



The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

“Working with Our Neighbours”: Cross-Border Cooperation in national, regional and local development

Information Session
hosted by the
Joint Committee on Rural
and Community
Development

12 December 2018





Speakers

Welcome: Joe Carey TD, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Rural & Community Development

Anthony Soares, Deputy Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies

Pamela Arthurs, Chief Executive, East Border Region

Shane Campbell, Irish Central Border Area

Lisa O’Kane, Northern Ireland Local Government Association

Aidan Campbell, Rural Community Network



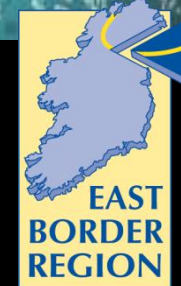
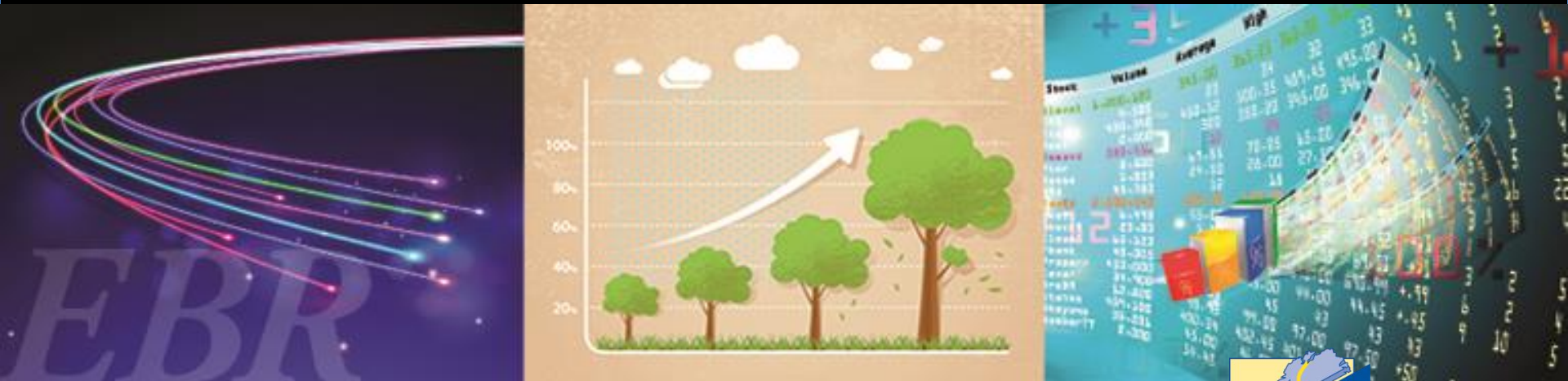
The Centre for
Cross Border Studies

Introductory remarks, Anthony Soares



- ▶ *Thinking* about our neighbours
- ▶ Thinking *with* our neighbours
- ▶ *Working* with our neighbours
- ▶ ... *a two-way process*

**Cross Border Local Authority Cooperation
Ireland/N Ireland
Pamela Arthurs
Chief Executive. East Border Region
12th December 2018**



Context: IRL/NI Cross Border Co operation

- 40 years old – relatively young
- Origins in Local Authorities in 1970's**

Elected members realised:-

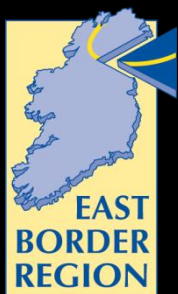
- *'back to back'* development not working.
- There were areas of common concern north/south
- Strength in working together
- The Border area - more disadvantaged on both sides

1976: East Border Region Committee

1975: NWRCBG

1996: ICBAN

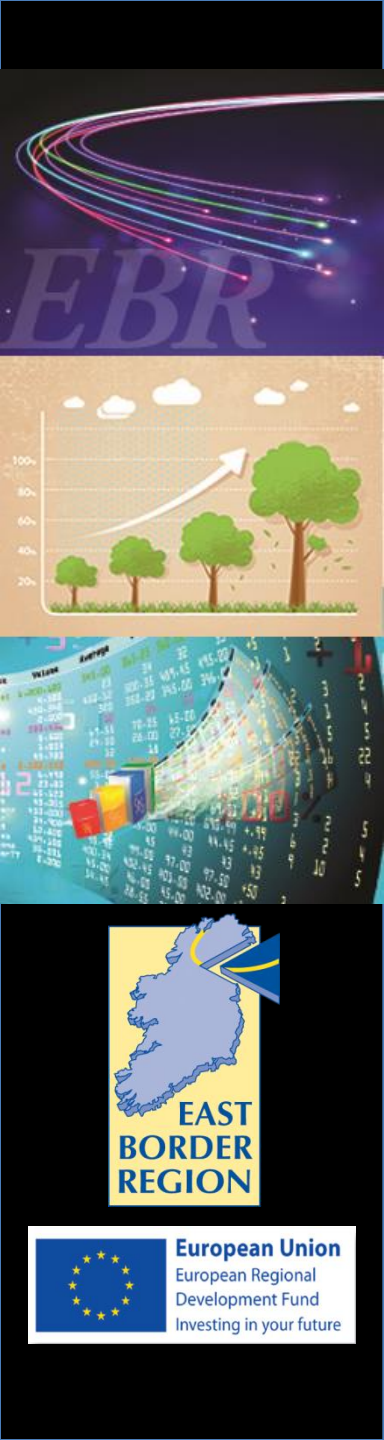
Border Corridor necklace in 1996:



Local Authority Cross Border Cooperation

Aim:

- to promote cross border economic development which benefits all of the people of the cross border region.
- Visionary – first cross border political organisations.
- Daunting – Hostile political climate
- No support in Dublin or Belfast.
- No financial support

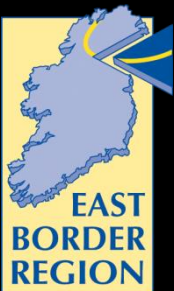


1980's



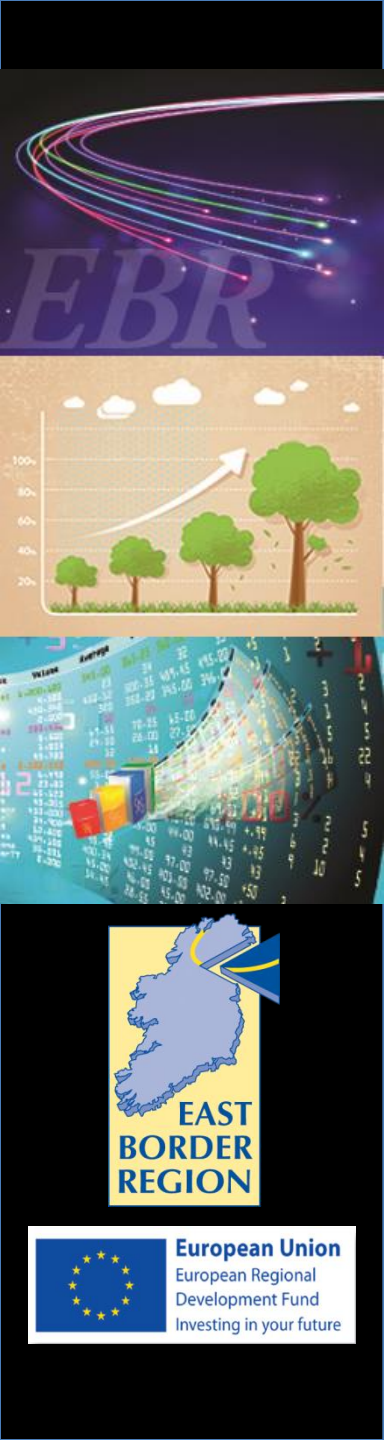
Local Authorities

- Trust and relationships – elected members and officials developed
- Cllrs and officials became familiar with differences across the border
- Cllrs and officials – cross border working – practical. Eg Roads
- New areas of common concern emerged.
- Common work plans were developed
- Realisation that strength in working together
- No money!!



INTERREG Funding 1989

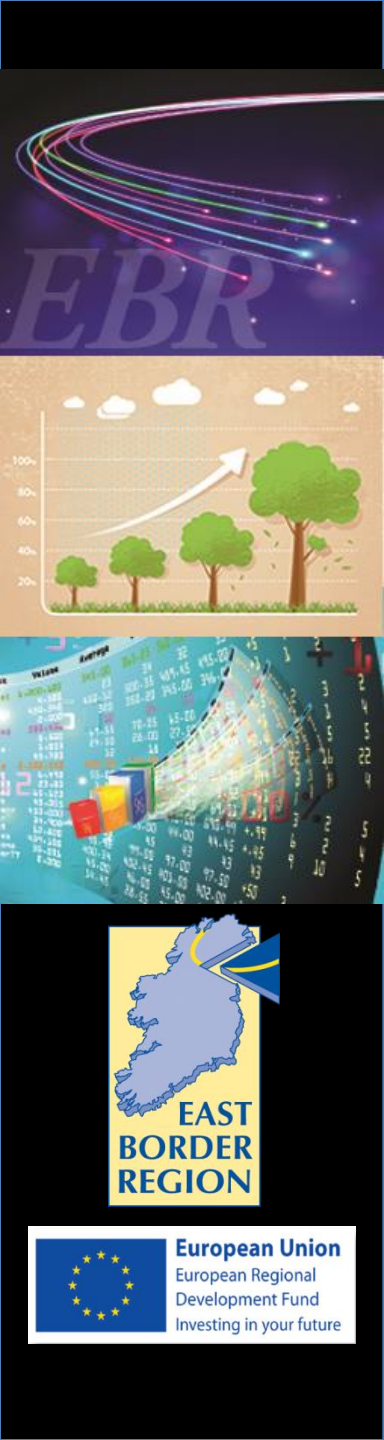
- First time outside finance available for cross border activity
- EU funding encouraged LA's to be more outward looking - share and learn from colleagues in other areas - AEBR
- Realised that the Irl/N Ireland border area suffers similar problems to other border regions in Europe
- One advantage – same language.



INTERREG IIIA 2000-2006

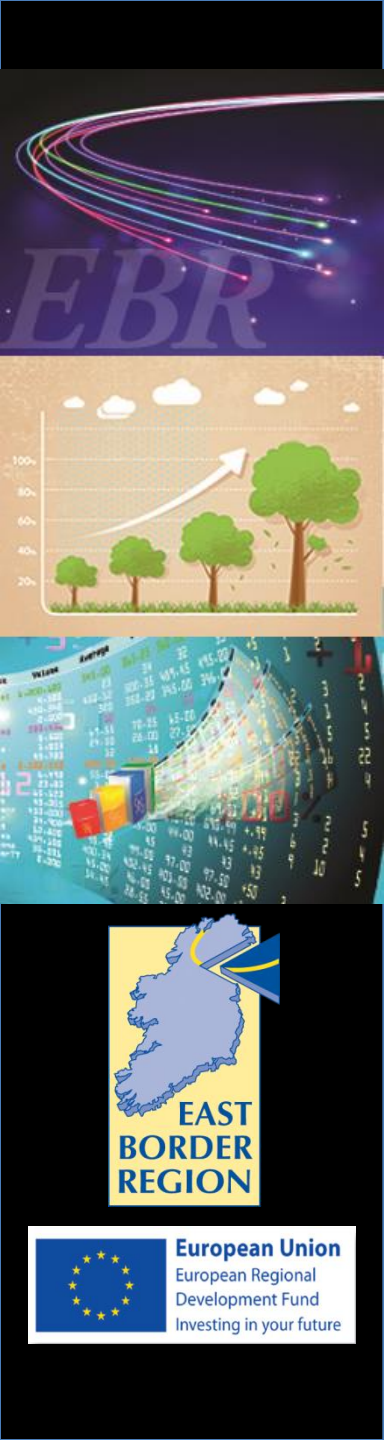
- Border Corridor Strategy – set agenda for INTERREG IIIA
- Cross Border groups - Implementing Bodies – awarded €59m
- Bottom up
- Needs based
- Local decision making

High Point – genuine cross border collaboration and impact.



INTERREG IVA VA

- More centralised Programmes
- Government departments north and south set priorities
- Global economic downturn
- No local decision making
- ‘people to people’ projects not funded
- Contrary to spirit EU wide guidelines



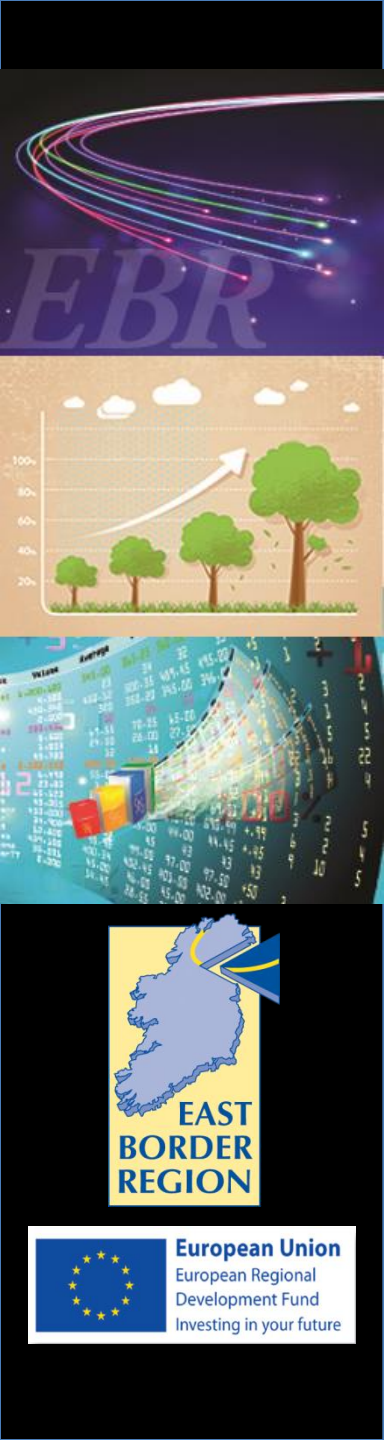
EU Territorial Cooperation Programmes

PEACE and **INTERREG** enabled the transformation of the Irl/N Ireland border area.

- Border area however still lags behind economically
- Continued interventions required

European Union

'constant backdrop to cross border cooperation since 1976'



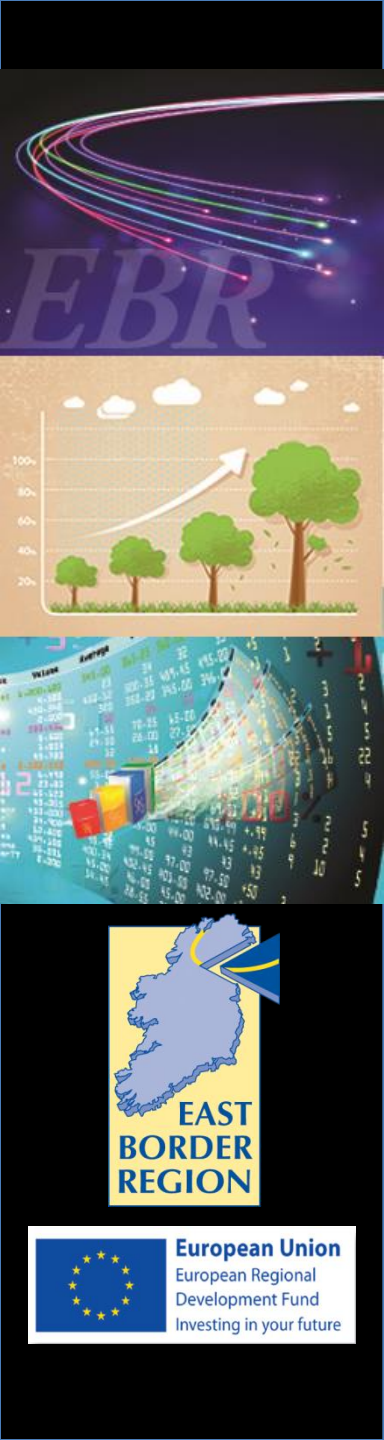
Brexit



Referendum 23rd June 2016

‘game changer for cross border cooperation’

Ireland/ N Ireland Border will be most impacted by Brexit



The 11 Local Authorities comprising the Ireland/Northern Ireland Border area cordially invite you to the launch of

Brexit AND THE Border Corridor

on the Island of Ireland:
Risks, Opportunities and
Issues to Consider

Venue: Northern Ireland Executive Office,
180 Chaussee d'Etterbeek, 1040 Brussels, Belgium
Date: Wednesday 11 October 2017
Time: 10.00am - 12.00noon
RSVP: admin@eastborderregion.com by Friday 6 October 2017



Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon
Borough Council



Comhairle Chontae Leitrim
Leitrim County Council



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Chathair &
Cheantar an tSráidh Béinn
Derry City & Strabane
District Council



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council



Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrne agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne and Down
District Council

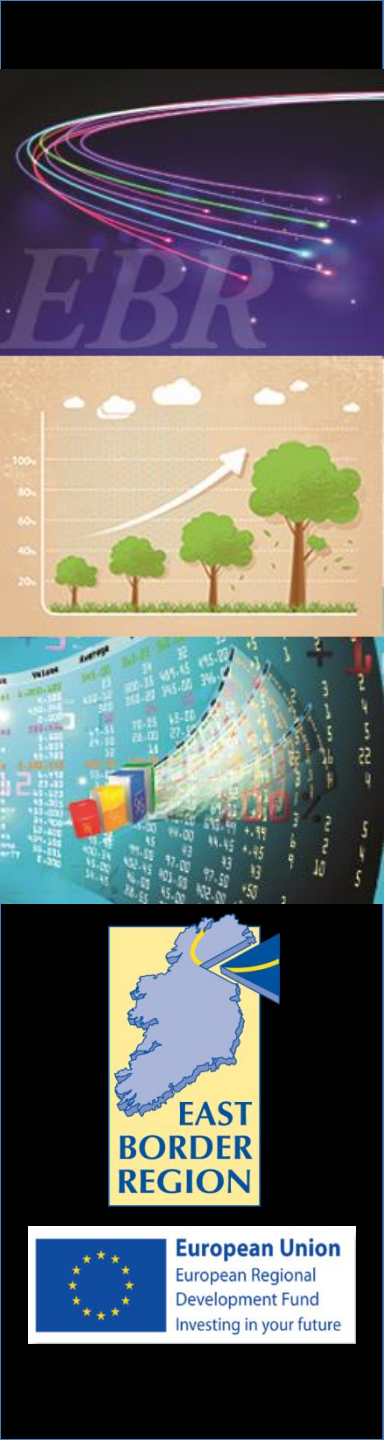


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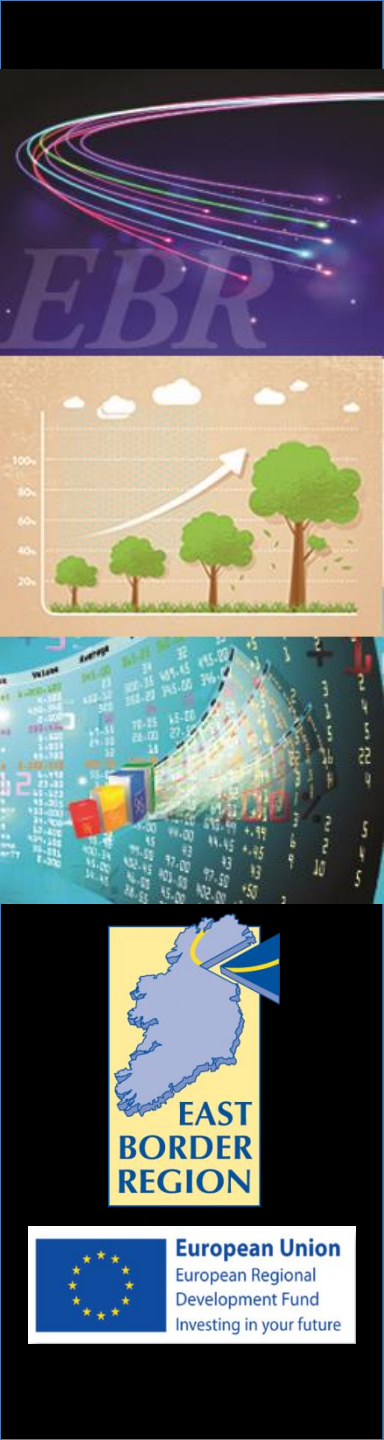
Key concerns after Brexit

- Cross border cooperation not a priority
- Funding? to date mainly from EU
- UK Prosperity Fund/ Irish equivalent?
- Negative impact – economic – political and social
- Polarised communities
- Return to ‘back to back’ development
- No government in N Ireland
- Need corresponding NI plan to NDP



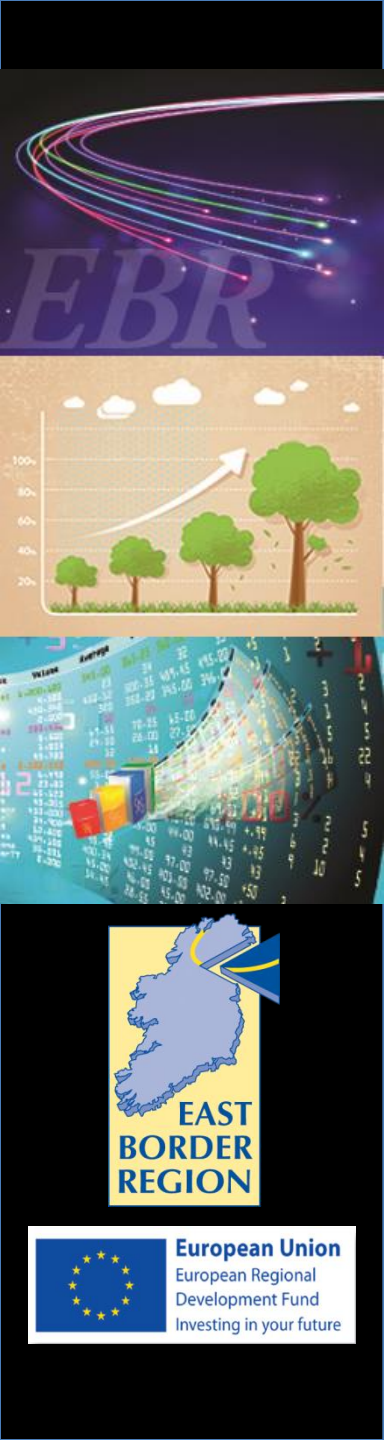
Local Authorities: Key asks:

- As Local Authorities along the Border we want to be part of the solution not the problem
- The goals of peace and reconciliation contained in the Good Friday Agreement/Belfast Agreement must be maintained
- “Seamless and frictionless” border
- There is a functioning Economic Area straddling the Border, and also sub-sets with the Corridor (North West, East around the Dublin economic corridor) If Brexit is not handled properly there is a real possibility that this will be jeopardised



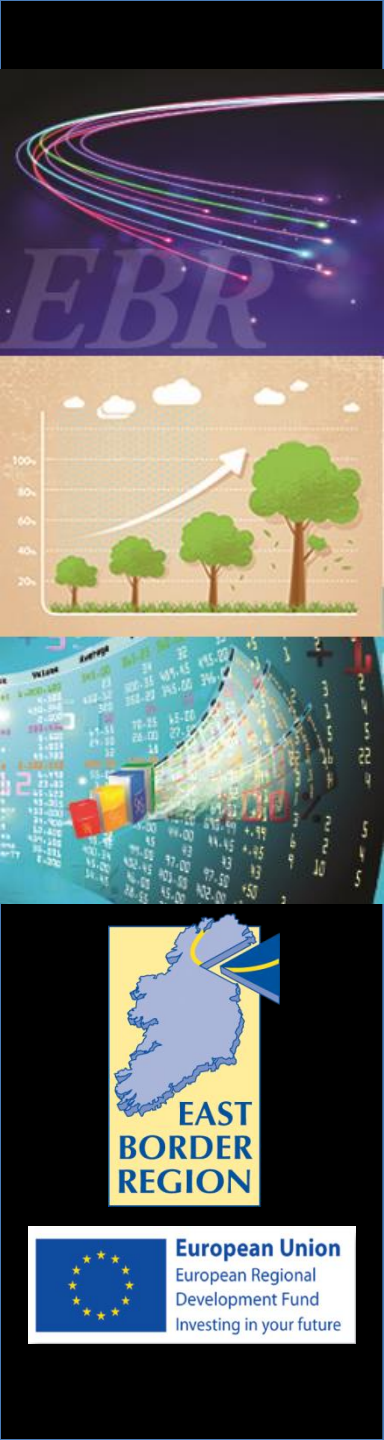
Key areas for support:

- Investment in Infrastructure (real and virtual):
 - Roads/rail/broadband/telecoms/access/connectivity/
Energy
 - Education/Skills Development/R&D
 - Health
 - Tourism/Greenways/Blueways/product development
- Investment in Business
 - The majority of Border Businesses are not prepared for Brexit (NI in particular)
 - SME's backbone of Border Corridor
 - Funding to assist with preparation for Brexit
 - Information/advice regarding tariffs



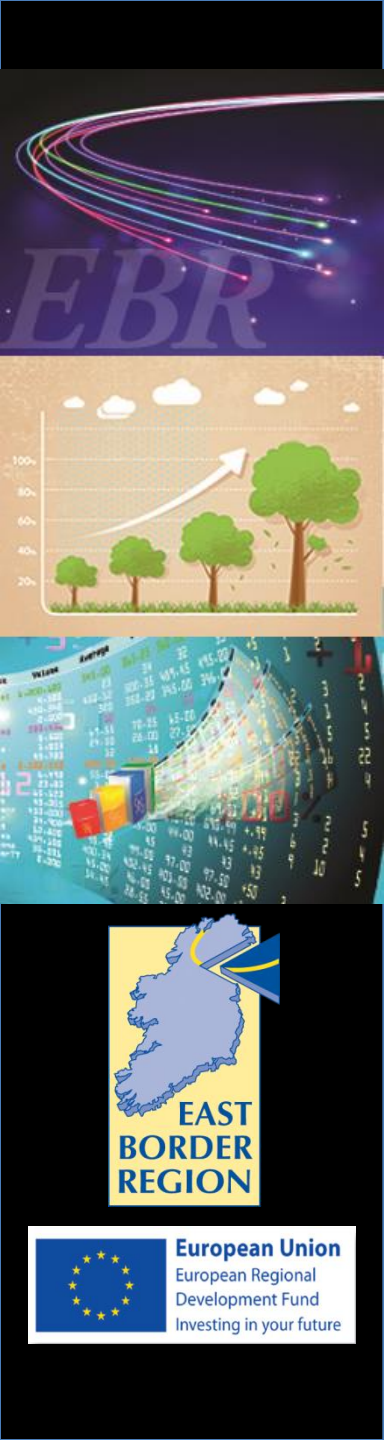
Key Areas of support:

- Agrifood Industry - particular challenges; supply chain (80% of end products rely on cross border interaction)/exchange rates/compliance
- need properly funded transition arrangements
- Continuation of EU Funding which has helped transform the Border Region:
INTERREG/PEACE/Horizon 2020/Erasmus/Rural Development etc...
- Support for continued cross border collaboration amongst key stakeholders; Local Authorities, Cross Border Networks, Chambers, Educational Institutes etc..



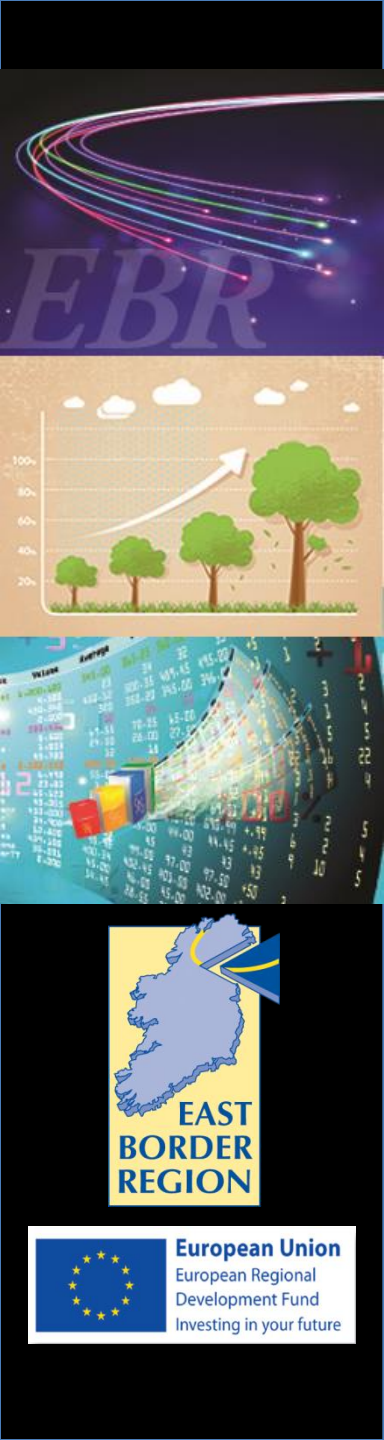
Local Authority Cross border Groupings

- Critical for future cross border cooperation.
- Political mandate
- Provide local solutions
- Provide mechanism for whole region not just Local Authorities
- Politically neutral
- Could play a key role in the design, development and implementation of any dedicated intervention following Brexit.



Local Authority Cross border Groupings

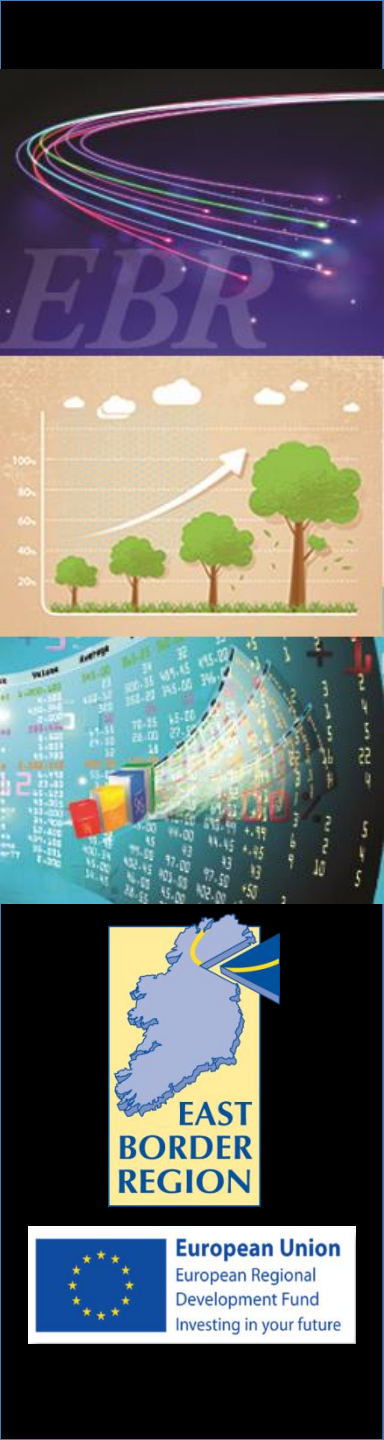
- Strategic in approach
- Proactive – agenda setting
- Capacity building
- Strong networks, regionally, nationally and at EU level
- Strong track record
- Cross border expertise
- Strong cross party/border lobby





Conclusion

- Cross Border Co-operation is not easy!
- Challenging times
- Whatever the outcome of Brexit East Border Region we has the expertise to be part of any new process in respect of cross border co-operation
- Practical, decentralised, needs based approach required (similar to INTERREG IIIA model)
- East Border Region core value remains consistent:
- **`to promote sustainable, cross border economic development which benefits the citizens of the region`**



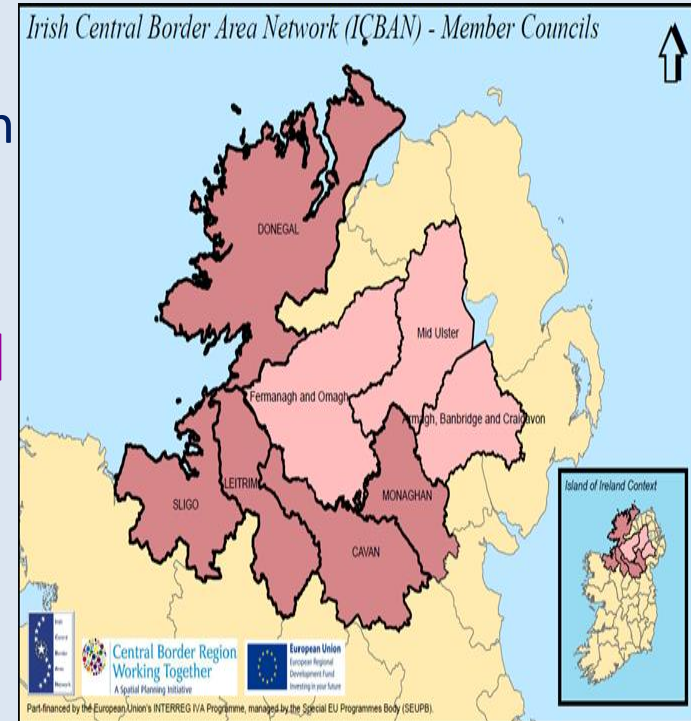
What is the Appetite for Cross-Border Cooperation?: The Central Border Region example

‘Working with our Neighbours’ seminar

Shane Campbell, ICBAN, 12/12/2018, Leinster House

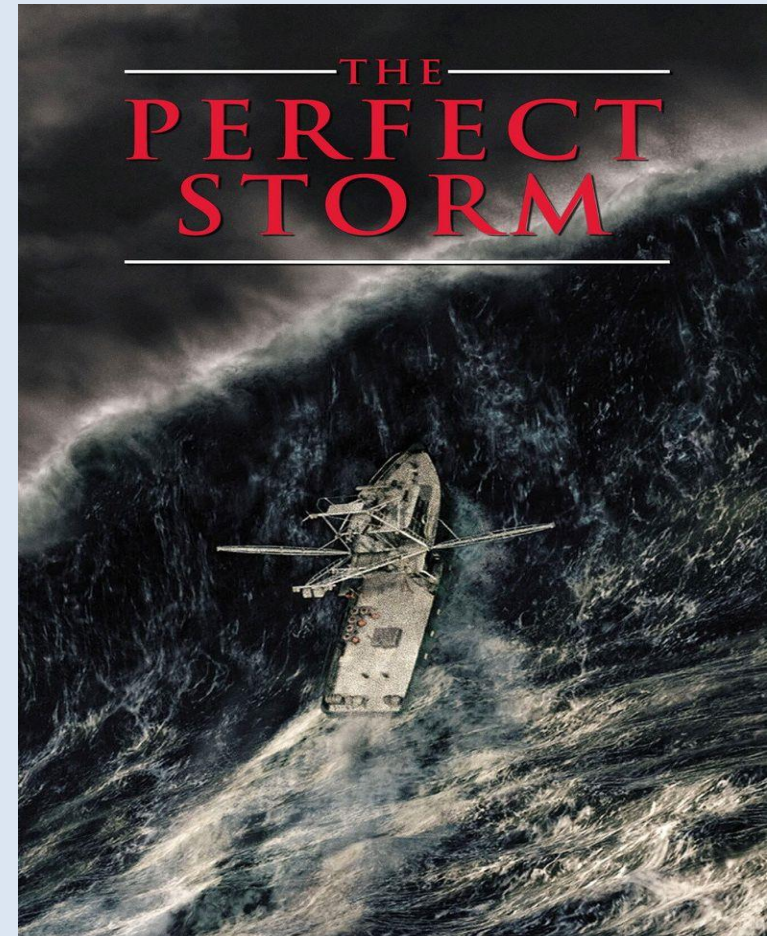
Cooperation in the Central Border Region Today

- Addressing challenges of a changing environment
 - Where one jurisdictional area of the Region will be in the EU, while the other prepares to leave
- Incumbent on areas such as the Central Border Region (CBR), and organisations such as ICBAN, to respond accordingly
 - Engaging with member Councils, stakeholders and Border Communities
 - Help maintain and build good relations



Knowns and Unknowns

- Existing Govt Policies
- Councils' role in enterprise development
- Fragility of UK Government
- EU funds to finish, except maybe:
 - **Peace – the EU likes it**
 - **Horizon – the UK likes it**
 - **INTERREG maybe**
- Might be a NI Executive again by 2020?
- Brexit impacts on tariffs and EU funds?
- NI as a 'common regulatory area'?
- NI Brexit dividend via UK, Ireland (EU)?
- UK Regional Policy impact on NI?
- Tories' 'Shared Prosperity Fund'?
- Irish Govt's 'Border Focal Point' and 'Special Compensation Fund'?



Engaging Border Communities & Stakeholders



- | Citizens' Dialogue
- | Youthful Voices
- | Stakeholder Engagement
- | Looking Beyond our Borders
- | Sustainable Solutions

- Need to maintain a hard-won peace
- Reconciliation is a work in progress
- Cohesion challenged by high-level political pressures
- Continuing engagements, joint-working, dialogue between Local Authorities (LA)
- Renewed commitments to LA cross-border cooperation



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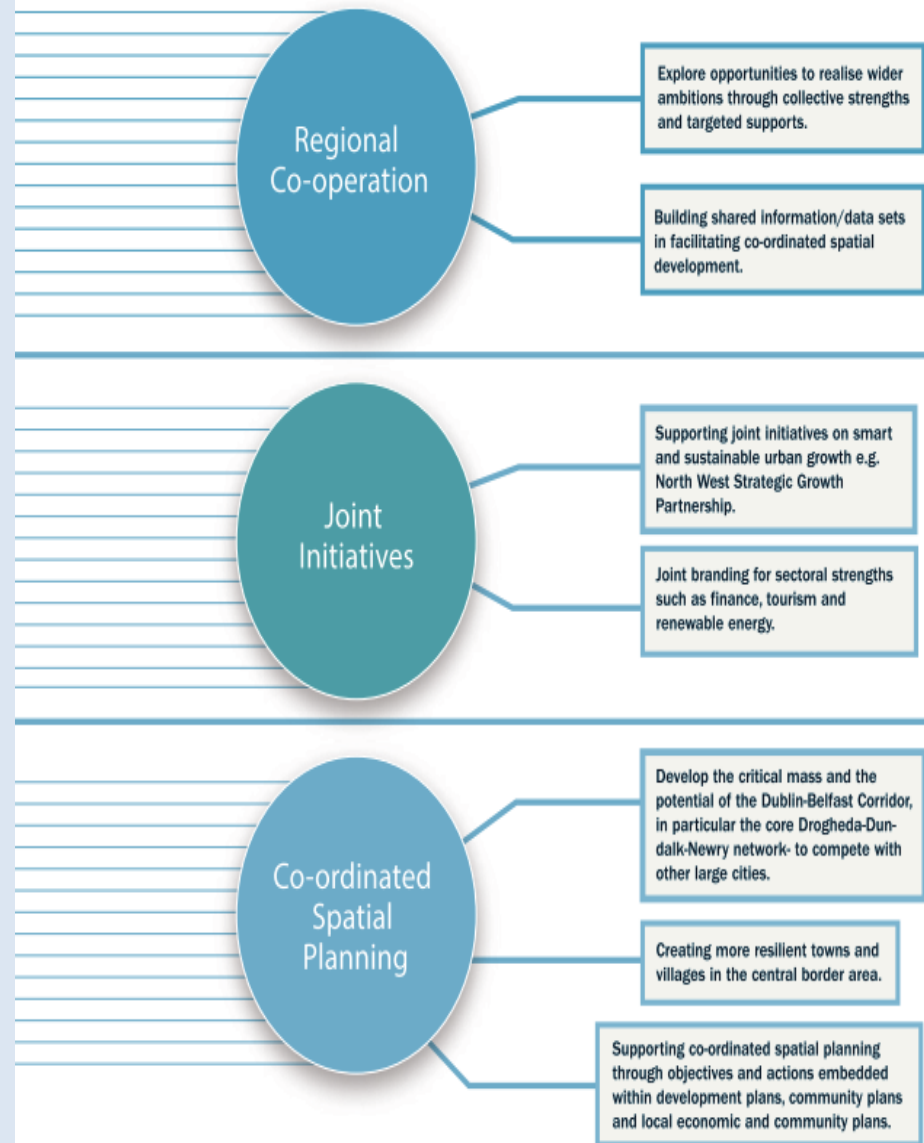
The Developing Discussion Within ICBAN

- Some issues best served border-wide
- Some issues best addressed sub-regionally
- Recognition that cross-border co-operation is more important than before
- *'The harder the border, the greater the need to cooperate'*

National Planning Framework 2040

- “The NPF supports further growth and investment in the county towns in the central border counties and strengthening accessibility from and to the central border area”
- “Building up the economic, infrastructural and developmental ties will be supported through local leadership and co-operation arrangements such as the co-ordination of statutory planning functions and corresponding infrastructural investment”
- Specific reference to Central Border Area
- Sets out three key areas of focus include:
 1. Regional co-operation arrangements
 2. Joint initiatives
 3. Co-ordinated spatial planning

Figure 8.2 | Areas for Cross-Border Local Co-ordination



Examples of Cross-Border Cooperation Between Local Authorities in CBR

1. 'Statement of Common Good'
2. UNESCO Global Geopark
3. Cross-Border Community Planning Linkages

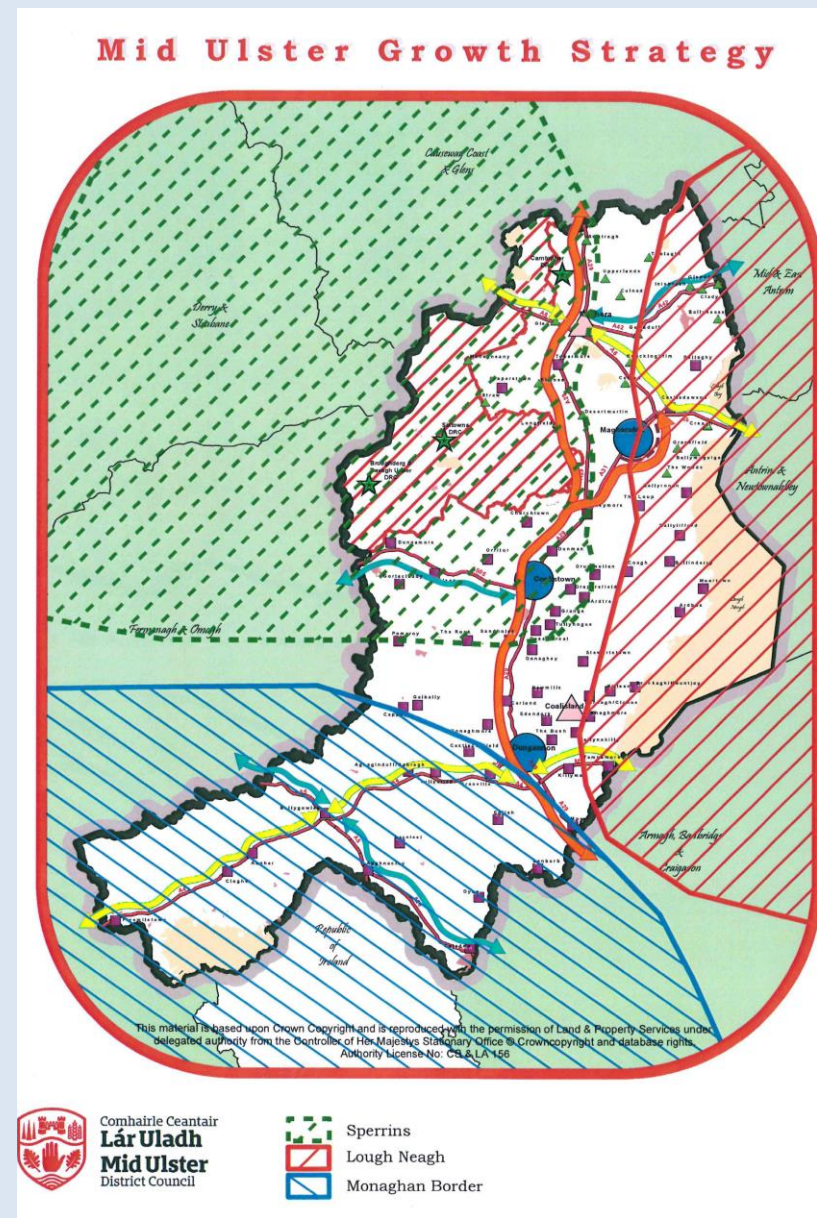
Three key areas for collaboration

Sperrin Mountains

Lough Neagh and Lough Beg

Monaghan Borders

1. Statement of Common Good:
Slides Courtesy of Mid Ulster District Council and Monaghan County Council, 30/11/2018





Common Issues

- Protection of landscapes through appropriate environmental designations;
- Protection of River Corridors from inappropriate development and safeguarding the Ulster Canal;
- Management of Minerals Development and the use of Areas of Constraint on Mineral Development;
- Improvement of road linkages and infrastructure;
- Improve energy infrastructure and provision;
- Improve broadband provision;
- Protection of water quality;
- Protection of sites of environmental/heritage/biodiversity importance.

Cross Border Forum Statement of Common Ground

1. Provide appropriate policies to facilitate **improvements to the transport infrastructure** to enable faster and safer travel across the central border region;
2. Encourage the delivery of enhanced **cross border connectivity** to include cycling and walking routes, as well as blueways and greenways.
3. Promote the **growth of the region's main towns** as the key hubs for housing, services and employment, complemented by a network of small towns and villages;
4. Provide appropriate policies **to resist major retail development outside of the towns**;
5. Support the delivery of a stable power network through a '**North-South Interconnector**' scheme and also the accompanying distribution and transmission networks to enhance the security of electricity supply in the region;
6. Support the delivery of stable and secure digital communications infrastructure, including fibre optic technology, to **improve broad band provision** across the region;
7. Provide appropriate policies to encourage **renewable energy schemes**, in order to support a reduced carbon footprint for the central border region;
8. Provide appropriate policies and/or designations to **protect our most sensitive landscapes** from inappropriate development;
9. Provide appropriate policies to **protect our most sensitive areas from mineral development**;
10. Provide appropriate policies to afford **protection to our existing peat resources** from commercial extraction.



Cross Border Forum - Statement of Common Ground Map



- Special Protection Area
- Special Area of Conservation
- North/South Border
- Ulsterway
- Monaghan Way
- Main Road Network
- Ulster Canal
- Proposed North/South Interconnector
- River Blackwater
- Cross Border Linkages
- Project Kelvin
- Gas to the West
- Great Northern Railway



Author: John Paul Smith Date: 21 November 2018
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Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark



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an Chabháin
Cavan
County Council



GEOPARK AREA – 2,333KM2



Northern
Ireland (UK)

Republic of Ireland



**Marble Arch Caves
Global Geopark**



**Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council**
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí



Cavan
Comhairle Contae
an Chabháin
Cavan
County Council



Cross – Border Collaboration



Joint Operational Committee

Councillors from both local authorities
Directors of Service
Geopark Manager

Oversight of Geopark

Geopark Management Team

Geopark staff
Area Engineer

Cavan & Fermanagh Tourism Officers
GSNI

Heritage Officers





Marble Arch Caves
Global Geopark



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an Chabháin
Cavan
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Marble Arch Caves
Global Geopark



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organisation



Marble Arch Caves
UNESCO
Global Geopark

CUILCAGH BOARDWALK





Marble Arch Caves
Global Geopark



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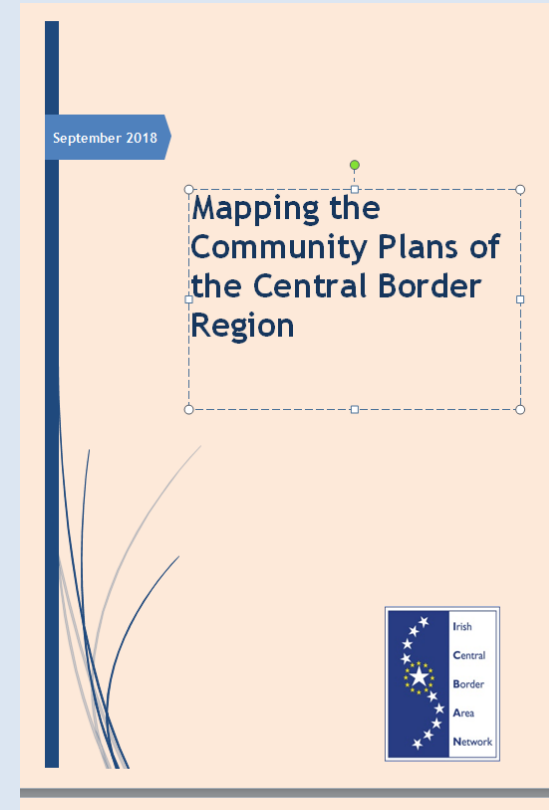
CAVAN BURREN PARK



3. Cross-Border Community Planning

Linkages

- ‘Community Plans’ common to all 8 member Councils
- Mapping initiative by ICBAN, summer 2018
- Common opportunities in economic, social and environmental
- A Forum being established
- How can Border region residents access services in the other jurisdiction in future?



Common Characteristics

- Bottom-Up, local initiatives
- Mix of Economic, Social and Environmental Well-Being
- None are funding led
- Advancing despite complexities of cross-border working
- In absence of a common strategic, over-arching context

A Place for Communities and Businesses

- This largely rural border region is a place of opportunity
- It can be central to harnessing the major global opportunities and meeting the challenges of the C21st.
- Role of place-making as a core goal for the region....capitalising on existing local strengths
- Local government as key drivers of this
- Collaboration is happening to ensure those opportunities are maximised...but where is the coherence/ overview?
- As the transition of this region continues, is there a more strategic role for the cross-border partnerships?

Slide courtesy of ICLRD, 30/11/2018



Where Next? What Direction?

- Need to navigate a rapidly changing environment
 - Central Border Area under intense pressure
 - Pre-existing infrastructure deficits
 - Lack of attention from the NPF
 - Brexit: challenging confidence, cohesion, interventions
 - LA leadership in tackling the challenges
 - Political and executive dialogues are happening
 - But cooperation is difficult:- Incentives needed
-
- Other Regions and cross-border areas are benefiting from Govt. leadership initiatives and strategies
 - For how much longer will Central Border communities be without such?



A Final Word to a Youthful Voice

“It’s all well and good putting in these *‘It’ll sort us out for a few years’* ideas...but there’s no point in doing that if it’s not going to last and it’s going to have to be changed again.”

*(‘Brexit at the Border’ Study, 2018:
Monaghan Youth Focus Group 1, Ref: 42.16)*



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Working with Our Neighbours:

**Cross-Border Cooperation in national,
regional and local development**

Lisa O’Kane, Programmes Manager- NILGA

the voice of local government

11 councils



On the radar

- Brexit
- Shifts in governance and policy delivery terms
- City and Growth Deals - new powers, incentives & “localism”
- Devolution within Northern Ireland
- Local Government Elections of May 2019

What are councils doing?

- **Understanding community and business needs**
- **Maintaining status quo, looking for opportunities**
- **Planning for future growth**
- **Assessing supply chains**
- **Safeguarding core services**
- **Continuity planning**
- **Collaborating, sharing knowledge and being good neighbours**

The NILGA Response

- Continuing to work with MLAs via **Central – Local Government Political Partnership Forum**
- **UK Collaboration** WLGA, COSLA, LGA – Brexit preparedness, Shared Prosperity Fund
- Collaboration with **Irish Regional Assemblies**
- Maintaining EU links – EWRC, iEER / EER, CoR
- Working groups covering Brexit, Migration Policy, Skills & Demographic change, Environment

Opportunities for cross-border collaboration

- Continuing **council to council projects** & joint funding through Peace Plus, Shared Prosperity fund and individual council funding
- **Collaboration with Regional Assemblies** on spatial planning, smart specialisation, regional economic development infrastructure, community cohesion, entrepreneurial activities, training & leadership development
- **City & Growth Deals** – joined up thinking?
- **Irish Sea programme** funded by EU, UK & ROI?

Working with our Neighbours

Cross-Border Cooperation in national,
regional and local development

CCBS Seminar

Leinster House

12.12.18

Aidan Campbell Policy Officer Rural Community Network

Rural Community Network

- Founded in 1991
- 250 member groups across Northern Ireland
- Board democratically elected from our member base
- Our work is focused on two broad aims:
 1. To articulate the voice of rural communities on issues of poverty, equality and community development.
 2. To promote excellence in community development practice

Cross border co-operation and local development

- What's been done to date by community/voluntary organisations?
- Focus on RCN's Rural Enabler Project
- Examples and learning
- Benefits & challenges of cross border work
- Promoting cross border co-operation post Brexit

Types of work to date

- Very local work between groups both sides of the Border
- Work North and South but more on a “twinning” basis – important for breaking down barriers.
- Projects providing services primarily on one side of the Border but people from the other side facilitated to access
- Regional projects e.g. RCN & IRL Rural Enabler project,
- LEADER/LAG Co-operation projects – community partners on LAGs

Local Cross Border working

- Blackwater Regional Partnership - IFI funded
- 7 villages Emyvale, Glaslough, Tynan, Killylea, Aughnacloy, Caledon and Middletown
- Partnership between Dungannon South Tyrone, Armagh & Monaghan county Councils
- Focussed on education and training and heritage.
- Communities worked together and built relationships.
- Blackwater learning centre based in Truagh provides training, childcare & events for people both sides of the Border.

Regional cross border working & Community Sector – benefits

Regional level Rural Enabler Project – Peace III funded

The benefits were

- Built relationships
- Better overview of how the conflict impacted across NI & Border counties
- Developed new ways of working
- Deeper understanding of the dynamics of border communities
- Deeper understanding of government and politics in the South
- Good to hear how other see us - feedback

Challenges?

- Practical challenges of employing/managing staff in 2 jurisdictions
- ICT – lack of internet connectivity very frustrating
- Very different experience of & attitude towards the Troubles
- Legacy of the Troubles/sectarianism permeates Northern society
- Issues were much more hidden in rural communities in the border counties – especially for minority communities.
- Understanding policy context of 2 jurisdictions on a range of issues

On reflection....

- Have we taken our eye off the ball?
- Less cross border work between NGOs in the past 5 or 6 years? With honourable exceptions
- Peace 4 is located primarily with Councils
- Did we become complacent and assume the Border was fading away?
- Have we ignored other aspects of cross border development and focussed on peace building?

Post Brexit promoting cross border work

- Governments must implement commitments in Withdrawal Agreement to future PEACE & INTERREG programmes.
- But what about LEADER and any future rural development programme
- No return to the borders of the past
- Essence of community development is learning
- UK is leaving the EU NOT Europe

Thanks for Listening

For further Information:

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