

Fostering Cooperation for Local and Regional Development through Cross-Border Spatial Planning

International Centre for Local and Regional Development
Report of Third Annual Conference

17 January 2008, Armagh City Hotel



This report summarises the key messages and presentations from the January 2008 conference. The presentations are available on the ICLRD website, www.iclrd.org.



From left to right: Mr. Liam Nellis, Chief Executive InterTradeIreland; Mr. Batt O’Keeffe T.D., Minister for Housing, Urban Renewal and Developing Areas, Dublin; Mr. Conor Murphy M.P., M.L.A., Minister for Regional Development, Belfast; Mr. Feargal McCormack, Chairman of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development.

“Our government and indeed our counterparts in the North remain steadfast in our belief and our commitment to realising the full extent of the work that has already been undertaken by the ICLRD, by InterTradeIreland and, of course, by all of the key players here in the North and South”.

Mr. Batt O’Keeffe T.D., Minister for Housing, Urban Renewal and Developing Areas, Dublin

“It is just over a year since Dick Roche was joined by a senior official from my Department to launch the ICLRD Collaborative Spatial Planning Research Report, which has provided the basis for work on cross border spatial planning in Ireland. A great deal has happened since then”.

Mr. Conor Murphy M.P., M.L.A., Minister for Regional Development, Belfast

“Borders are the bane of regional planners”.

Prof. Francois Vigier, President, Institute for International Urban Development

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

It is an exciting time for cross-border cooperation on the island of Ireland. The publication of the *Comprehensive Study on the All-Island Economy* in late 2006 and the *National Development Plan 2007-2013* (NDP) in January 2007, together with the return of devolved government to Northern Ireland in May 2007 all create opportunities for greater and more effective cross-border cooperation and joined-up planning and delivery.

Attended by 145 delegates representing government departments, regional development agencies, local planning authorities, private consultants, academics, cross-border networks, border communities and locally elected officials, this 1-day event – the third annual ICLRD conference – reinforced the importance of local and regional development to the economic, social, cultural and environmental growth of the Irish Border Region. There is growing support for, and recognition of the mutual benefits of, all-island collaboration; so much so, that both Governments are now earmarking Exchequer monies for cross-border and all-island cooperation.

A Changing Environment

Both governments are heading into a very active period in terms of restructuring and policy review. Between 2008 and 2011, there will be a general review of the implementation of both the *Regional Development Strategy* (RDS) for Northern Ireland and *National Spatial Strategy* (NSS) in Ireland: this will include a statutory review of the RDS. From this work, a monitoring framework for both strategies – and possibly an all-island monitoring framework – will have been developed and put in place. This will involve the identification of priority spatial indicators and the establishment of a detailed data collection system.

Within this timeframe, the non-statutory collaborative framework, which is being devised by both governments, will have been published and from this, tangible projects will be identified and implemented. The statutory review of the

Regional Planning Guidelines in the South will have been completed through a collaborative process at local, regional and central government levels. This RPG review, scheduled to take place in 2010, will be timed to take account of the “refreshed” *National Spatial Strategy* (NSS) so that the spatial, social and economic development frameworks continue to complement each other. Each of these reviews will in turn have implications for the growth and development of the already identified Gateways, Hubs and Strategic Employment Locations in both jurisdictions; as well as for the smaller towns and villages. It is essential, therefore, that both governments work closely with each other in carrying out these reviews as the final output can result in the harmonisation of policy; and this in turn will then lead to better cross-jurisdictional planning.

The Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland is now proposing 11 ‘super-councils’ from 2011 onwards. The Northern Ireland Executive will propose functions to be devolved to the ‘new’ local government institutions. This, it is argued, will have a positive impact on cross-border collaboration and cooperation as councils on both sides of the Border will now perform similar functions and have similar responsibilities.

In 2011, both governments will roll-out a Census of Population. This will allow policy makers to carry out an informed comparative analysis of both jurisdictions for the first time since 2001/2002. This will ensure that any future collaborative programmes – whether government- or community-driven – are evidence-informed.



Background to the Conference

The ICLRD, together with *InterTradeIreland*, were delighted to jointly host the conference, *Fostering Co-operation for Local and Regional Development through Cross-Border Spatial Planning* on 17 January 2008 in the Armagh City Hotel, Armagh.

This third annual conference addressed the current opportunities for cross-border collaboration and highlighted both the ICLRD and 'on-the-ground' activities that continue to contribute to the better understanding of the complex all-island and cross-border dynamics of change in cities, towns and rural areas.

A number of key issues were addressed during this 1-day event, and these included:

- The development of the collaborative framework to promote joined-up spatial planning on the island of Ireland;
- Financing collaboration – the role of the *Irish National Development Plan (2007-2013)* and the Northern Ireland Executive's *Investment Strategy (2008-2018)*;
- Implementing cross-border sub-regional strategies;
- Enhancing connectivity in small cross-border towns;
- The role of housing in building sustainable communities; and
- Supporting evidenced-based spatial planning.

The ICLRD continues to support the development of an all-island collaborative framework for spatial planning through its action research programmes, technical workshops and forums, which together address three spatial scales: EU and all-island, sub-regional and local. This support will continue in 2008 through its forthcoming research activities and roll-out of training programmes.

ICLRD and InterTradeIreland - Who we are

The International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) is a North-South-U.S. partnership which was established in 2006 to explore and expand the contribution that spatial 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 ICLRD has developed out of a unique collaboration between academics and spatial planning specialists from the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at National University of Ireland Maynooth, the School of the Built Environment at University of Ulster, Athlone Institute of Technology, the Centre for Cross-Border Studies in Armagh, and the Institute for International Urban Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

InterTradeIreland, the Trade and Business Development Body, is one of the six North-South bodies established under the 1998 Belfast Agreement. By building effective business relationships, it helps strengthen individual businesses and promotes the value of growth sectors to make the Island of Ireland more competitive in a global economy. Its key strategic objective is to enhance the global competitiveness of the all-island economy to the mutual benefit of both jurisdictions. This is to be achieved through the creation of knowledge-intensive all-island trade and business development programmes.



PART II: ALL-ISLAND COLLABORATION



Chaired by **Feargal McCormack**, Chairman of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development, Session 1 of the conference focused on the issue of collaboration, the

new ‘buzz-word’ of both governments – North and South. But it is much more than a ‘buzz-word’; it is a reality. Since 2006, both governments have been working together on the development of a non-statutory collaborative framework – the focus and timing of which was broadly outlined by Batt O’Keeffe T.D., Minister for Housing, Urban Renewal and Developing Areas (Ireland) and Conor Murphy M.P., M.L.A., Minister for Regional Development (Northern Ireland) when they officially opened the conference.

The Island of Ireland – A Changing Landscape

In their respective speeches, both **Minister O’Keeffe** and **Minister Murphy** noted that, despite the relative slow-downs that have taken place in the global and Irish economies, the island of Ireland continues to experience change. This in turn brings with it growth challenges. With the continued growth of the island’s population, towns and cities are burgeoning - and it is thought that a further 1.5 million people will live on the island by 2030. This brings with it a consequential demand for homes, jobs, schools, medical services and good quality transport infrastructure.



“We are going to need 60,000 residential units on an annual basis over the next nine years. That’s why there is a major commitment to social and affordable housing”

While employment rates on the island exceed the EU average, traditional employment sectors – agriculture and manufacturing – are declining; the end result being that a number of settlements,

particularly in rural areas, are facing further pressures and are in need of continued support. The increasing demand for, and numbers using, the island’s transport infrastructure – roads, ports, airports – is increasing year-on-year, highlighting that the modern way of life is transport dependent. In addition, Minister Murphy noted the number of common environmental challenges, not least climate change that the island of Ireland is facing in both the short-term and long-term future.

Both governments are clear that the solutions to the many common challenges facing the island of Ireland requires a shared spatial vision, positive attitudes, long-term planning and co-ordinated actions at cross-jurisdictional and interdepartmental levels. Spatial planning is, therefore, seen as crucial in ensuring coordinated and balanced development across the island.



The Collaborative Framework

The 2006 ICLRD report commissioned by InterTradeIreland, *Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland: Development of a Framework for Collaborative Action*, recommended that both governments implement a new framework for collaboration on spatial planning on the island of Ireland. Promoting economic competitiveness, sustainable development, improving services and supporting the mobility of a growing population on the island can all be greatly enhanced through joined-up regional and local spatial planning initiatives, targeted investments and a programme of spatial planning research. In recognition of this, both governments have been developing a non-statutory collaborative framework for the island of Ireland due to be published in 2008. In their opening addresses, both Batt O’Keeffe T.D., Minister for Housing, Urban Renewal and

Developing Areas and Conor Murphy M.P., M.L.A., Minister for Regional development re-emphasised their commitment to, and the importance of cross-border cooperation.

The consequences of the Border are becoming better understood – isolation, marginalisation, back-to-back development, lack of strategic investment, decline and removal of services, etc. And so too are the benefits of cooperation – better infrastructure, higher quality service provision, etc.

Both governments noted that in preparing the collaborative framework, they have jointly entered new territory and, as one would expect, this has required a time commitment in terms of preparatory work. While both jurisdictions face similar issues, they have different ways of dealing with them i.e. different central and local government institutions and structures, along with different statutory and budgetary processes.

The collaborative framework will cover such areas as service provision, roads infrastructure, shared municipal services and environmental challenges. In working together in partnership on its development, both governments highlight that they have come to better understand the changing dynamics of the island and, as a result, have undertaken to review their existing lines of cooperation and communication.

“What we are proposing is absolutely not rocket science. Joined-up thinking on roads, on shared municipal services, on environmental challenges, on infrastructure and complementary areas, make absolute sense for all of us”

Minister Batt O’Keeffe

The non-statutory collaborative framework can facilitate greater cooperation in spatial planning, investment strategies and regional and local development at the three spatial scales recommended by the 2006 ICLRD/ITI Report: the Island of Ireland for strategic investments and programmes that improve competitiveness and the quality of life in both jurisdictions; regional level cooperation including cross-border cooperation and engagement; and local development. Potential areas for future collaboration that are under consideration between both governments include:

- Regional and local spatial development strategies; for example, the ongoing work with the North West Gateway Initiative and the Newry and Dundalk "Twin City" strategy as well as proposed collaboration in the central border area;
- The identification of key spatial development priorities and joined-up analysis of key trends and drivers of development by monitoring spatial indicators and promoting joined-up research;
- Identifying areas for enhanced strategic cooperation as part of the ongoing implementation review and assessment processes for both spatial strategies, and taking account of the opportunities presented by the forthcoming review of the RDS;
- Continuing to identify joint investment opportunities through the respective investment strategies and programmes; and
- Identifying specific areas such as service delivery and environmental protection that would benefit for the economies of scale as demonstrated in other EU cross-border collaborations.

Starting in 2008, both the *Regional Development Strategy* (RDS) and the *National Spatial Strategy* (NSS) will undergo a mid-term assessment of successes, challenges and future actions and priorities to implement them. Given that this evaluation coincides with the publication of the non-statutory collaborative framework, there are new opportunities to further ‘knit’ and align these documents together; thus leading to increased prospects for collaboration on the creation of sustainable communities and in meeting the persistent and emerging challenges facing the growth and development of the island as a whole.

“Our over-arching aim is to focus and harness economic development, regeneration and prosperity within a just, peaceful and stable society. We will do this by addressing head-on decades of underinvestment, regional imbalance and inequality so everyone can enjoy a better quality of life - now and in the future”.

Minister Conor Murphy

For the past forty years, decisions made in Dublin and Belfast had serious implications for the Border Region, spanning both jurisdictions. A key issue in moving forward – and which the collaborative framework tries to address – is: how can the planning process within each jurisdiction be aligned so that the Border is no longer characterised by back-to-back policy development? Both governments are convinced that this key question will be answered but to do so will require on-going dialogue – not only at government level but among community activists on the ground.

To facilitate community engagement in the final make-up of the collaborative framework, it is envisaged that a consultation process will be entered into upon the publication of the draft framework. As part of this process, which it is hoped will take place in Autumn 2008, local stakeholders will be asked for their views and opinions on the framework's content.

Collaboration and Spatial Data

The need for evidence-informed spatial planning and decision-making cannot be under-estimated as both jurisdictions move forward together. Both governments are determined that all planning in the future will be based on relevant data that is up-to-date, concise, compatible and comparable. Both Minister O'Keeffe and Minister Murphy congratulated the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO), ICLRD and its associated partners on the publication of the *All-Island Atlas of Ireland: Mapping Social and Economic Change*. Regarded as a benchmark for future analysis of demographic data; the all-island maps, cartograms, and detailed analysis, makes the case for alignment of thinking and data across both jurisdictions.

Financing Collaboration

The issue of financing cross-border collaboration, together with emerging areas of cooperation, was discussed by **David Gavaghan**, Chief Executive of the Strategic Investment Board (Northern Ireland) and **Dermot Nolan**, Principal Officer, Department of Finance (Republic of Ireland).

The island of Ireland is increasingly becoming connected. In physical terms, this largely translates as transport and energy connectivity, for example:

- There now exists an all-island electricity market;
- The Irish Government has committed €10.8 million to the development of the City of Derry Airport; and
- Work is drawing to a close on the joint investment in the A1, the motorway linking Dundalk with Newry.



“The key areas for all-island cooperation are:

- Infrastructure provision;
- Spatial planning
- Trade, tourism and investment
- Human capital
- Enterprise promotion
- Provision of public services (health, education)
- Environment
- Agriculture and fisheries
- Culture, heritage and sport
- Social inclusion”.

Strategic initiatives in cross-border cooperation are closely linked to the ability to generate both public and private financing. In the South, Dermot Nolan reported that the new *National Development Plan* (NDP) covering the period 2007 to 2013 has identified five priority investment areas:

- Economic Infrastructure (€54.7bn);
- Social Inclusion (€49.6bn);
- Social Infrastructure (€33.6bn);
- Human Resources (€25.8bn); and
- Enterprise, Science & Innovation (€20bn).

In addition, the NDP, for the first time, acknowledges the need to take account of the North-South dimension to policies and programmes contained within the Plan itself.

Promoting all-island cooperation is a key objective of the Plan and each Government Department has been charged with working towards all-island solutions to common all-island challenges. Recognising there has been a deficit in terms of ‘joined-up thinking’ and all-island coordination, the NDP has put the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) centre stage in terms of investment decision-making.

In support of collaboration, and alleviating the need for ‘fire-brigade action’ into the future, both NSS and NDP are now linked with targeted programmes such as the Gateway Innovation Fund.

The forthcoming *Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland*, as outlined by David Gavaghan, emphasises three cross-cutting themes that all have clear spatial dimensions:

- The economy;
- Society; and
- The environment.

As with the NDP, the investment plan for Northern Ireland now includes the financing of cross-border programmes as part of its strategic objectives.



“As noted by Al Gore, in the area of renewable energy the Island of Ireland can lead the way. This too applies to the area of sustainable waste management”

That there is funding available to support cross-border programmes is encouraging, particularly given the current global ‘credit-crunch’. The financial commitments by both Governments are geared towards specific projects which will

benefit the island of Ireland as a whole. For example, projects earmarked for co-financing on a North/South basis include:

- The Ulster Canal;
- Roads to the Northwest (e.g. N2-A5 upgrade);
- Joint research on future and on-going areas of cooperation e.g. energy grids, health, education; and
- Tourism development.

This public investment has the added benefit of generating confidence in the area and therefore, leveraging further funds to support the development of the region. But as noted by both David Gavaghan and Dermot Nolan, there must be a shift away from silos in favour of more ‘joined-up’, cross-border thinking. The many issues facing the island do not recognise borders, and as noted in the *Comprehensive Study of the All-Island Economy*, nor should the vision for growth be impaired by the existence of the Border.

“Promoting all-island co-operation is a very important dimension of the NDP. The Government attaches great political importance to this horizontal objective”.

An Tániste, Brian Cowen T.D.
Speech to the NDP Central Monitoring Committee
21 November 2007

As noted by the first session speakers, with the commitment now in place towards cross-border cooperation at government level, the next step is to adopt a clear all-island proposition that pools resources. We must accept and acknowledge that the economy on the island is experiencing a down-turn. Connectedness is now a reality for the island of Ireland which can foster cooperation for continued growth and development.

It is only through creating critical mass, economies of scale and better value for money that we can become leaders in our chosen markets.

PART III: FOSTERING CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Chaired by **Prof. Francois Vigier**, President of the Institute for International Urban Development (Cambridge, Mass.), the purpose of Session II – *Fostering cross-border cooperation* – was to outline the research activities of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) during 2007.

Both all-island and cross-border in its focus, the ICLR D’s research programme reflects on the notion that the implementation of plans across a border are stymied by a patchwork of institutional and administrative structures, each with its own view, powers and responsibilities and vision. In response to this, most European countries, at the urging of the EU, have prepared large-scale spatial development strategies to enhance their economic competitiveness and achieve spatial development strategies that are efficient and more sensitive to environmental concerns. Within Ireland and Northern Ireland, this has resulted in the *National Spatial Strategy* (NSS) and the *Regional Development Strategy* (RDS) respectively.



However, since their publication in the late 1990s and early 2000s, their implementation at the local level still continues to pose challenges. Neighbouring areas still continue to see themselves in competition with each other, rather than sharing a regional strategic vision. Furthermore, where natural hinterlands are divided by European Borders, there has in many cases been little or no collaboration in the development of these national or regional strategies.

As noted by the *European Charter of Border and Cross-Border Regions*, “borders are scars of history” which have resulted in many border regions being unable to realise their full development potential. Cross-border cooperation is regarded as an effective means in reducing the disadvantages of being peripheral and in a cycle of decline. There are many examples of successful cross-border collaborations in existence throughout Europe.

Cooperation at local government level can be either mandated or promoted on a voluntary basis – with voluntary cooperation being considered more popular, widely acceptable and less politically difficult.

Cross-border collaboration continues to face many challenges – legal, institutional, economic, and social. The work of ICLR D not only addresses these many challenges but also considers how these may be overcome and how the potentiality of the Border region can be tapped into in a sustainable and balanced way.

Newry-Dundalk: Implementing a Sub-Regional Strategy

For the past eight months, the ICLR D has been working with the ‘twin cities’ of Newry and Dundalk on the implementation of a sub-regional strategy and the progression of a number of key projects identified as central to the growth and development of this cross-border ‘gateway’. On behalf of a wider research team, Prof. Jim Berry, University of Ulster and Dr. Chris Van Egeraart, NUI Maynooth presented progress to date.





Prof. Jim Berry outlined that the purpose of developing and operationalising a non-statutory sub-regional collaborative framework for the ‘twin cities’ of Newry and

Dundalk was to adopt a practical orientated approach to the spatial development of both towns. This framework would, in the medium- to long-term, lead to:

- Delivering economic competitiveness;
- Facilitating infrastructure connectivity;
- Attracting investment and services; and
- Promoting sustainable technologies and regional development.

The research is focusing on identifying the practical and mutual benefits of cross-border cooperation in strategic cross-border projects, namely:

1. Creating ‘Sustainable Energy Communities’ in Newry and Dundalk;
2. Exploring an Integrated Environmental Management Plan and the potential of a European GeoPark;
3. Promoting a Newry-Dundalk International Services Zone;
4. Supporting work force development through stronger links between the third-level colleges in both towns; and
5. Enhancing connectivity and accessibility through infrastructure development.



As outlined by **Declan Mealey**, Head of Dundalk 2020, Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) is Ireland’s national energy agency and has been in existence for 5 years. Its key objective is the promotion and facilitation of energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy. Dundalk 2020 is one of SEI’s flagship projects. An initiative funded under the EU Concerto programme, the Project aims to develop an exemplar sustainable energy community within Dundalk.

Under the auspices of the ICLRD research into the development of the Newry-Dundalk ‘twin-city’, the objective is to extend Dundalk 2020 to identified zones in Newry – thus making Dundalk

and Newry island exemplars in the development of sustainable energy communities. The roll-out of this cross-border initiative is being supported by Sustainable Energy Ireland and the Dundalk Institute of Technology.



Working with the public and private sectors, work is ongoing in identifying potential partners and suitable sites in Newry to compliment the work that is already underway in Dundalk. The cross-border Austrian town of Gussing is leading the way in terms of building sustainable communities – 50 new companies have been attracted to the area, over 1000 new jobs have been created and it is now 45% self-sufficient in terms of its energy needs.



The area encompassing the Mourne, Cooley, Slieve Gullion and Carlingford Lough are, according to **Martin Carey**, Chief Executive of Mourne Heritage Trust, of

outstanding geological and historical significance on the island of Ireland. With its shared heritage, this area is now being considered for GeoPark status i.e. a region with a geological heritage of European significance, a sustainable development strategy and a strong management structure to facilitate further development. There are currently two GeoParks on the island of Ireland: Marble Arch Caves in Co. Fermanagh and the Copper Coast in Co. Waterford. Through GeoPark status, these areas have become part of a European GeoParks Network.

The area between Newry and Dundalk is considered extremely attractive for recreation and short-breaks; and has the potential to be a shared environmental and educational resource for the major urban conurbations. A GeoPark, as a collaborative tourism project, is being discussed by the respective authorities. While non-statutory in nature, it allows the area to brand itself on a common identity – and compliment the existing ‘designations’ in the area e.g. areas of outstanding natural beauty. It can also bring economic benefits to existing land owners and jobs to the region for those working in the tourism sector. Introducing the concept will require a education and outreach process to clearly articulate the benefits to key stakeholders on both sides of the border.



The third project involves the marketing of Newry/Dundalk as a centre for high-value internationally tradable service operations. As pointed out by **Dr. Chris Van Egeraat**, this sub-region’s location on the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor makes this a prime location and a cost competitive choice for international service organisations. Previous studies have made the case for Newry/Dundalk as HQ centres and a base for financial services (SMM Consulting 2007; O’Driscoll, 2005). The area’s location offers many advantages to companies looking for a base in Ireland:

- Good transport links to Dublin and Belfast;
- Easy access to international airports;
- Cheaper office rents;
- Access to well-developed ICT infrastructure;
- Potential connection to a large and highly skilled labour pool;
- Close proximity of third-level education and research institutes; and
- Areas’ designation as a Gateway with funds available in support of its development.

Clearly linked to this initiative is concurrent regeneration strategies in both Newry and Dundalk that could be jointly marketed to make themselves more attractive to high-value inward investment. A cross-border business zone would need to be identified and developed which would attract both foreign and indigenous investment in the high value added international financial services sector.

Research: Key Messages

Building upon complementarities:

- Innovation
- Inclusiveness
- Sustainability
- Attractiveness
- Uniqueness
- Skills



Delivering real and effective regional collaboration



ICLRD INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT Promoting best practices in spatial planning and economic development.

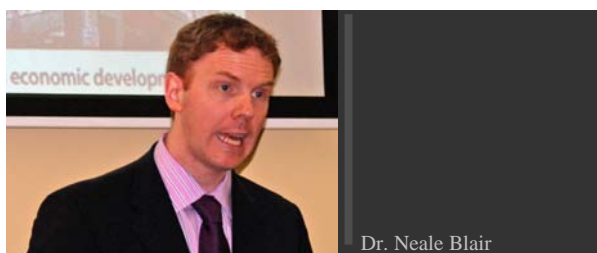
Presentation by Dr. Chris Van Egeraat

Energising the Newry and Dundalk regional cooperation will require a strong local awareness of the areas’ regional identity, an appreciation of the areas’ shared strengths, a joint commitment to collaborative projects, and an integrated approach to the planning and development of the area.

Micro-Regions: Reconnecting Cross-Border Towns and Villages

In parallel with the Newry-Dundalk Sub-Region programme of research, the ICLRDR has also been carrying out investigations into the level of connectivity and ‘potentiality’ that exists between small cross-border towns and villages which have (a) varying functions within their settlement hierarchies and (b) been affected to differing degrees by the presence of the ‘border’. Representing a cross-campus, cross-disciplinary team, the findings to date of this research programme were presented by Dr. Neale Blair, University of Ulster and Caroline Creamer, NUI Maynooth.

Dr. Neale Blair described how EU, Irish, and British policy is pointing towards the need for further research into local economic development and complementary functional areas with an emphasis on sustaining rural communities by harnessing their potentiality. In the Irish Border region, there is both a border separating the two jurisdictions, and also the challenge of securing positive growth in frontier villages and towns affected by decades of depressed economic conditions.



Dr. Neale Blair

“The landscape of Europe is shaped and strongly influenced by borders and their associated challenges and opportunities. Indeed, cross-border cooperation is not a new activity and in Europe intra-jurisdictional initiatives have been ongoing for sometime, both formally and informally”.

Through focusing on five case study areas comprising a series of small, connected towns and villages spanning the Irish Border, this ICLRD research activity is considering what is the current level of connectivity (leading to mutual benefits) and the future ‘potentiality’ between and within the selected case study areas? and can this be enhanced through collaborative spatial planning?



Caroline Creamer, described how the small towns in each of the case study areas were once vibrant, growing settlements with natural cross-border hinterlands. Their growth,

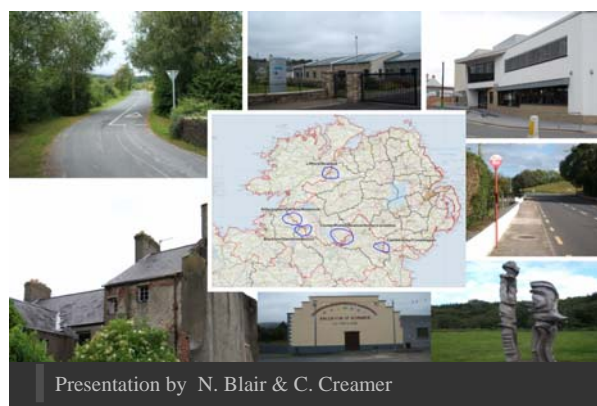
however, was stymied with the establishment of the Border in the 1920s and furthermore during the Troubles – and also as a result of changing internal economic circumstances, for example the closure of the railway lines.

Since the 1980s, the number of cross-border projects, networks, and organisations has mushroomed – largely encouraged by the monies made available to address this economic stagnation and social disconnect resulting from the ‘Border effect’ and the Troubles. And these have varied both in terms of their intensity and level of stakeholder participation.

However, cross-border cooperation now finds itself at a crossroads where serious questions must be asked about its scope and future sustainability. Fundamental questions need to be asked about the focus and duration of funding programmes; private sector involvement; the governance disconnect; and the issue-based nature of projects and partnerships.

Phase I of this ICLRD study focused on examining the level of connectivity between the selected cross-border connected towns and villages. Phase II of the project, which is currently ongoing, is focused on ‘making communities border-effective’.

The research findings conclude that much of the cross-border collaboration to date has been community-led – but that this is gradually beginning to change with other stakeholders increasingly becoming involved including local government, and the private sector.



Socially, the structure of cross-border partnerships to date has been ‘like-with-like’ i.e. councils with councils, community groups with community groups etc. The emphasis now must turn towards integrated partnerships which involve the councils and communities working together – and where possible the business sector. In the cross-border context, each of these groups is weak in isolation but together, with clear objectives, they have the potential to become a powerful force. *Economically*, the case study areas accept that they will never be major industrial hubs – they do not have the necessary population base, service or skills base, or infrastructure requirements. The only possible exception to this is the Lifford-Strabane area, which many regard as a ‘gateway’ in its own right. With industry not being a growth option, a number of the areas see tourism development as the way forward.

Throughout the presentation, both Dr. Blair and Ms. Creamer reiterated that each of the case study areas were unique. Yet both demonstrated that there is a key ‘IDEA’ or four processes and activities that both define cross border collaboration, and are the key ‘drivers’ behind its implementation on the ground. They are:

I - Identifying mutual benefits for the participants involved;

D - Developing connectivity on the basis of socio-economic development;

E- Emphasising relationship building and understanding of each other; and

A - Adopting a common sense and strategic approach.



Within the case study area of Lifford-Strabane, one of the main local partnerships pushing a collaborative agenda has been the Strabane Lifford Development Commission (SLDC).

Donal MacLochlainn, Chair of the SLDC reported that this association of cross-border businessmen has now been in existence for 15 years; and was established with the overall objective of improving both towns and their surrounds through tourism, quality product development and physical renewal. At the suggestion of John Hume, local MP for Strabane, the Commission was established as a European Economic Interest Grouping so that it could avail of EU funds; but also so that each town could address its own priorities until such time as it was possible for them to undertake joint initiatives.

At the same time as the SLDC was established, the regeneration of the towns of Lifford and Strabane was adopted as a flagship project for the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) when it was established in the late 1980s. It is now widely acknowledged that the IFI took a risk in adopting Lifford-Strabane as a flagship, but that it has been a worthwhile gamble. Since its establishment, the SLDC has been able to engage in initiatives that Donegal County Council and Strabane District Council would never have been able to 'get off the ground'; it has, therefore, been key in the economic, environmental and social renewal of these Border towns. From 1993 to 2006, the SLDC generated funding of €25m for both 'hard' and 'soft' projects in the area. Examples of the types of initiatives the Commission has involved itself with include:

- a number of environmental improvement schemes in each town;

- the development of the Finn Valley Enterprise Park;
- the development of social housing (with Habinteg Housing Association);
- the restoration of part of the Strabane Canal;
- the Wider Horizons Programme which aimed to improve the employability of young people from disadvantaged areas between the ages of 16-28 years through training and work experience; and
- the Centre without Walls Programme, the objective of which was to re-engage women in the workforce through IT training and upskilling.



'Let the Dance Begin', located on the Lifford-Strabane Border

With its current funding running out, the Strabane Lifford Development Commission is considering its future. Given its current financial situation, its' staff is now working shorter weeks. Nevertheless, the commission remains active on the ground, and with characteristic enthusiasm, it continues to search for potential future sources of funding.



Elish Gray, Project manager of the KiltyCashel Project reported on how the cross-border communities of Kiltyclogher and Cashel, located on the Leitrim-Fermanagh Border, have

historically viewed themselves as one single entity. This unity was characterised by social, educational and economic interaction. However, during the Troubles, these communities were decimated. There was no longer freedom of movement between the two communities.

A sense of mistrust developed; and it is this mental barrier to cooperation that is taking the longest time to dismantle. The establishment of the KiltyCashel Project in 2001 by representatives from the Kiltyclogher Community Council and the Cashel Community Association has gone some way to addressing and removing these barriers. With an emphasis on new opportunities and moving forward, this community-led EU-funded project is cross-border and cross-community in nature.

A key focus of the KiltyCashel Project's work is to make this area a better place in which to live and work. This is mainly being achieved through the promotion of understanding, and the socio-economic revitalisation and cultural development of this cross-border area. Initiatives undertaken to date include:

- Increasing the employability of the people through the provision of training programmes such as ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence);
- Providing capacity-building training and rolling out courses on starting small businesses;
- Developing a playground and public parks for the cross-border community;
- Bringing together and supporting local clubs (such as Active Age); and
- Building bridges between the 'lost generation' - those who have missed out on not knowing each other because of the 'Troubles'.

The success of the Project has been attributed to its emphasis on complementarity; whereby each community provides, or takes responsibility for, a different range of services and activities. However, significant social and economic

challenges remain in this area, the response to which may be hampered by a new, more limited funding environment with less opportunities for community engagement.

Conclusion

The ICLRD research, highlighted in this session on 'Fostering Cooperation', demonstrates that current collaborative structures in the Border region involve local community leaders and volunteers for the most part; with some entrepreneurs emerging as protagonists and co-ordinators in the larger settlements. In those areas where there is a willingness to widen the stakeholder / partnership make-up, there has been increased inter-community and cross-community contacts and networking, which in turn has led to increased levels of social capital.

"When looking to the future in terms of cooperation and collaboration, it is not enough to look at the areas strengths and potentiality for future relationships. Consideration must be also given to the areas weaknesses and how these may impact on the setting-up of partnerships or the delivery of any future initiative".

Caroline Creamer, NUI Maynooth

In planning for the future, all cross-border collaboration must sustain and build upon the levels of social capital that have been fostered in this way. The research also highlights that the Border region still requires continued – and in some instances greater - institutional and financial support from central government. While the new funding programmes are emphasising increased investment in large-scale infrastructural projects as a means of promoting sustained economic competitiveness, it remains equally important to support the small-scale and area-based collaborative approaches.

PART IV: PANEL DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



Chaired by **Aidan Gough**, Strategy and Policy Director with InterTrade-Ireland, delegates were reminded of the long road that has been travelled by the island of Ireland since

the late 1980s – the various peace agreements and associated dividends; the establishment of a number of all-island bodies; the on- and off-devolution of Northern Ireland’s government; the phenomenal economic and demographic growth on the island, in particular in the South; the reframing or national and regional bodies to facilitate joint support of infrastructural developments; and more recently both governments developing the non-statutory collaborative framework around infrastructure and shared service provision. The added-value resulting from these various initiatives is only beginning to come to light – but already it is clear that cooperation equals mutual benefits.

The morning sessions of this conference focused on collaboration – in terms of focus and funding – and the challenges and opportunities that arise in fostering cooperation at various spatial scales. Prior to opening the floor to questions, the panel members were asked first to respond to the morning’s presentations.



Denis Rooney, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), noted that the Border Region has undergone significant changes since the mid-1980s. And while the IFI

has been funding projects in the Border area since 1986, it remains difficult to get viable, sustainable projects on the table for funding. Adopting a long-term strategic vision has been challenging for the community and voluntary sector who have largely been the drivers behind cross-border and cross-community cooperation and collaboration. In moving forward, the emphasis will increasingly be placed on *people* – a key objective of the funding programmes now being administered by IFI – and the range of stakeholders will have to be widened beyond the community sector. The private sector, for example, must begin to get

involved in supporting cross-border and/or cross-community initiatives – not only because of a social responsibility but because it is an economic imperative. To continue to grow and develop, the island must market itself as one entity.



David Walsh, Head of Spatial Policy in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Dublin) emphasised the importance of cooperation on a cross-

border basis and the need for stakeholders to engage with networks and regional planning and development agencies. Without this active engagement, the forthcoming collaborative framework will not reach its potential. He noted that there is already a lot of good work taking place on the ground – largely driven by the community sector – and this commitment and engagement is valued by government and must continue into the future. At the local level, communities will need to increasingly think strategically and engage with policy makers. To receive funding, future initiatives and proposals should be evidence-based, articulate achievable targets, demonstrate mutual benefits and create a platform for future action.



Mike Thompson, Director with the Department for Regional Development (Belfast) highlighted that we, on the island of Ireland, are on a journey of discovery. As he noted, we

have come a long way to date – demonstrated by the inspirational examples of on-the-ground action we have heard about as part of this morning’s proceedings - but we do have further to go. We have to continue to ask the questions: what is the vision for this island? how do we manage the challenges facing this island? how can we best influence local and regional policy? what is meant by regional balance? how do we achieve sustainable communities? It is hoped within Northern Ireland that the Review of Public Administration (RPA), when finalised, will provide some answers to these questions and afford us the opportunity to address these issues.

Questions & Answers

The Chair then opened the discussion to questions from the floor; making the point that ensuring stakeholders have their say is an essential part of any collaborative process.

Rural Peripherality



Cllr. **Sean McDermott**, Leitrim County Council and Chairman of Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) raised concerns regarding the development of the more

rural towns and villages in the Border area and the possibility of their losing out to the designated 'Gateways' and 'Hubs'. It was noted that there is a need to focus on the development of rural areas. In the village of Glenfarne, the population has halved in his lifetime. In Rossinver, no primary school children started in the local school in September 2007, and no children have been enrolled to start in September 2008. This is an emerging challenge for rural schools throughout the Border region – not only County Leitrim. It was also highlighted that the central border region is very scenic but in terms of tourism potential, its development is being hampered by poor infrastructure and accessibility.

In response, both Mike Thompson and David Walsh stated that both Governments are aware that they need to work harder for rural areas. It is easy to deal with the Gateways and Hubs – they get a lot of the headlines – and there are concerns that the rural areas are being left behind. It is, however, increasingly recognised that there is a rich vein, an 'untapped potential' in these rural areas; that the rural dimension is important in its own right – and the current political climate now facilitates the development of this potential. The peripherality of the Border region needs to become a thing of the past; and in terms of infrastructure, it is envisaged that the planned upgrade of the Derry-Dublin road will improve the overall accessibility of the area. Recognising that the central border area is most in need of government support – it has no particular focus to date in terms of how it should develop or promote itself – both Governments are planning to work more closely with the border network serving this

area, ICBAN, and the Border Regional Authority. The *National Development Plan*, a 7-year plan, will be monitored on an annual basis to ensure that the monies are not only going to the big towns; and that the needs of the more rural counties – Leitrim and Cavan for example – are addressed.

The Planning Disconnect

John Hanna, Chairman of Banbridge District



Council noted that while this conference is focusing on the Border corridor itself, there is a need to go that bit deeper into Northern Ireland and Ireland. There are a

number of significant projects under way, the important of which must not be lost sight of; for example the Newry-Portadown Bridge. Concerns were then raised regarding the planning disconnect in Northern Ireland, particularly the length of time it takes to get a decision on a planning application. The panel were also asked if it would be feasible in the short to medium-term to align the planning processes on a North-South basis?

Denis Rooney noted that the issue was compatibility i.e. matching proposals with place and space, and that this is not yet getting the attention it deserves. The delays are not acceptable and do need to be addressed in the near future.

In response Mike Thompson noted that the Minister for the Environment, Arlene Foster MLA is also concerned about the time delays and the disconnect between the planning process and the people it serves. As such, the system is to be reviewed to get it 'fit for purpose' and more responsive to peoples needs. Regarding the notion of planning alignment on a North-South basis, both David Walsh and Mike Thompson stated that what this actually means in reality needs to be further debated and discussed at government level; and that to align both systems would take time, particularly given that the systems are very different and are managed at different levels.

Emphasising the Urban-Rural rather than Urban v. Rural



Oliver Kerr, Florida International University pointed out that when working in neighbourhoods – irrespective of whether they are urban or rural based – one must be inclusive in terms of the practices adopted. It is essential that all necessary steps are taken to ensure that none of the communities, particularly the rural communities, get lost in the ‘shuffle’.

Tourism and the Border Region



Jerry Fitzpatrick, Cavan Community Forum noted the importance of tourism to the Border Region. There is widespread support for the development of quality tourism products in the area, particularly in eco-tourism, agri-tourism, water-based tourism – provided of course that they were sustainable in nature. There is, however, a deficit in funding for tourism initiatives and it would be welcomed if the North South Independent Consultative Forum would become the voice for Border communities around the need for investment in, and development of, sustainable tourism products.

Practical Projects: The Way Forward



Martin McDonald, Rural Development Council called for practical initiatives to be the way forward in terms of cross-border and/or cross-community cooperation. The days where ‘white elephants’

were acceptable are gone. Future initiatives should also involve a wide range of stakeholders i.e. there is a need for wider buy-in to the process of cooperation and collaboration. In relation to the Gateway Innovation Fund, the Irish Government was called upon to ensure that a proportion of these monies went to the smaller centres in the Border Region, particularly the central Border area.

In response, Denis Rooney outlined that communities will have to grab initiatives, and move outside their comfort zones so as to actively become involved in cooperation and collaboration. The onus and responsibility for sourcing monies and devising sustainable initiatives, which lead to mutual benefits, will firmly lie with the communities themselves from hereonin. Communities must, therefore, become strategic in their thinking and in the way they form partnerships and alliances. In determining what type of projects are to be funded, the agencies will need to adopt a ‘Dragon’s Den’ approach whereby only those initiatives considered viable will be supported.

The Collaborative Framework

In closing this session, both David Walsh and Mike Thompson noted the importance of the collaborative framework – not only in bringing both Governments together to work on the development of the document but in getting both governments to think strategically about the development of the island as a whole. Both governments look forward to receiving comments on the framework when it is launched later in the year; and if time and resources permit, a seminar will be organised around the frameworks content and roll-out.

PART V: THE BUILDING OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Prof. Peter Roberts, Chairman of the Academy for Sustainable Communities (ASC), a UK-based national centre promoting the betterment of places, opened Session III by noting that sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work – now and in the future. As a concept, ‘sustainable communities’ is an idea that crosses national and international borders. It is increasingly recognised throughout Europe that national policies need to be pioneering, adaptable and offer balanced solutions to economic, social and environmental challenges. For example, the *Bristol Accord*, adopted in 2006, identifies and agrees with Europe-wide principles and characteristics of sustainable communities. In practical terms it provides a rational framework for the delivery of “sustainable communities, economic prosperity and social justice”. Supporting both the *Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas*, the *Bristol Accord* outlines eight characteristics of sustainable communities and argues that sustainable communities are “diverse, reflecting their local circumstances”.

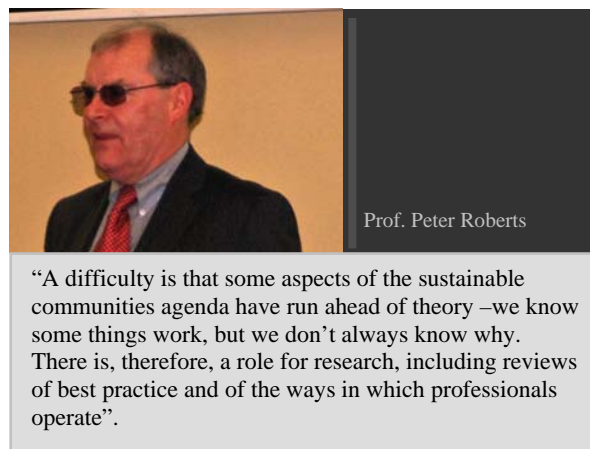
There is no – nor should there be – a common template which should be applied to all communities to make them sustainable. However, there are a number of principles which should be adopted by each, thus making it cohesive and competitive:

1. Active, Inclusive & safe i.e. fair, cohesive with strong local culture, with shared spaces and activities;
2. Well-run – with effective and inclusive participation and leadership;
3. Well-connected through transport, communication linkages, etc.;
4. Well-serviced with a wide range of services that meet peoples’ needs and are accessible;
5. Environmentally sensitive where well-designed places are considerate to the environment;
6. Thriving communities with a diverse and innovative economy and community;
7. Well-designed and built i.e. a quality environment; and
8. Fair for everyone – not only now but in the future.

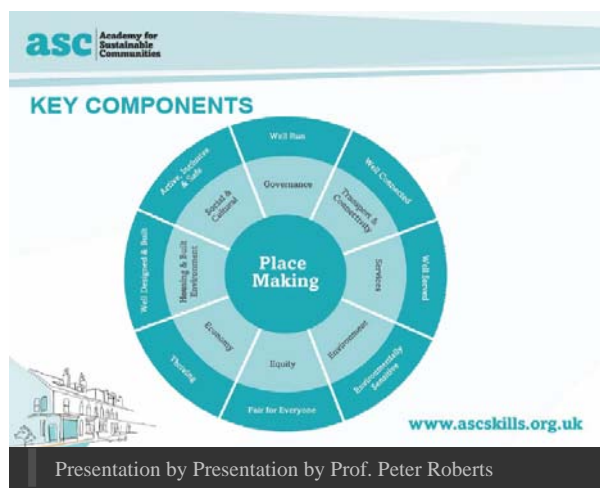
Good governance has also been recognised as a pre-requisite for the building of sustainable communities; a factor discussed in detail at the Warsaw Summit in May 2005 and the High Level Meeting on Governance and the EU which was held in London in November 2005. This principle has been further endorsed under the *Bristol Accord*.

The Principles of Sustainable Communities – Partnership and Planning

As well as chairing this session, **Prof. Peter Roberts** gave a short but informative presentation on the principles of sustainable communities. These, he noted, can be applied to places at various stages in their evolution – new places, regenerating places and evolving places. Within England, 3% of the population live in ‘new places’, 25% in ‘regenerating places’, and the remainder in ‘evolving places’. With an emphasis on making places for people, the objective of the sustainable communities agenda is to remove the need for regeneration in the future; and this means creating and maintaining places so that they meet the needs of those who live and work there. The principles of sustainable communities, as mooted in the aforementioned *Bristol Accord*, can be used to create new communities or retrofitted to existing places. But irrespective of where the principles are applied, the key is their application through teamwork and partnership i.e. involving many disciplines and professions.



Spatial planning has a key role to play in ‘place-making’; and has always advocated the creation of sustainable communities – this can be traced back to Ebenezer Howard’s Social City (1898). The problem has been that practice has not always reflected current thinking or theory; and this in part can be attributed to the type of training and education received by professionals engaged in the development of the built environment – architects, planners, urban designers, engineers, etc.



Presentation by Prof. Peter Roberts

As a central tenet to the delivery of sustainable communities, spatial planning must, from hereonin, engage with the full skills and knowledge agenda. Buy-in must be achieved from local residents of all ages, particularly the youth, the process of visioning must be further encouraged, opportunities must be generated to facilitate the exchange of experiences and information, and the range of stakeholders must be extended to include the private sector, trades people, all levels of government and the community and voluntary sector.

Sustainability and Housing on the Island of Ireland

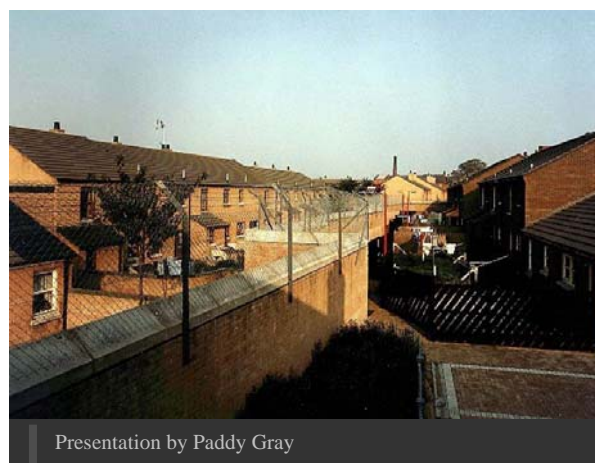
The eight principles of sustainable communities are evident throughout each of the research programmes being carried out by ICLR D at present, two of which have already been discussed. The third research activity in which ICLR D has been engaging is that of assessing the linkages between promoting mixed income / integrated developments and the new policy agenda of developing sustainable communities on the island of Ireland.



The underlying notion within this research, according to **Paddy Gray** of University of Ulster, is that an incremental and more consistent long-term approach is required to achieving sustainability in relation to housing communities. Within Northern Ireland, the issues of religion and religious segregation, income segregation and ethnicity are key issues; while in the South, the key issues are income segregation and ethnicity.

Recognising that different areas need different solutions, this research programme is investigating the concept of sustainable communities in six areas:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Enniskillen: | Carran Crescent |
| 2. Antrim: | Spring Farm |
| 3. Derry: | Shared Space |
| 4. Sligo: | Cranmore |
| 5. Cork: | Mahon |
| 6. Dublin: | Adamstown |



Presentation by Paddy Gray

A key element of this research programme is the involvement of youth – both in terms of better understanding their experiences within the communities they live but also in terms of finding out their vision for their community in the future. The findings from the research (due in Summer 2008), as well as identifying best practice, will be used to develop training modules for housing practitioners, policy makers and local officials.

“We have poor inter-community relationships, effective apartheid in housing across our villages, towns and cities; community division (exemplified in, but not confined to the physical structures of peace walls); the slow pace of reconciliation; the sectarianism and fractured educational provision”.

Letter by Five Protestant Church Ministers,
Jan. '08

‘Homes are for living in’

The sustainable communities agenda is not only of relevance to Europe but is a world-wide issue. While it is only one of many elements, housing is an important ingredient in the creation and management of sustainable communities. In the United States, the current financial climate has resulted in the housing market – and its recent state – being much debated in the media. As a result of the downturn, there has been a return the old adage that ‘homes are for living in’ (rather than for buying and selling).

In the words of **Nicolas Retsinas** of the Joint Center for Housing, Harvard University “home defines who we are and prepares us for all we can be. It is the centrality of how we live and where we live -- homes define our communities, what they are and what they will be”.

He noted that urban sprawl is a huge issue facing the United States and is the result of decisions by people – decisions taken without understanding the longer-term costs of energy, congestion, and transportation. It is important that there are planning frameworks in place that lead to good planning, sustainable and balanced development, and tenure choice or ‘communities of opportunity’.



“Planning that just backfills after development, planning that takes an inordinate amount of time, planning that does not engage the local community all can make a community worse than if there were no planning at all ... not all planning works”.

Planning is not, nor should it be, about social engineering. Housing choice is a key element in the building of sustainable communities. It is in generating these choices and opportunities that the sustainable community professions of planning, architecture, engineering, urban design, surveying, civic leadership and community development face their greatest challenge to date.

Sustainable communities, there should encourage: (a) a mix of people working and living in the area; (b) a broad skill-base that can promote the growth of the area, (c) a wide range of services available to meet local needs and are accessible, and (d) a recognition within the community itself that tomorrow is just as important as today; that today’s action has impacts for tomorrow.

Striving for Sustainable Communities along European Borders

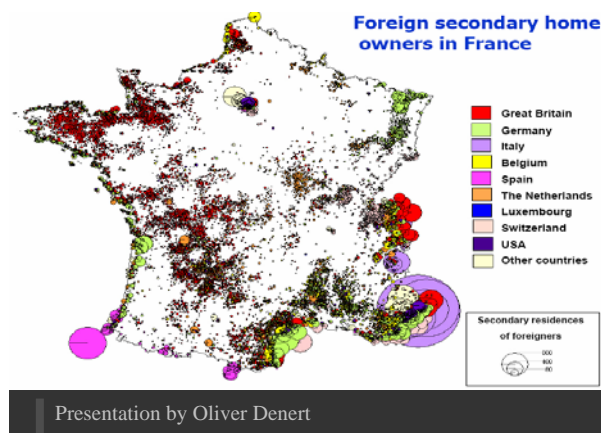
The sustainable communities model offers a template for cross-border collaboration on spatial planning and associated activities. The cross-border operational organisation, Mission Operationnelle Transfrontaliere (MOT), based in Paris, is unique in that it supports communities working on a cross-border basis on projects such as transport, housing and land-use among other topics.



Olivier Denert of MOT highlighted a recent initiative that involved an examination of housing and land-issues on the franco-swiss and franco-spanish borders. As part of this research programme, MOT analysed the housing, planning and land-use policies that are being implemented on each side of the aforementioned borders and outlined proposals for how any persisting barriers might be overcome. The main issues this study hoped to address were:

- How / if the border can have an impact on the level of house prices on both sides of the border;
- How many people choose to live on one side of the border over the other because prices are cheaper and land is more readily available?;

- How do planning, housing and land-use policies differ (in both positive and negative terms) on both sides of the border?; and
- How are these varying policies managed in a cross border context?



At the franco-swiss border, there are a lot of cross-border flows; this is one of the most active cross-border regions in Europe. However, as a result of this activity land and house prices in this border region are very expensive, particularly on the Swiss side. There are different policies at play in each jurisdiction which inevitably impacts on the other region. Restrictions on development in Geneva, for example, have had serious impacts on the rate of growth on the French side of the Border. Through cross-border cooperation, however, the relevant local authorities have come together and reached agreement on how the Swiss can compensate France for this. While this is a partial solution, it does not resolve the issue of increased urbanisation facing this French border region (as Geneva does not intend to review its restricted policies at this point in time).

In the case of the franco-spanish border, there is currently limited interaction taking place. Both areas are experiencing different rates of growth and this has implications for the type of development being permitted in each border area (with more and higher-scale development taking place in the Spanish Basque region). The respective local authorities are, however, coming together to put in place tools to ensure that the scenario that arose on the franco-swiss border does not happen here; a process that is largely the

result of the existence and intervention of the cross-border research and promotional agency that is MOT.



Conclusion

Sustainable and balanced development is a key focus of much of the policy being implemented throughout Europe and further afield at present. Recognising that any framework promoting sustainable communities must be tailored to meet local circumstances, a series of principles have been agreed at the EU level to assist countries in moving from policy to implementation.

“The sustainable communities programme is not a closed venture – it depends on active participation to enhance practice and to support learning and research”.

Prof. Peter Roberts, Academy for Sustainable Communities

As with any area of policy, there is much to be gained from cross-fertilisation and sharing of experiences. Decisions and actions need to be taken at the right level – but at the same time, there is a need for an overall framework or policy template on which to formulate policy and resulting activities.

Places and spaces must be designed and developed with people in mind. And as noted in the OECD Principles of Metropolitan Governance (2001), emphasis must be placed on “investment in infrastructures and human development” so as to make best use, and take full advantage of, local assets.

PART VI: CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS



In bringing the Third Annual ICLRD Conference to a close, **Prof. Alastair Adair**, Dean of the Faculty of Art, Design and the Build Environment, University of Ulster noted the uniqueness of the Centre in terms of the working model it adheres to in undertaking its research activities. The ICLRD is a cross-disciplinary, cross-campus, cross-border organisation with the ability to deliver research findings that can be directly fed into policy making and capacity building by bringing relevant actors together. As a North-South-US Partnership, the partners work together on common goals that are not abstract; but which are market-focused and have direct relevance on people's lives and economic prosperity going forward.

During 2007, this common goal has been 'Fostering Cross-Border Cooperation'. Through its work in Newry-Dundalk, a non-statutory sub-regional collaborative framework is being devised which highlights the shared strengths and complementarities that exist within this cross-border region. Through emphasising the delivery of three practical spatial projects, the strategy will deliver on real and effective collaboration and promote the growth of a high quality, value added knowledge economy in this sub-region.

In focusing on a number of small border towns and villages, the ICLRD is drawing on the experiences of these communities to promote the value added that can be achieved through cross-border and cross-community cooperation; that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This research flags the opportunities that exist within these rural communities to build on identified local strengths which will lead to 'positive-sum'

cooperation (i.e. mutual benefits) and assists the communities in better understanding what these strengths actually are.

While at an earlier stage in its development, the research programme focusing on the building of sustainable communities is already highlighting the importance of applying sustainable community principles to areas at various stages of development i.e. in new builds, places undergoing regeneration, and places evolving. It has also become apparent at an early stage that the promotion of mixed housing must be sensitive and incremental; that policies must foster choice and harmonisation rather than forced integration.

All three ICLRD research programmes promote the need to share innovative approaches as to what works and what doesn't in fostering cross-border cooperation. The maintenance of the *status quo* in spatial planning policies that pay scant attention to each other is no longer acceptable. While there is an increasing awareness of the need for both complementary and competitive collaboration, the evaluation as to which route to take must increasingly be linked to accurate and evidence-based decision-making.

Part of the added-value of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development is that while these studies are important in their own right, they also feed into the development and roll-out of training modules focusing on spatial planning and balanced development. The modules and their content are guided by the research findings and associated research activities (i.e. case studies, policy analysis, etc.). The first training programmes will be launched later this year with details to be released on the ICLRD website (see www.iclrd.org) in late Spring / early Summer.

PART VII: LAUNCH OF THE ATLAS OF THE ISLAND OF IRELAND

Evidence-based spatial planning and the demand for high quality data on an all-island basis is ever increasing. The ICLRD InterTradeIreland report – *Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland: Development of a Framework for Collaborative Action* – highlighted the need for complete, consistent and comparable datasets for the development and implementation of all-island collaborative spatial planning.

To support these efforts ICLRD and the All-Island Research Observatory published the *Atlas of the Island of Ireland—Mapping Social and Economic Change*. Launched at the conference by Tommie Gorman, Northern Editor, Radio Telefis Eireann, the atlas was introduced by Professor Rob Kitchin, Director, National Institute of Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA), NUI Maynooth.



Tommie Gorman

Rob Kitchin

The Atlas presents a set of detailed, full colour maps on population, housing, transport and the economy across the island based on census data for the Republic of Ireland in 1991 and 2002 and census data for Northern Ireland in 1991 and 2001. As noted in the Joint Foreword by Minister John Gormley T.D and Minister Conor Murphy M.P. M.L.A, the Atlas can facilitate ‘better harmonization of information sets North and South so that we can plan better for an even more prosperous and sustainable future on our remarkable island.’ The Atlas will provide an important baseline for the future, especially in 2011 when the census in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland will occur at the same time.



From left: Brendan Bartley, Tommie Gorman, John Driscoll, Rob Kitchin, Justin Gleeson, and Ronan Foley

Appendix 1: Schedule

PROGRAMME

Thursday 17 January 2008

Conference Room: Fisher 4

8:45 Registration and refreshments

9:20 Welcome by the Mayor of Armagh,

Cllr. Charles Rollston

9:30 **Implementing and Financing the Collaborative Framework**

Chair: Feargal McCormack, Managing Partner, FPM Chartered Accountants, and Chairman, International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD)

The Collaborative Framework

• **Batt O’Keeffe** T.D., Minister for Housing, Urban Renewal and Developing Areas, Dublin

• **Conor Murphy** MP MLA, Minister for Regional Development, Belfast

10:00 **Financing Cross-Border Collaboration**

• **David Gavaghan**, Chief Executive, Strategic Investment Board, Belfast

• **Dermot Nolan**, Principal Officer, Department of Finance, Dublin

10:30 **Fostering Cross-Border Cooperation**

Chair: François Vigier, ICLR and President, Institute for International Urban Development, Cambridge, Mass

10:40 **Newry-Dundalk: Implementing a Sub-Regional Strategy**

• *Newry Dundalk Twin City: a New Perspective on Regional Development* - **Jim Berry**, ICLR and Professor in Urban Planning and Property Development, University of Ulster, and **Chris van Egeraat**, ICLR and Research Fellow, National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth

• *A Regional Approach to Creating Sustainable Energy Communities* - **Declan Meally**, Head of Dundalk 2020, Sustainable Energy Ireland

• *Integrated Environmental Management of a Cross-Border Natural Heritage Area: the Mourne/Slieve Gullion/Cooley Geopark* –

Martin Carey, Chief Executive, Mourne Heritage Trust

11:30 Refreshments

11:45 **Micro-Regions: Reconnecting Cross Border Towns and Villages**

• *Small Cross-Border Towns and Villages: Enhancing Connectivity* - **Caroline Creamer**, ICLR and Research Fellow, National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, and **Neale Blair**, ICLR and Lecturer, University of Ulster

• *Strabane-Lifford Development Commission* – **Donal MacLochlainn**, Chair, Strabane Lifford Development Commission

• *KiltyCashel Project* – **Elish Gray**, Project Manager, KiltyCashel Project

12:30 **Panel and discussion**

Chair: Aidan Gough, Strategy and Policy Director, InterTradeIreland

• **Denis Rooney**, Chairman, International Fund for Ireland

• **Dave Walsh**, Principal Officer, Spatial Policy Unit, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin

• **Mike Thompson**, Director, Regional Development Strategy, Department of Regional Development, Belfast

13:15 Lunch: Fisher 3

14:30 **Session Three: The Role of Housing in the Building of Sustainable Communities**

Chair: Peter Roberts, Chair, Academy for Sustainable Communities, Leeds

• *Sustainable Communities on the Island of Ireland* – **Paddy Gray**, ICLR and Senior Lecturer, University of Ulster

• *Bristol and Leipzig: Driving the Sustainable Communities Agenda* – **Peter Roberts**, Chair, Academy for Sustainable Communities and Professor of Spatial Sustainable Development, University of Leeds

• *Sustainable Balanced Communities*

Nicolas Retsinas, Joint Centre for Housing Studies, Harvard University

• *Good Practices in Housing and Land Tenure: Experiences from the French/Swiss and French/Spanish Borders* – **Olivier Denert**, Project Manager, Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, Paris

15:45 Questions and answers

16:00 Closing Comments – **Alastair Adair**, Dean of Faculty of Art, Design and the Built Environment, University of Ulster

16:15 Launch of **The Atlas of the Island of Ireland**

Introduction by Professor **Rob Kitchin**, ICLR and Director, National Institute of Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA), NUI Maynooth

Official launch by **Tommie Gorman**, Northern Editor, Radio Telefis Eireann