Council
Winston Patterson, Strabane Lifford Development Commission

Kiltyclogher-Cashel/Scribbagh-Garrison-Rossinver

Alan McCluney, Rossinver Community Development Company
Aoife Mulcahy, Leitrim County Council
Barbara Timoney, Garrison Womens Group/ Kinlough Rossinver Askill Garrison Partnership (KRAG)
Ciarán Tracey, Leitrim County council
Councillor Aodh Flynn, Leitrim County Council
Councillor Frank Dolan, Leitrim County Council
Councillor Gerry Gallagher, Fermanagh District Council
Councillor Michael Colreavy, Leitrim County Council
Councillor Sean McDermott, Leitrim County Council
Councillor Stephen Huggett, Fermanagh District Council
Councillor Tony Ferguson, Leitrim County Council
Donnacha McSorley, Border Action
Elish Gray, KiltyCashel Project
Evelyn McManus, Rossinver
Fr. Doyle, Kiltyclogher/Rossinver
Fr. Phair, Kiltyclogher/Rossinver
Geraldine Higgins, St. Martin’s Primary School, Garrison
Joel Smith, Rossinver-Belleek Partnership
Joseph Gilhooly, Leitrim County Development Board
Louise Leonard, Cashel Community Association
Michael Burns, Cashel Community Association
Molly Feely, Garrison Womens Group/ Kinlough Rossinver Askill Garrison Partnership (Krag)
Noel Loughlin, Manorhamilton Enterprise Forum
Olive Gallagher, Kiltyclogher Community Council
Paul Kirkpatrick, Leitrim County Council
Pauline Carson, Cashel Community Association
Sheena O’Dowd, Leitrim County Council
Theresa Kilkenny
Tom Lavin, County Leitrim Partnership
Tommy McLaughlin, Fermanagh District Council

Glenfarne-Blacklion-Belcoo

Cathal O’Dolan, McNeen Community Partnership
Councillor Domhnall O’Cobhthaigh, Fermanagh District Council
Councillor John-Paul Feeley, Cavan County Council
Councillor Sean McDermott, Leitrim County Council
Eilish McLaughlin, West Cavan/Fermanagh Economic Development Project
Ena McGinley, Killinagh Community Council / West Cavan Community Council
Isabelle Leonard, McNeen Community Partnership
James Fox, Cavan County Enterprise Board
Jennifer McCorry, Cavan County Council
Jerry Fitzpatrick, Cavan Community Forum
Jim Nolan, Killinagh Community Council / Cathal Bhui Festival
Joe McLoughlin, Cavan County Development Board
Kate Ennals, Cavan Community Forum / Cavan County Council
Kathleen Richey, Killinagh Community Council
Liam McKeever, Border Action
Mairead O’Dolan, Blacklion-Belcoo Active Age
Marice Galligan, Cavan County Council
Michael Fitzpatrick, Killinagh Community Council
Michael McLoughlin, Killinagh Community Council
Pauline Gilmartin, Lough McNeen Tourism Initiative
Raymond Doherty, McNeen Community Partnership
Richard Watson, Marble Arch Caves European Geopark
Rodney Connor, Fermanagh District Council
Sandy Holland, Community Connections

Clones-Rosslea-Newtownbutler-Lisnaskea

Ann-Marie Fryers, Clones-Erne East Partnership
Brian Cosgrove, Lisnaskea Enterprise Centre
Councillor Fergus Quillan, Fermanagh District Council
Councillor Harold Andrews, Fermanagh District Council
Councillor Pat Traenor, Monaghan County Council
Donald McDonald, Border Action
Helen Shells, Fermanagh District Council
Jean O’Brien, Monaghan Youth Federation
John Ruddy, Monaghan Youth Federation
Josephine Traenor, Clones Community Forum
Martina Holland, Clones Enterprise Centre
Noel McGuire, Sliabh Beag Partnership
Padraig Maguire, Monaghan County Council
Paul Clifford, Clones Town Council
Robert Gibson, Fermanagh District Council
Ruth Daly, Local Development Consultant
Sean Curran, Lisnaskea Chamber of Commerce & Development Association
Shae Carolan, Rosslea Enterprise Centre
Sharon Murphy, Failte Cluain Eois
Tasha Cassidy, Monaghan Youth Federation
Terry O’Driscoll, Clones Enterprise Centre
Una Traynor, Clones Community Forum

Castleblayney-Crossmaglen

Arlene Sweeney, RehabCare
Bernadette McCarra, Regeneration South Armagh (RoSA)
Bernard Bolger, Border Action
Councillor Bernard Hughes, Castleblayney Town Council
Councillor C. Burns, Newry & Mourne District Council
Councillor Gary Carville, Monaghan County Council
Councillor Geraldine Donnelly, Newry & Mourne District Council
Councillor Jackie Crowe, Castleblayney Town Council
Councillor James Cunningham, Castleblayney Town Council
Councillor Joe Brennan, Castleblayney Town Council
Councillor T. Hearty, Newry & Mourne District Council
Dette Hughes, East Border Region
Dympna Condra, Monaghan County Council
Fiona Kieran, Cross Square Hotel, Crossmaglen
Gabriel O’Connell, County Monaghan Partnership
Gerard Tracey, Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (Northern Ireland)
Gerry Murray, Crossmaglen Community Enterprise
Helen Thompson, Castleblayney-South Armagh Partnership (CASA)
Jonathan McGilly, Newry & Mourne District Council
Liz Christy, The Swallow Gallery
Michelle Boyle, Newry & Mourne District Council
Pamela Arthurs, East Border Region
Pat Merrick, Castleblayney Tidy Towns
Pauline Walsh, Regeneration South Armagh (RoSA)
Raymond Sexton, Tangible Technology
Rev. John McCabe, Castleblayney
Ron Murray, Regeneration South Armagh (RoSA)
Rosaleen Quigley, Regeneration South Armagh (RoSA)
Sinead Lennon, Castleblayney Town Council
Suzanne Rice, Newry & Mourne District Council
Tom McKay, Regeneration South Armagh (RoSA)
Terry Savage, Border Regional Authority
Tommy Maguire, Castleblayney Enterprise Centre
Observation Area: Truagh-Aughnacloy

Josie Brady, Truagh Development Association
Malcom Duffey, Aughnacloy Development Association
Marian Dudley, Truagh Development Association
Mary Devlin, Truagh Development Association
Rev. Sean Nolan, Truagh Development Association

Observation Area: Pettigo-Tullyhummon-Kesh

Mary Redmond, Association for the Development of Pettigo & Tullyhummon (ADoPT)
Neville Armstrong, Fermanagh District Council