

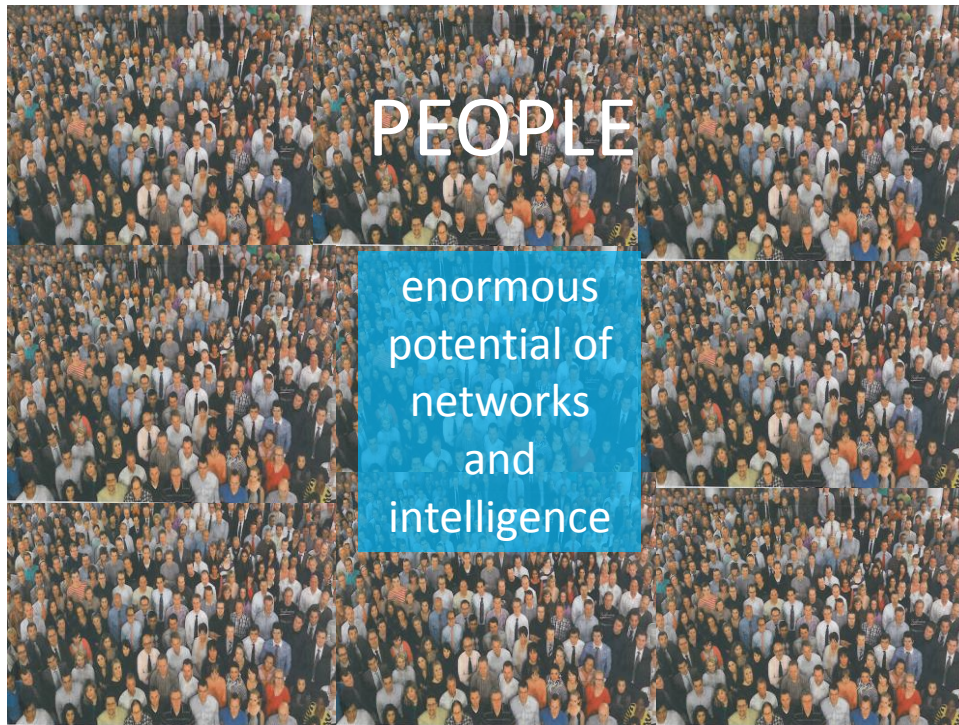
International Centre for Local and Regional Development

**Executive Training Programme**

**CroSPlaN II - An INTERREG IVA Funded Programme**

***Module Five***  
**Strategic Cooperation:**  
**Strength in Unity of Purpose**

**Post Module Report**



**5th December 2013**

**Glencarn Hotel, Castleblayney**



International Centre for Local and  
Regional Development

## **BACKGROUND TO MODULE 5**

Recognising that natural hinterlands – or “functional territories” – do not adhere to man-made boundaries and thus neither do the functions of local government, there is a growing awareness among the councils in the Irish border region that enhanced collaboration and joint work on common priorities must move up their agendas. Public sector collaboration in the Irish border region can be significantly enhanced through strengthened leadership skills, access to innovative practices and opportunities to build knowledge networks among colleagues. The ICLRD’s experience is that high-level training and animation can help both senior officials and elected representatives in local authorities to have a better understanding of how their development opportunities are linked and fit into a larger strategic context.

**The Executive Training and Animation Programme** for cross-border region councils, using the successful ICLRD model linking training and animation developed under CroSPlan I, targets the 22 Councils involved in the three local authority-led cross-border networks, namely:

- Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN);
- North West Region Cross Border Group; and
- East Border Region Ltd.

The programme will be delivered through a programme of plenary sessions, seminars, discussion forums and working groups.

As demonstrated in CroSPlan I, this programme will improve the quality of cross-border cooperation and provide a critical forum to bring together cross-border councils, selected cross-border bodies and central government departments to support joint solutions supported by collaborative agreements.

The programme will consist of 10 modules; with post module reports to be prepared for the initial five plenary sessions.

Please see the training website for information on upcoming modules and readings  
<http://iclr.org/training-crospan/>

## INTRODUCTION

This module considers the mutual benefits of practical cooperation both on an intra- and inter-jurisdictional basis. It considers the areas of activity in which there is increasing scope for councils to pursue strategic and collaborative agendas, and/or develop shared services - and the implications of this for optimising service delivery. In the context of the growing EU agenda on territorial cohesion, how do we make the most of our territorial / natural assets? How can we better strengthen links, and integrate territories, through cooperation and exchange?

In terms of the tools available to bodies interested in planning cross-border projects, particular attention will be paid to the Impact Assessment Toolkit for Cross-Border Cooperation, which has been developed by the Centre for Cross Border Studies. This toolkit is reflective of EU territorial cohesion policy and the increasing importance being attached to a place-based (rather than sectoral-based) approach to cooperation.

## SESSION 1: TERRITORIAL COHESION: A PLACED-BASED APPROACH TO JOINT WORKING

### **Collaborative Working Across Local Government: The Mutual Benefits of Collaborative Working**

*Mr. Kevin Murray, Kevin Murray Associates (Glasgow)*

The context for collaboration is constantly changing; government is in a constant environment of reform - personnel change, policy change, structure change. This results in a flux of people and relationships - which in turn can impact on cross-border working relations.

As a result of reform, processes can be overwhelmed by complexity - yet, at the same time, the message coming from Central Government is that things are getting simpler!

In terms of learning from reform, we must remember that organisations come to reform from different starting points - and indeed, perspectives. And with reform, we increasingly need to recognise that there are different perspectives to our own.

There is a hierarchy of collaboration:

- 1) Mutual actualisation
- 2) Shared investment (staff, risk, etc.)
- 3) Shared planning
- 4) Shared data
- 5) Essential/basic.

And in terms of strategic planning, this is crucial to national and sub-regional infrastructure development. Strategic development plans set out a vision for the long term development of the city regions - with part. emphasis on areas such as:

- housing and economic development
- infrastructure + transport
- green networks

We need city regions - they are a driver for local authorities to come together to collaborate (examples from Scotland include TAYplan - involving 4 local authorities, Glasgow and Clyde Valley - involving 8 local authorities). These city regions work together on governance (agreement), funding (shared and ring-fenced) and process of review (working, process, content).

What does this look like in reality. There are performance issues that must be taken into consideration:

- realistic in terms of trends and issues
- integrated themes
- good public sector links - with bodies involved from the outset
- mixed ambitions
- recognition that links to implementation are much harder as all bodies involved are not controlled by this process
- belief that plans are richer because of this collaboration.

In Sterling and Clackmannanshire, for example, a strong emphasis has been put on shared services in the areas of education and social service provision. The initiative is overseen by a Programme Board chaired alternatively by the Chief Executives of the Councils - demonstrating strong leadership and trust. A Partnership Agreement is in place and together, this leads to more effective services and desired outcomes.

In the Oresund Region, as well as links between Copenhagen and Malmo and their respective hinterlands, work is underway to build linkages with Germany. This requires vision and political leadership - and a spatial strategy. The Oresund Region has put an emphasis on infrastructure/connections, economy/low carbon, and its people and environment. Taking the Western Harbour area of Malmo, this initiative has led to this region transforming itself from Shipyard to University to City-Region. The area has become a focus for energy efficiency housing - and is placing a greater emphasis on climate change - moving from a functionalist city to a spaghetti city. A Commission has been set up for a socially sustainable Malmo - with an emphasis on health, wellbeing and justice. Recognising that technology is changing how people live, work, etc., the City is moving from an industrial city to community sense of sustainability.

This requires a change in how we think about planning, how the City organises itself. for Malmo, this is quite radical. New buildings will have many functions - through design, energy, ecology. An increased emphasis is being placed on the importance of people -and their potential; for example in terms of access to education and housing, engagement with youth (48% of the population is under 35years), etc.

Physical planning is increasingly been viewed as a tool to counteract segregation and social imbalance through:

- Bridging barriers
- Densifying / Mixing
- Localisation
- Empowering.

To be effective, we need policy frameworks; in Scotland, for example, central government is heading into the third iteration of its National Planning Framework

And what of the role of community? Dialogue is key. Community exhibitions are interesting but they are not collaborative. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on community visioning. In Helsinki for example community visioning places an emphasis on economy, social mix, infrastructure need (Greater Helsinki Vision 2050). Glasgow is looking to 2061 in terms of its spatial planning - asking such questions as what youth want/need, how we need to plan for fact that people are living longer (Future Glasgow: City Vision).

*"The best way to predict the future  
is to invent it".*

*Alan Kay, computer scientist*

Themes of Future Glasgow include:

- Neighbourhoods and communities
- Governance and relationships
- Transport and movement
- Learning and education
- Jobs and economy
- Health and well-being
- Recreation and leisure
- Sustainability and green issues
- Streets, parks and public spaces
- City centre.

Across every community, cycling is becoming increasingly popular - but how many places have the infrastructure in place to support this activity? Community visioning, with a long-term perspective, has a role to play in informing policy, of bringing new trends to attention of policy-makers - but also in taking messages from local government to businesses etc.

Scenario planning plays a key role in the process - with emphasis being placed on creating a living, learning environment with diversity at its heart.



Charettes involve condensing 3-4 weeks work with communities into one day; the key to the success of such an approach being getting the right people into the room in the first instance. It involves taking people's different ideas and reviewing them as a group in order to come up with a shared end plan. The Charette Plus is not just about development in its physical sense but is much broader and includes the concept of 'community planning' - with a particular emphasis on health and education. Again, the key is getting the right people around the table.

In English planning, there is a duty to cooperate - but this doesn't always translate into effective collaboration. There are many reasons for this - lack of an evidence-base to support proposals, etc.

The localism agenda promotes neighbourhood planning; an example of which is in Henley where the community can develop its own plan as long as it sits within the strategic focus of the core strategy and is passed by the council and community through a community referendum...hence the plan must be robust and defensible.

Participatory budgeting is a South American concept slowly gaining traction in Europe. In Lisbon for example it was used at a time where there was a lack of public money - so initiatives happened through community engagement. It works as follows: a proportion of public spend is allocated to allow the public to nominate projects they would like to see undertaken, there is a vote of the proposals put forward and the winning project is implemented. As a process, it builds active citizenship and ensures a partnership with local authorities.

*"The only way to find the limits of the possible is by going beyond them to the impossible".*

*Arthur C. Clarke*

Through these examples, we see that there are many benefits to collaboration (of which there are various models):

- Better research and shared data
- More informed policy – fresh perspectives
- Integrated spatial planning
- Shared skills and knowledge
- Shared investment – and savings
- Build trust - progressive sequence
- Positive impacts on solutions and outcomes
- *Stronger more sustainable 'place communities'* .

Collaboration is an intelligent process - that requires learning from people around us. It increases potential - of what we can do to effect change. It leads to joint action and delivery, it results in the sharing of risks, it builds social capital.

### **Q&A with Mr. Murray**

In addition to personal statements and reflections, participants also posed a number of questions. These are paraphrased below along with the speakers' responses in *italics*

It was noted that local authorities are territorial by their very design; that they have core responsibilities and largely fixed budgets within which to operate. This can often negate against openness to new initiatives and ways of working. In the case of city-visions, for example, while these can be quite dynamic processes, there is then the issue of delivery and securing the necessary finance (and energy) to bring them to fruition. Questions were also raised around consultation processes and the resulting fatigue that can result - is there a way around this?

*Mr. Murray noted that in Scotland the sharing of budgets and running costs between councils had central government backing - this does make the process easier. Other examples such as Stirling were on a voluntary basis - it requires strong leadership and a commitment to a process. There can be elements of a 'carrot and stick' approach which does make things happen - albeit not as you may want. The default is to return to the 'old ways' and many people are no longer to let this happen. In terms of delivery, low risk agendas are generally a good place to start...they may be small wins but they are wins!*

It was queried whether participative budgeting could be divisive in terms of the allocation of limited resources?

*Mr. Murray noted that participatory budgeting may not work everywhere - but it has proven to be effective in communities that were previously considered disenfranchised. It engages communities by challenging them to set priorities. It requires guarantees at councils level of who can be involved in future rounds - so the process is deemed fair. It is a process that requires a few cycles in order to build up the programme and demonstrate its effectiveness.*

## SESSION 2: CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION: DEVELOPING COHERENT PROJECTS

### Introduction to the Impact Assessment Toolkit for Cross-Border Cooperation

*Ms. Ruth Taillon & Ms. Eimear Donnelly, Centre for Cross Border Studies*

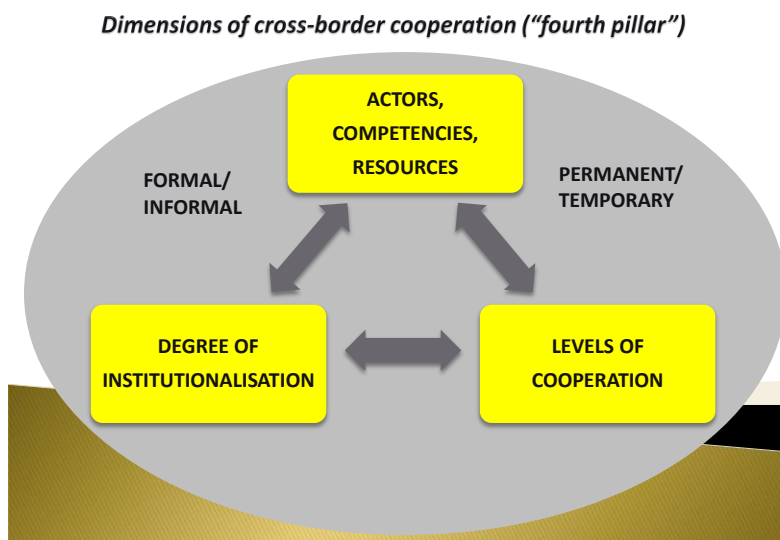
The Impact Assessment Toolkit (IAT) is a practical Toolkit for planning results-focused cross border projects; its objective being:

- To identify and consider the impacts (results) of cross border co-operation within the island of Ireland based on transparent criteria
- Provide stronger conceptual framework based on an integrated territorial approach

The toolkit is supported by a training course and mentoring programme - provided by Centre for Cross Border Studies staff - for actors at the programme and project level. The toolkit was developed in the context of the EU 5<sup>th</sup> Cohesion Report, the EU Impact Assessment System, the EU Sustainable Development Policy, the EU Territorial Co-operation Programmes (namely INTERREG & PEACE), and the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement.

It recognises the need for integrated working and planning across the three pillars of sustainable development - social, economic and environmental; with the toolkit introducing a fourth pillar - that of cooperation. The cooperation impacts include additional social, economic and environmental impacts and provide a mechanism for dealing with (un)expected impacts that arise.

The toolkit follows a step-by-step process which you are required to follow in a coherent, logical manner - and depending on the answers at various tages, you may need to return to some steps/stages along the way.





The first three steps involve:

- 1) Identifying the problem
- 2) Identifying the change you are trying to achieve
- 3) Considering how this can be achieved.

This is followed by a consideration of what want to achieve, how this can be demonstrated and the data that exists to support this (linked to programme indicators and objectives, etc.).

The toolkit is intended to bring you from idea to application; and includes several case studies to demonstrate how the toolkit works in practice.

While this toolkit has been developed with funding applications in mind, it has the potential to be used in other scenarios; for example in building budding working relationships that are focused on a particular issue or theme.

### **Q&A with Ms. Taillon**

Participants largely commented on the challenge of using this toolkit is the process adopted by the funding administrators in terms of assessing project applications doesn't change in tandem. Delegates noted the need for quick decisions in the assessment of funding applications - something currently absent from the process. It was queried to what extent funded bodies were consulted in the development of the toolkit - and the extent of the development support of offer (and associated costs).

### **MODULE CLOSE**

Ms. Creamer and Prof. Roberts closed the module by thanking the attendees for their participation and looked forward in anticipation to their active participation in Strand 2 of the programme - due to commence in February 2014; with delegates reminded that they would be meeting in their focus groups rather than in plenary for these forthcoming sessions.

### **For further information, contact:**

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