



The Centre for  
Cross Border Studies



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



**European Union**  
European Regional  
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## INICCO – Ireland / Northern Ireland Cross-border Cooperation Observatory

**07 November 2013**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**For immediate use**

### ***Joint Conference by the International Center for Local and Regional Development and the Center for Cross Border Studies***

**Venue:** To be confirmed

**Date:** 30-31 January 2014

While there is no longer an all-island Common Chapter, the Irish Government's 2007-2013 National Development Plan (NDP) notes that the border "causes natural markets to fragment along territorial lines, reducing economic interaction and the opportunity to develop economies of scale and strong indigenous industries is lost. Firms tend to shun border regions and infrastructural links are not developed, resulting in unbalanced economic growth. Taking an all-island approach will help deliver more balanced regional development and address the negative effects of the border" (p.96).

The **Towards a Border Development Zone** (BDZ) action research project explores the potential of a joint economic development approach across the whole Irish and Northern Irish cross-border region. The idea for the Border Development Zone originated in a meeting of policy makers (including representatives of InterTradeIreland, Invest NI, Forfás, Enterprise Ireland and IBEC) in Newry in September 2011 to discuss the emerging findings of the Bradley & Best report, *Cross-Border Economic Renewal: Rethinking Regional Policy in Ireland*, which was commissioned by the Centre for Cross Border Studies (CCBS). This project is part-financed by the European Union's INTERREG IVA programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.

Previous research by CCBS and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) has shown that this region has been cut off from the organic links that exist between more centralised regions in both Irish jurisdictions. This project investigates ways of tackling its unique double challenge of peripherality and the presence of an international border, and how the whole region can be re-integrated into the Northern Irish, Irish and island-wide economies. The 'Towards a Border Development Zone' project is centred around five short pieces of follow-up action research,

the findings of which will be presented and discussed at this major conference. The five action research studies are as follows:

- a) Overall BDZ strategy and structure;
- b) SME enterprise in goods and services with an export potential;
- c) Tourism and recreation;
- d) Agriculture, food and fish processing; and
- e) Low carbon initiatives, energy saving and renewable energy.

This 2-day conference will bring together leading figures from the border region, including representatives from local authorities, local enterprise agencies and business organisations, along with individual entrepreneurs and business leaders from the cross-border region and interested central government officials. It will identify a different and innovative way of mobilising existing resources and structures in the cross-border region and consider how key regional actors can drive this new strategy to revive and energise the region from the 'bottom up'.

For further information, please contact Ms. Eimear Donnelly, Centre for Cross Border Studies at [eimear.donnely@gub.ac.uk](mailto:eimear.donnely@gub.ac.uk)

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#### Notes to Editors'

- The **Centre for Cross Border Studies (CCBS)**, based in Armagh and Dublin, researches and develops cooperation across the Irish border in a wide range of practical areas, notably education, health, the economy, ICT and citizens information, and works with similar cross-border regional research bodies in other parts of Europe. For further information please visit [www.crossborder.ie](http://www.crossborder.ie)
- The **International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD)** is focused on building the capacity of regional and local authorities, development agencies, border networks and community and voluntary organizations to manage spatial planning on the island of Ireland as a whole. For further information please visit [www.iclrd.org](http://www.iclrd.org)
- The **Special EU Programmes Body** is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Finance in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU structural funds Programmes PEACE III and INTERREG IV designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society. The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland.
- The INTERREG IVA Programme, funded under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), is worth €256 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders. It has two distinct priority measures to create co-operation for a more prosperous and sustainable cross-border region. For more information on the SEUPB please visit [www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)