

The Newry-Dundalk Twin City Region

Supporting the Implementation of
Cross-Border Collaborative Frameworks

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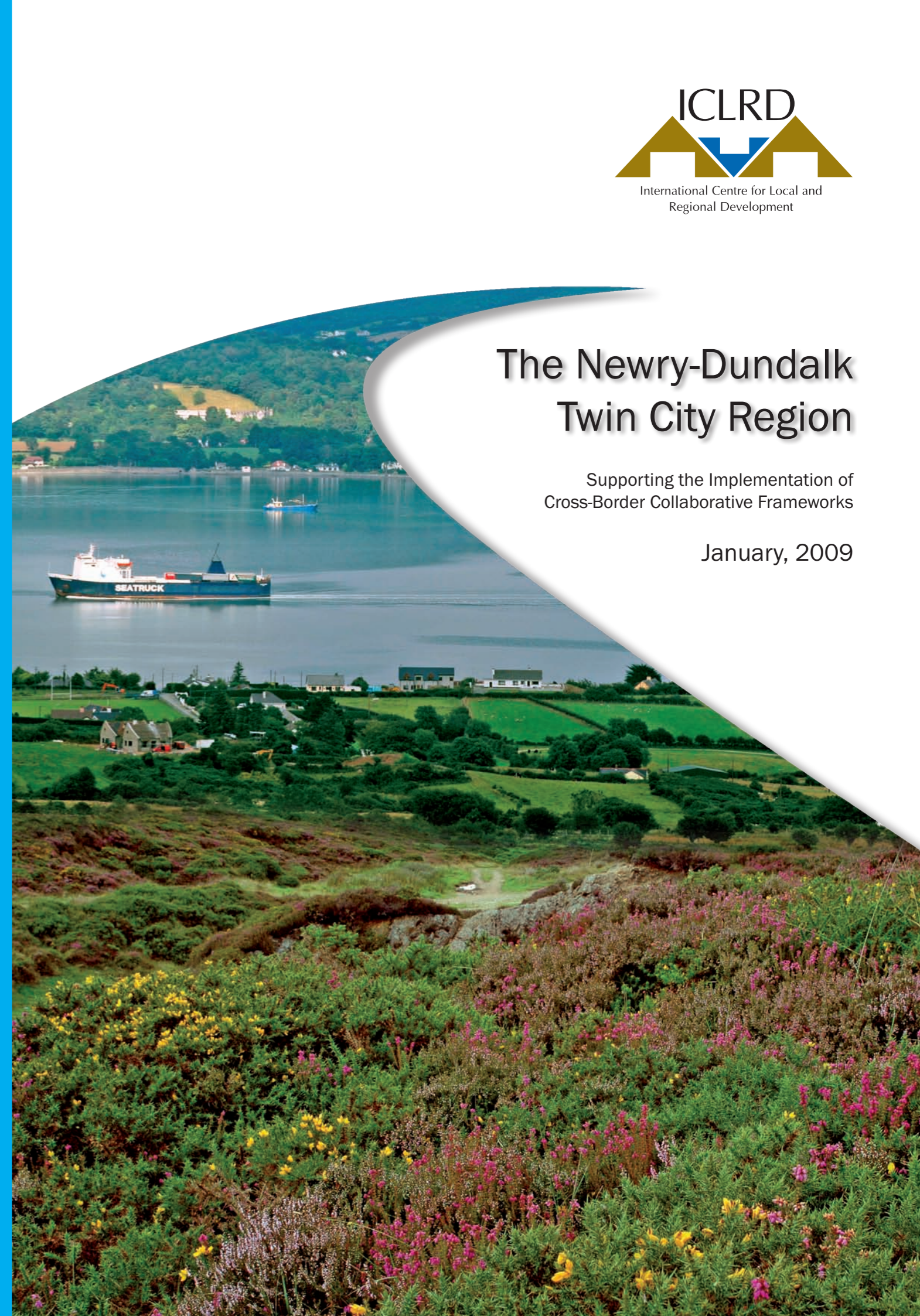
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This research, focusing on fostering mutual benefits through cross-border co-operation in the Newry-Dundalk Twin City Region, has been carried out by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) as part of a core research programme for the period 2007-2008. It is a summary of separate in-depth working papers generated through focus groups and research by the study team. This report is one of a series of three that will be produced by ICLRD in 2008/2009 as a result of its research activities; the others being:

- Fostering Mutual Benefits in Cross-Border Areas: The Challenges and Opportunities in Connecting Irish Border Towns and Villages
- Changing Neighbourhoods: Sustainable Communities on the Island of Ireland.

All three studies will be available in hard copy and electronically through ICLRD. The more detailed working papers on which this report is based are available on the ICLRD web site, www.iclrd.org. For further details contact info@iclrd.org.

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acknowledgements

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Steering Committee Members

The Steering Committee offered the study team strategic guidance during the course of the study. The members took considerable time to review and comment on different drafts of the study.

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The research team further takes this opportunity to thank the ICLRD partners for their support during this study.



**Department of Regional
Development**



Louth County Council



**All Island Research
Observatory**



**International Centre for Local and
Regional Development**

joint foreword

In global or even European terms, the island of Ireland is a small entity. In the face of intensifying global competition, which we are already experiencing on both sides of the border, every opportunity for competitive advantage must be grasped, and on the island of Ireland, collaboration and co-operation is one such advantage.

Both Governments acknowledge the need for and value of better and more strategic collaboration and both our Ministries are eager to support initiatives that will not only provide a sound evidence basis for future investment and policy decisions across both jurisdictions but also have a tangible and step-change impact on the ground. Our respective spatial strategies – the Regional Development Strategy in the north and the National Spatial Strategy in the south – are key foundations on which to base our future strategic investment decisions and help to achieve a better balance of development and growth in our respective areas on the island of Ireland and to put development on a more sustainable path. Furthermore, from a competitiveness, trade and business development perspective, improving the physical environment that supports all-island growth and profitability is a pre-requisite to strengthening both economies on this island.

We are faced with a unique opportunity within the warm relations and goodwill that now exist between our two jurisdictions to change the face of our border towns and cities, such as Dundalk and Newry, for the better, adding impetus to the creation of dynamic cities and towns that provide a competitive and vibrant environment for enterprise, and a high quality of life that attracts people to live, work, visit and simply enjoy.

Our fundamental objectives, working together, must be to secure higher inward and local investment and employment and to deliver more balanced regional development and a better quality of life for people in Newry and Dundalk and indeed for people in the wider region for which the two cities act as focal points.

The research and outputs from this collaborative “twin-city” venture between Newry and Dundalk and the wider east border region can be held up as an exemplar of what can be achieved with high-level co-operation and through robust, evidence-based analysis. This teamwork is, however, not the results of an overnight success but has been nurtured and advanced by key local stakeholders in both the public and private sectors and InterTradeIreland, as well as being supported by our respective Departments and other central government agencies and facilitated by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development. However, it is important to acknowledge the strong local commitment

to this partnership process and also the future commitments and plans outlined in the report.

This report is an integral element to achieving the vision of a strong, vibrant and progressive Newry-Dundalk region, but it is only the start of the process. We encourage all involved to continue to consider strategic and complementary initiatives which can help to achieve the wider reality of a strong economy across the island of Ireland capable of competing on the world stage in the years ahead. For our part, our Departments will provide support and assistance in whatever way we can.

**John Gormley, T.D.,
Minister for the Environment, Heritage
and Local Government**

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

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executive summary

Policy Context

This study brings together recent and current research on how to realise the benefits of cross-border collaboration in the Newry-Dundalk sub-region through integrated planning and development strategies. Strategically located on the Belfast-Dublin corridor, Newry and Dundalk together are strongly positioned to attract high-quality jobs, improve the built environment, generate a wide range of public and commercial services, and promote a well managed environment for tourism and recreation. There is clear evidence that Newry and Dundalk are more likely to achieve these goals by working together and thereby become not only a growth pole in its own right but also an engine of growth for the entire cross-border sub-region, which has an estimated population of 170,000.

On the island of Ireland, the NI Regional Development Strategy and the Irish National Spatial Strategy each provide a comprehensive vision of regionally balanced, sustainable economic development, leading to higher living standards for all. Both strategies are now closely aligned with the respective investment programmes (ISNI II 2008-2018 and NDP 2007-2013) and each recognises that actions taken on one side of the border will generate spill-over effects on the other.

The 2006 *InterTradelreland* report (prepared by ICLRD) on *Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland: Development of a Framework for Collaborative Action* highlighted the importance of cross-border spatial planning to support economic competitiveness, through joined-up delivery of public services and infrastructure.

In tandem with the *InterTradelreland* report, a joint planning study, carried out by Colin Buchanan on behalf of Newry and Mourne District Council, Louth County Council and Dundalk Town Council, explored the potential of the Newry – Dundalk Twin City concept and was completed in 2006. The report concluded that there was significant scope for cross-border collaboration and co-operation to benefit the entire sub-region.

The two Chambers of Commerce have also taken a proactive role in developing a regional identity. The Dundalk Chamber's Annual Conference in November 2007, entitled *Border Vision Gateway*, discussed opportunities for Newry Dundalk co-operation, echoing the previous year's Newry Chamber seminar - the *Strategic Vision for the Greater Newry Area* - which also focused on cross-border co-operation. The 2007 and 2008 cross-border speed network facilitated by *InterTradelreland* offers opportunities for businesses

from Newry and Dundalk to develop joint business activities.

The concept of a Newry-Dundalk Twin City Region is beginning to take hold and facilitate an integrated and sustainable cross-border development strategy for the eastern seaboard corridor. The practical and mutual benefits of voluntary co-operation will be reflected in the cost savings on economic infrastructure; pooling of expertise; sharing of good practice and efficiencies in enterprise development and sustainable management of the twin city's unique natural heritage.

Newry-Dundalk Sub-Region Steering Group

Building upon the ICLRD and Buchanan "Twin City" studies, this policy and action framework is being developed to demonstrate how local level co-operation, backed by regional authorities and central government, can build a genuine twin city region that will drive growth in the wider sub-region. Ultimately, it seeks to reinforce the growth potential of the shared gateway of Newry and Dundalk, within the broader context of the eastern economic corridor, linking Dublin and Belfast.

A Steering Committee, chaired by *InterTradelreland* and supported by ICLRD, was established to provide guidance to the Study Team and drive forward the process. The composition of the Steering Group included representatives from the cross-border bodies (NSMC, *InterTradelreland*, and Centre for Cross Border Studies); central government (DOEHLG and DRD); local government (Louth County Council, Dundalk Town Council, Newry and Mourne District Council); the Chambers of Trade and Commerce in Newry and Dundalk; and the business sector (CBI), as well as ICLRD research team.

Policy Research and Proposals

The research underpinning the framework considered the following elements:

- A non-statutory approach to an integrated spatial planning and development framework focused on the benefits resulting from enhanced co-operation between Newry and Dundalk;
- Actions to facilitate promotion, tourism, skills training, education, innovation, business development and the knowledge economy;
- Joint analysis and action by stakeholders in areas such as sustainable development, cultural heritage, trade and investment, environmental management and regeneration; and
- Spatial planning data and research relating to the key drivers influencing development patterns and trends.

A successful cross-border regional strategy requires the involvement of the central government departments in both jurisdictions as well as that of local officials, civic leaders and the private sector, all working in a dynamic partnership in order to implement an agreed action agenda. Promoting a cross-jurisdictional, multiple-stakeholder approach in Newry-Dundalk will require a number of key activities, including:

- Coordinated approach to sustainable economic development;
- Joint actions to implement common objectives;
- Creation of common inter-jurisdictional databases; and
- Alignment of legal and institutional frameworks.

Six major themes capture the potential benefits of voluntary co-operation for the Newry-Dundalk Twin City Region:

- Economic competitiveness;
- Sustainable development;
- Improved community cohesion;
- Preservation of the natural and cultural heritage;
- Increased efficiency resulting from the coordination of infrastructure investment; and
- Up-skilling for an economically productive workforce.

The ICLRD research team conducted over 100 interviews with public, business, and civic leaders to identify key issues affecting the sub-region and specific projects that would help achieve sustainable development based on social, economic, and environmental criteria. With guidance from the steering committee the following four projects have been selected to be progressed within the wider sustainability context:

1. A Dundalk/Newry Centre of Excellence to create a sustainable energy community linked to the work of Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) and EU Concerto funding which is positioning Dundalk 2020 as an exemplar for the island as a whole;
2. A Newry-Dundalk cross-border international services zone linked to international financial and other related services that will create additional tertiary employment;
3. Geo-tourism and the management of a shared landscape and natural heritage to safeguard the geological assets and natural resources of the Mourne, Cooley, Slieve Gullion, and Carlingford Lough, and develop the tourism potential of the sub-region; and
4. A coordinated regeneration strategy for older areas in Newry and Dundalk, to promote the distinctiveness of the two cities, further the complementarities of their respective urban functions and improve their liveability.

These projects have the capacity to drive a collaborative framework at a sub-regional level and reinforce joined-up policy approaches. The four projects share several cross-cutting themes. As infrastructure linkages and travel times along the M1/A1 corridor are improved, economic growth and the potential synergies in infrastructure and delivery of services present a host of opportunities for joined-up planning and resource management for the sub-region. Strategic road and rail infrastructure will reinforce the objective of cross-border balanced development and will promote the accessibility of the sub-region as a focus for population growth, sustainable economic development and inward investment.

Skills, education, and training programmes are essential to ensure that the sub-region benefits from economic growth and increasing prosperity. Both the Southern Regional College in Newry and the Dundalk Institute of Technology will play a key role in providing progressive tracks for both up-skilling the workforce and delivering educational programmes that meet the projected employment needs in the tourism, sustainable energy, financial services and business management sectors.

Common data sets, including the assembly and analysis of information required for decision making at the local level (land use, construction activities, work force characteristics, educational levels, income, housing conditions, infrastructure, and delivery of public services), are only partially available from current census data. However, the sharing of information in the Newry- Dundalk Twin City region will facilitate the compilation of compatible projections of future trends, which are essential for identifying optimal economic and social development strategies and land development strategies for the benefit of the entire sub-region. A recent study commissioned by the Newry and Mourne Local Strategy Partnership, 'Newry-Dundalk Cross Border Economic Forecasting Model' (Oxford Economics) is developing an integrated cross-border economic forecasting model for the Twin City region for the period 2008-2018.

Each of the four projects and the cross-cutting elements are in different stages of development and have networks and the coalitions necessary for moving from concept to implementation and delivery. The projects have specific, particular attributes that will help in building a common approach to cross-border collaboration. However, they should be viewed as merely the first step in addressing the remaining, more complex issues of the long-term management of the sub-region for economic, environmental, and social progress.

Next Steps

The main challenge facing inter-municipal collaboration in cross-border regions lies in the legal and institutional differences that commonly occur across borders. The main issues to be resolved to ensure full cross-border co-operation include:

- Identifying legal and administrative procedures on each side of the border that may hinder co-operation;
- Quantifying the potential for synergies for investment;
- Proposing solutions to institutional obstacles; and
- Promoting and branding the unique identity of the sub-regions.

The specific cross-border projects for the Newry-Dundalk Twin City region are being advanced for consideration by the local authorities and subsequent submission to the Governments for their endorsement.

Building on the region's reputation for entrepreneurship and co-operation, it is proposed that a bottom-up approach, led by local government and business leaders, should be reinforced by the top-down commitment from central government Ministers and departments. Engagement and commitment of the Northern and Southern administrations are crucial to provide the impetus, guidance and resources needed to implement cross-border interventions in partnership with the local governments.

It is proposed that the two jurisdictions should continue their existing co-operation by building on the light and flexible coordination structure that has evolved during this study:

1. Continue and enhance the *Joint Senior Management Group*, composed of the County / Town Managers and Council Executives and their senior department heads to develop areas selected for future co-operation into a sequence of interventions to implement commonly agreed strategic projects. It will also ensure the necessary liaison with central government agencies and cross-border bodies.
2. Create a *Twin City Region Advisory Group* modelled on the Steering Committee and composed of representatives of the Newry-Mourne District, Louth County and Dundalk Town Councils, the two Chambers of Commerce and central government representatives. The Joint Working Advisory Group should meet at least twice a year and would be responsible for:
 - Developing and adopting a common strategic

plan for the Newry-Dundalk Twin City region;

- Facilitating coordination with other central government and cross-border bodies;
 - Identifying areas of future co-operation for the implementation of the strategic plan; and
 - Creating consultative mechanisms to ensure stakeholder participation and transparency of the process.
3. Appoint *Joint Technical Teams* under the stewardship of the Senior Management Group, which will be responsible for:
 - Programming the nature of the interventions;
 - Proposing an implementation sequence; and
 - Targeting securing local and external funding sources for implementation of both joint and individual projects.

The Newry-Dundalk sub-region can build on its core strengths in a sustainable manner to the mutual benefit of both cities and the surrounding areas. In essence, the task is to create an attractive place for people to live and work, tourists to visit, and companies to grow.

The projects identified in the course of this research can be realised in the coming years by aligning local initiatives and priorities to major government policies and activities that will take place between the two Governments and supported by the European Territorial Co-operation agenda for 2007-13. Furthermore, the provision of public services, including solid waste management, public transportation, education, and health care, obviously benefits from the economies of scale that result from cross-border collaboration, as has been demonstrated in several European cross-border projects.

Improvement of the physical, social, and economic fabric of the two cities is a core policy objective for local governmental authorities. The initiative shown by the civic, public and business leadership in Newry and Dundalk to bring added benefits to each side of the border with a new regional perspective can provide a powerful example of how voluntary inter-jurisdictional co-operation can benefit other local governments across the island of Ireland.

introduction

“Joined-up thinking on roads, on shared municipal services, on environmental challenges, on infrastructure and complementary areas, make absolute sense for all of us.”

Batt O’Keeffe TD, former Minister for Housing, Urban Renewal and Developing Areas and currently Minister for Education (ICLRD Conference - January 2008)

“There are considerable growth challenges north and south but there are many similarities in the trends that we measure. Solutions will require very positive attitudes, long term planning and coordinated actions if we are to achieve long term economic success coupled with high quality of life.”

Conor Murphy MP MLA, Minister for Regional Development (ICLRD Conference - January 2008)

Background

In 2007, the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) selected the Newry-Dundalk sub-region for one of a series of research studies to assess the potential for cross-border collaboration on the island of Ireland. Another ICLR D study focused on small connected towns in cross-border areas.

This Newry-Dundalk sub-regional study represents the coming together of two tracks. At the central government level the 2006 *InterTradelreland* report on spatial strategies on the island of Ireland examined the potential of synergistically linking the *Regional Development Strategy* (RDS) in Northern Ireland and the *National Spatial Strategy* (NSS) in Ireland. At the local level the Newry-Dundalk Twin City Report of 2006 provided a convincing rationale for co-operation between Newry and Dundalk. Our research reinforces and builds on these reports, demonstrating how the NSS and RDS can be successfully linked at a local level and what actions, supported by central government, can make the twin city concept a reality.

A Steering Committee, chaired by *InterTradelreland* and supported by the ICLR D was established to advise on the research, implement the recommendations, and drive the process forward. The steering group includes representatives from: the cross-border bodies (North South Ministerial Council, *InterTradelreland*); central government (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; the Department of Regional Development); local government (Newry and Mourne District Council, Louth County Council, Dundalk Town Council); the Chambers of Commerce and Trade in Newry and Dundalk; and the business sector (CBI). The

great benefit of this approach is the way in which it links central, regional, and local government with business and civic organisations.

It is clear that there is a very strong commitment to cross-border co-operation among the three councils at local government level as shown by existing joint arrangements on matters of mutual interest. A similar spirit of co-operation is apparent in the private sector, with the two Chambers of Commerce and Trade taking a proactive role in developing a regional identity. The Dundalk Chamber’s annual conference in November 2007, entitled *Border Vision Gateway*, offered an opportunity for speakers from the North and the South to discuss opportunities for Newry/Dundalk co-operation. The 2006 *Strategic Vision for the Greater Newry Area* also speaks to cross-border co-operation. The 2007 and 2008 cross-border speed network facilitated by *InterTradelreland* offers opportunities for businesses from Newry and Dundalk to develop joint business activities. Articles and inserts sponsored by the respective Chambers in the local media stress the importance and benefits of regional co-operation.

Setting the Context for Co-operation

Most European countries, at the behest of the European Union (EU), are preparing large-scale spatial development strategies to enhance their economic competitiveness and deliver efficient responses to environmental concerns. Achieving the European Spatial Development Perspective intent of “balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union” poses daunting challenges for strategic planning and development based on co-

operation among national, regional and local levels of government.



Cllr. Charlie Casey, Deputy Mayor, Newry & Mourne District Council and Cllr. Jim Darcy, Chairman, Dundalk Town Council at the *Conference on Cross-Border Territories: Day-to-Day Europe* in Lille, France, November 2007. Source: Frank Pentony, Dundalk Town Council

Territories that span cross-jurisdictional boundaries are more often than not competing with each other to capture a share of development and investment potential. Obtaining the consensus of key stakeholders that is needed to implement a sub-regional strategic vision, especially on a cross-border basis, is a dynamic process necessitating integrated decision making, joined-up governance, and a partnership approach to delivery.

Through the process of implementing the Good Friday Agreement (1998), the border region on the island of Ireland has been slowly moving away from being a contested zone characterized by the legacy of the Troubles and 'back-to-back' planning and becoming instead an area where the practical and mutual benefits of cross-border collaboration in economic development, environmental protection, and public service programmes are endorsed and encouraged by the political process. The St. Andrew's Agreement (2006) and the return of devolved government to Northern Ireland (May 2007) has further strengthened co-operation among central and local authorities across the border.

On the island of Ireland, the *Regional Development Strategy* in Northern Ireland and the *National Spatial Strategy* in Ireland each provide a comprehensive vision of development strategies intended to increase economic competitiveness and improve the delivery of essential public services. Each strategy sets out challenging agendas that will guide the development of their jurisdictions and provide the context within which investments will occur.

Based on the Framework of Collaborative Action promoted in the *InterTradeIreland* report (2006), there is a clear agreement by both governments on the need to better synchronize the intent of the two spatial strategies and harmonise their components by developing further their cross-border elements. Increasingly, economic competitiveness and efficient delivery of essential infrastructure and public service provision are demanding economies-of-scale solutions. The European experience on cross-border co-operation indicates that developing and sharing compatible information/data sets facilitates harmonious and efficient spatial development and helps sustain the vitality of cross-jurisdictional economies and their competitiveness.

Voluntary co-operation between government departments, local authorities, and the business community can be promoted and encouraged by demonstrating the mutual advantages of working in collaboration. Evidence indicates that the most successful regional partnerships strongly depend on the ability of local leadership, representing both the public and private sectors, to:

- Identify collaborative projects and cross cutting themes;
- Build coalitions based on complementarities;
- Diagnose specific problems and interventions;
- Secure financing for joint actions;
- Obtain local community and wider civic support; and
- Secure consensus on implementation and timeframe for delivery.

Co-operation in the Newry-Dundalk sub-region and the types of projects being considered are moving towards more strategic levels of collaboration similar to long established models of inter-jurisdictional co-operation in the European Union and the United States. In reviewing the experience of cross-border co-operation in Europe, the French *Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière* concluded that the best examples were characterized by their success in:

- Improving the mobility of the population through the creation of cross-border public transportation;
- Providing partnerships for the delivery of public services that reflected development patterns rather than political jurisdictions;
- Promoting new economic activities by standardising regulatory measures;
- Achieving a more harmonious development pattern by coordinating land regulations and access to social housing; and
- Facilitating cross-border educational and cultural exchanges.

Newry and Dundalk Together: Why Co-operate?

With urban populations of approximately 28,000 and 35,000 respectively, neither Newry nor Dundalk has the critical mass to compete in the global economy. Evidence clearly indicates that, for a sub-region to attract significant domestic and international investment, it must contain at least one city-region of sufficient size to appeal to the higher-value segments of the business chain. These higher-value segments require access to sizeable pools of suitably qualified workers, adequate supporting infrastructure, and good-quality public and commercial services. A joined-up approach not only assists in meeting these requirements but will also support efforts to attract and leverage scarce public and private funding for wider regional infrastructure and regeneration initiatives. In sum, Newry and Dundalk need to think and act regionally if they want to compete in the market place.

With a combined catchment population estimated at 170,000 and excellent transport links to Dublin and Belfast, the two largest cities on the island, Newry and Dundalk can position themselves to be a dominant regional centre most effectively through collaboration. Although traditional employment sectors of the economy such as agriculture and manufacturing are in decline or stagnating, other, new opportunities are opening up in the services sector.

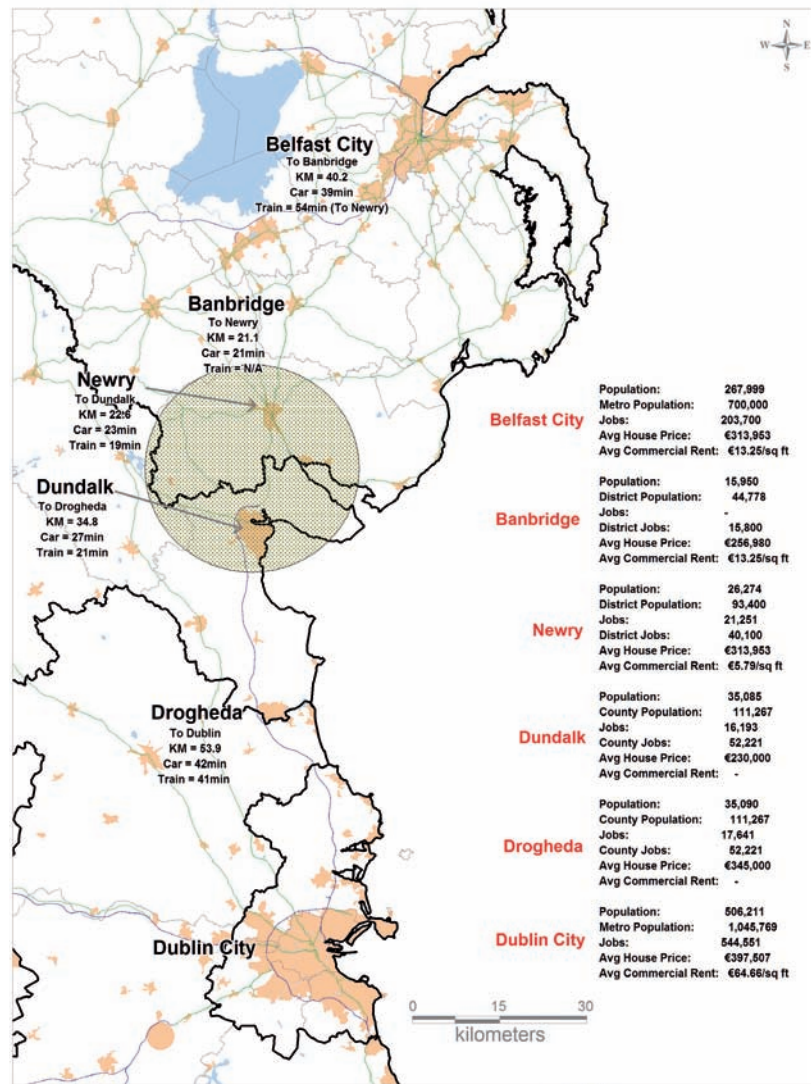
Building on Existing Initiatives and Leadership

Local authorities plus other major stakeholders, including the two Chambers of Commerce and Trade, recognize the critical importance of devising a collaborative cross-border strategy to raise the economic and social profile of the sub-region. The jointly funded study, *Newry-Dundalk 2006: a New Perspective on the Development of the Region*, published by Colin Buchanan, has made a substantial contribution in exploring the potential of a ‘twin city region’ with sufficient critical mass to attract investment, service the

needs of the cross-border region, and become a growth pole in its own right.

An integrated approach to the strategic planning of the twin city would enable Newry-Dundalk to promote the development of a progressive and competitive centre at the heart of a coherent and thriving sub-region. Capturing a regional dominance for the twin city at

Newry and Dundalk on the Dublin Belfast Corridor

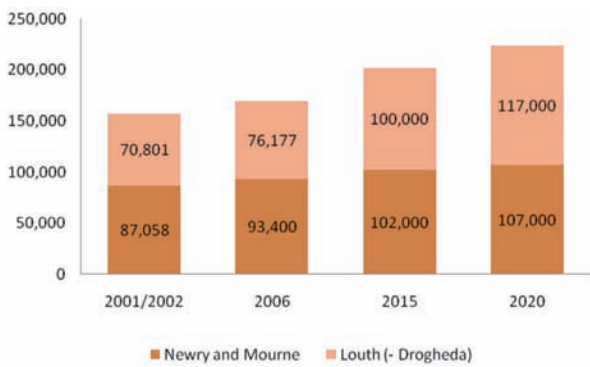


Located at the centre of the Dublin/Belfast corridor, Newry (pop 28,000) and Dundalk (pop 35,000) are the key drivers for a cross-border sub-region with an estimated 170,000 residents. The position of the sub-region on the M1/A1 motorway, rail links and easy access to international airports and ports provide good mobility and connectivity. The travel times and distances shown in the map are from each urban centre to the next, travel times based on schedules and Google map for road travel. Average home prices and commercial rents are drawn from various internet sources from 2007 and early 2008.

the core of the most prominent corridor on the island of Ireland would promote a self-sustaining and energy-efficient pattern of development, reducing the need to commute, appealing to inward investors, attractive to retaining its population, and capable of exploiting the dividends stemming from a shared future and quality of life agenda.

Newry and Dundalk are 23 km from each other, centre to centre. With the new A1/M1 road improvements, travel time by car between the two cities is 25 minutes. Their respective train stations are 19 minutes apart and a bus ride now takes anywhere from 20 to 30 minutes depending on the time of day. Both the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Development Strategy project strong population and job growth for the Newry and Dundalk sub-region and aim to concentrate this growth within existing urbanized areas.

Projected Sub-Regional Growth by Area



Sources: ROI Census; Regional Forecasts Study for Newry and Mourne; Louth County Development Plan and Newry and Mourne Area Plan.

Positioning Newry-Dundalk in an Island of Ireland Economy and Spatial Network

Notwithstanding the intra-jurisdictional differences which naturally exist between the two cities, both



Viaduct and Rail Line, Newry and Mourne District Council. Source: Newry and Mourne District Council

Newry and Dundalk are operating from a prominent position of strength. On its own, neither city has sufficient population to qualify for ‘gateway city’ status; however, as a twin city Newry-Dundalk does have the necessary mass of 63,000 residents, surpassing the threshold identified by the National Spatial Strategy. Our research identified several areas of mutual benefit that can reinforce the growth potential of a ‘shared regional gateway’.

Employment and economic growth. Due to their geographic proximity, Belfast and Dublin exert a strong pull in attracting the best-qualified labour from the Newry-Dundalk sub-region, while Newry and Dundalk both draw employment largely from the immediate catchment area of the sub-region, as indicated by actual travel-to-work patterns. In order to achieve the policy goals of generating more spatially balanced development and promoting economic growth in the sub-region, both central and local government authorities need to work together to achieve a critical population mass, create a more diversified economic base, attract higher paying jobs, and deliver new employment opportunities in Newry and Dundalk.



Recreational Riding in County Louth Source: Louth County Council

Housing Both cities will need to develop mixed housing typologies to attract and retain families and young professionals. To this end, spatial planning policies can play a key role in encouraging residential development to locate on brownfield sites in urban areas, and in steering regeneration strategies to provide attractive living and working environments for the growing population. Price differentials in housing and differing levels of planning control and enforcement between the two cities could result in some areas absorbing a disproportionate share of the housing demand. With rising house prices over the long-term and reductions in household sizes, a large increase in housing, both market and social, will be needed, underlining the

importance of cross-border collaboration in the provision of new and affordable housing.

Sustainability Sustainability is a cross-cutting theme, embedded within the other strategic projects suggested for regional co-operation. Developing two strong sustainability centres in the Newry-Dundalk sub-region would closely link to regeneration strategies, efficient public transport linkages, job creation for sustainable energy products, geo-tourism, and co-operation between the two regional third-level academic institutions in education and research for sustainable-energy projects. Sustainable development projects will also play a key role in the sub-region's future delivery of housing and industry.

Infrastructure. As infrastructure linkages improve and travel times are reduced along the M1/A1 corridor, the mobility of residents, businesses, and students between Newry and Dundalk and to other neighbouring urban centres such as Belfast, Banbridge, Dublin, and Drogheda will increase. Economic growth facilitated by a good infrastructure network and enhanced delivery of services presents a host of opportunities for joined-up planning and resource management for the mutual benefit of all citizens. Existing and proposed infrastructure in the sub-region need to be examined in this context.

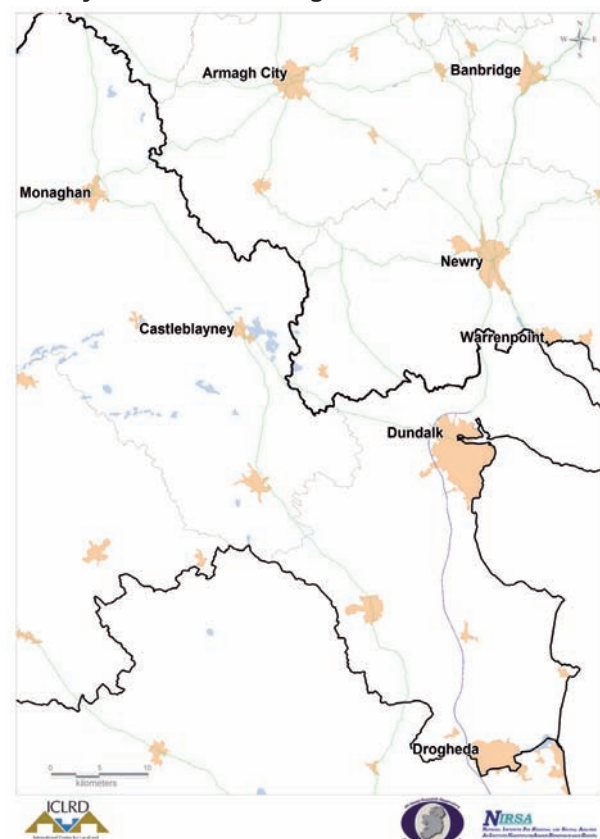
Environment. The provision of improved tourist infrastructure and the co-operative management of ecological resources will foster a sub-regional identity, help to protect valuable resources, and encourage the local tourism economy, to the benefit not only of the sub-region but also of the entire island of Ireland. A coherent, integrated approach will be key. Formulating and adopting common comprehensive policies to safeguard a shared high-quality natural landscape and to manage land development throughout the Newry-Dundalk sub-region will attract inward investment as well as protecting the area's potential as a tourism destination. The cross-border thinking that has developed at the local level should be replicated at central government level to maximize the benefits of collaboration. In this regard, a closer working relationship between the respective planning administrations in devising development plans and environmental policies will be important to the sustainable development of the sub-region.

Other growth sectors. Despite being in an embryonic stage, the financial services sector has the potential to deliver high growth in the coming years and for the local economies of both cities, health and education are other important sectors that deserve additional research as potential areas for co-operation. Education, job training, and social programmes are essential to

ensure that the sub-region in its totality benefits from economic growth and increasing prosperity. The Southern Regional College in Newry and the Dundalk Institute of Technology already play a prominent role in providing progressive tracts to both up-skill the workforce and provide education programmes that meet projected sectoral needs in tourism, sustainable energy, and financial and management services. There is scope to examine potential areas for skills training and educational co-operation between the two institutions, including the capacity for co-ordinating curricula.

Evidence indicates that Newry-Dundalk can acquire the capacity to act as an engine of growth for the entire sub-region. This can be achieved through an economically competitive, socially robust, environmentally sustainable development model that focuses clearly on improving the experience of living, working, and visiting a sub-region that has an array of desirable attributes. For the sub-region, this means attracting higher quality jobs, promoting a well managed environment for tourism and recreation and providing a wide range of public and commercial services. By adopting a regional perspective on sustainable development, appropriately supportive policy frameworks and integrated core projects can specifically target and strengthen the unique value position of Newry-Dundalk.

Newry and Dundalk: Regional Context



realising the vision

A successful cross-border regional strategy requires the involvement of central government departments in both jurisdictions as well as that of local officials, civic leaders and the private sector, all working in a dynamic partnership in order to implement an agreed action agenda. Promoting a cross-jurisdictional, multiple-stakeholder approach in Newry-Dundalk will require a number of key activities, including:

- A coordinated approach to sustainable economic development;
- Joint actions to implement common objectives
- The creation of common inter-jurisdictional databases; and
- The harmonisation of legal and institutional frameworks.

Six major themes capture the potential benefits of voluntary co-operation for the Newry-Dundalk sub-region:

1. Economic competitiveness;
2. Sustainable development;
3. Community cohesion;
4. Management of the natural and cultural heritage;
5. Coordination of infrastructure investment; and
6. Up-skilling for economically productive workforce.

The Newry-Dundalk sub-region can build on its core strengths in a sustainable manner to the mutual benefit of both cities and the surrounding areas. In essence, the task is to create an attractive place for people to live and work, tourists to visit, and companies to grow. Given the unique combination of social, economic, and environmental factors present, this is a very realistic goal. Through cross-border collaboration, existing synergies can be enhanced and the growth potential of the shared gateway reinforced. This will also improve the position of the sub-region relative to the rest of the island of Ireland.

A Competitive Place for Business and Workers: The Economic Proposition

The Newry-Dundalk sub-region will benefit from building on its reputation for entrepreneurship and its past success in attracting foreign direct investment. A supportive business environment is essential and is based on the following:

Scale and networks. Critical mass and good positioning within the all-island network are of paramount importance if Newry-Dundalk is to achieve economic competitiveness and attract international and domestic investment including the provision of public services and transport links. Although neither Newry nor Dundalk individually is of sufficient scale to qualify as a 'gateway' city, each has performed reasonably well

in the past by leveraging the benefits accruing from its proximity to the major population centre in its jurisdiction; that is, to Dublin and Belfast respectively.

However, by operating in tandem on a cross-border basis, the value proposition is radically improved. The estimated combined population of Newry and Dundalk in 2006 is in excess of 60,000, considered to be the minimum for gateway status in Ireland. If the entire sub-region is included, IDA Ireland estimates a catchment area of approximately 170,000 people within 20 kilometres of the two towns. For business this is crucial, as it provides access to a wider, more skilled labour force and denser input-output relationships with suppliers and customers – both of which are recognised drivers of regional competitiveness. This is especially important in the tradable services sector which, as research indicates, requires an urbanised environment to thrive. For local government departments, scale allows for the more efficient delivery of public services and infrastructure. For example, although outside the terms of this study, joint delivery of public services such as health care and waste management potentially offer significant advantages in terms of economies of scale.

Geographical location. Newry-Dundalk has one of the most strategic locations on the island of Ireland. The position of the sub-region on the M1/A1 motorway is ideal, with good complementary road and rail links and easy access to the international and regional airports and ports on the island. Close proximity to these transport and communication networks enables companies to locate in the sub-region and do business in both Dublin and Belfast, thus massively expanding their market and supply areas.



Cooley Mountains
Source: Louth County Council



Mourne and Silent Valley
 Source: Newry and Mourne District Council

Education, skills, and training. The Newry-Dundalk sub-region is well served by 33 post-primary schools, a College of Further Education, a College of Further and Higher Education, and an Institute of Technology. The sub-region also enjoys a favourable demographic profile with a relatively young, well-educated workforce, and it has a strong reputation for entrepreneurship. Going forward, potential exists to retain and attract back a good number of the highly skilled workers from the sub-region who currently live and work in Dublin and Belfast.

Existing company base. Both Newry and Dundalk can point to the considerable success they have achieved in attracting and consolidating international and domestic company operations. Norbrook, First Derivatives, Xerox, and Heinz are all examples of globally trading companies that have located their headquarters or branch operations within the sub-region.

Availability of high-quality property solutions. With the planned Albert Basin development in Newry, combined with existing and new premises available in Dundalk, high-quality property solutions will become increasingly available to prospective businesses.

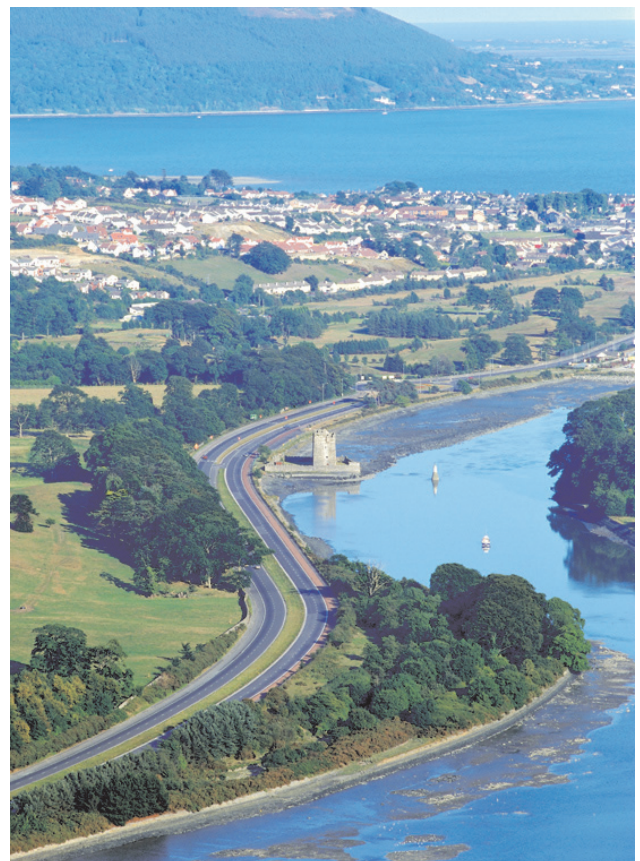
A Clean Place for Recreation and Leisure: The Environmental Proposition

The Newry-Dundalk sub-region contains some of the most dramatic and beautiful landscape on the island of Ireland. Its ready accessibility from the two major population centres, Belfast and Dublin, makes it perfect for domestic tourism as a 'shared playground'. More effective international branding could further open up the region's potential and its appeal to foreign visitors. Equally important is the need for structured

management of the region's resources so that the quality-of-life benefits to local communities are protected.

Sustainable energy. Increasingly, sustainable energy is seen as a vital component in any sub-regional strategy. Dundalk 2020 has made a creditable start in creating a sustainable-energy community that incorporates both the private and public sectors. By relying where possible on local sources of energy, costs are kept down, air quality is protected, and security of supply is improved, resulting in clear benefits to business and residents.

Natural environment. The shared natural environment of the Cooley Peninsula, Mourne Mountains, Ring of Gullion, Carlingford Lough and Dundalk Bay comprises a set of outstanding assets. They require careful management and would benefit from a joint cross-border operational, funding and marketing strategy.



Warrenpoint, view from Flagstaff
 Source: Newry and Mourne District Council

An Attractive Place to Live: The Social Proposition

High-quality urban design is fundamental to quality of life and to the performance of property in meeting end user requirements. The Newry-Dundalk sub-region has a fine heritage of public and private buildings. New developments such as those proposed for the Albert Basin offer the potential to provide a lasting legacy of innovative architecture within the sub-region. At the local government level, Newry and Dundalk are developing regeneration strategies to improve the quality of the built environment and create sustainable communities. The private sector is also committed to playing its role in creating attractive places where people want to live, work, and visit.

Delivering on the Propositions

The research team engaged with over one hundred key stakeholders across the public, private, civic and voluntary sectors to identify projects that would help to achieve sustainable development, taking into account economic, environmental, and social factors. Consensus was successfully reached on four integrated and collaborative projects that share several cross-cutting themes. Selection of the projects was based on three underlying key criteria.

The key criteria were:

- Capacity to drive a collaborative framework at a sub-regional level and reinforce joined-up policy approaches;
- Ability to improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the sub-region, while ensuring that development-led initiatives are mutually reinforcing; and
- Scope for creating a lasting legacy of sustainable local-level co-operation involving the public, private, and community sectors.

Selected Projects

- (1) A Dundalk/Newry Centre of Excellence to create a sustainable-energy community linked to the work of Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) and EU CONCERTO funding, which is positioning Dundalk 2020 as an island exemplar.
- (2) A Newry-Dundalk Cross-Border International Services Zone linked to international financial and other related services.
- (3) Geo-tourism and the management of a shared landscape and natural heritage to safeguard the geological assets and the natural resource of the Mourne, Cooley, Slieve Gullion, and Carlingford Lough and to develop their tourism potential.

- (4) A coordinated regeneration strategy for older areas in Newry and Dundalk, to simultaneously promote the distinctiveness of the two cities and further the complementarities of their respective urban functions. A proactive strategy reinforces the sustainable development of the region by focusing new development within existing designated urban zones and protecting environmentally sensitive areas from over-development.

Cross-Cutting Themes

As infrastructural linkages improve and travel times are reduced along the M1/A1 corridor, the mobility of residents, businesses and goods between Newry and Dundalk and to other neighbouring urban centres with accessibility to the Eastern Seaboard Corridor will increase. Economic growth and the potential synergies in infrastructure and delivery of services present a host of opportunities for joined-up planning and resource management for the mutual benefit of all within the sub-region. Strategic road and rail infrastructure will reinforce the objective of cross-border balanced development and promote the accessibility of the sub-region as a focus for population growth, sustainable economic development, and inward investment.

Skills, education, and training programmes are essential to ensure that the sub-region benefits from economic growth and increasing prosperity. The Southern Regional College in Newry and the Dundalk Institute of Technology play a key role in providing progressive tracks for both upskilling of the workforce and delivering educational programmes that meet projected workforce needs in tourism, sustainable energy, financial services, and business management.

Common data sets are needed for collaborative local-level decision-making. However, due to discrepancies in the two cities' census collection systems, census data are not at present an adequate resource for assembling, analysing, or comparing information on subjects such as, for example, land use, construction activities, work force characteristics (including educational levels), income, housing conditions, infrastructure, or the delivery of public services in Newry and Dundalk. Sharing of information between the two cities will allow compatible projections of future trends to be compiled, as a first step in identifying common economic, social and land development strategies.

Each of the four projects selected has developed its own set of networks and the coalitions necessary to move from concept to implementation and delivery. The specificity of the selected projects is important

in building a common approach to cross-border collaboration. However, the projects themselves should be viewed as merely *the first step* in addressing the more complex issues of the long-term management of the sub-region and furthering its economic, environmental, and social progress.

sharing a sustainable future: the four integrated and collaborative projects

Dundalk/Newry Centre of Excellence to Create a Sustainable Energy Community

“It is important as well that into the future, we look at the communities that we are going to be responsible for. We are going to have to ask ourselves the question, are we going to develop sustainable communities into the future? Are we going to develop a community that can live with itself in peace, a community that is self-enriching within itself, a community that will take pride of place?”

Batt O’Keeffe TD, former Minister for Housing, Urban Renewal and Developing Areas and current Minister for Education

Located at the centre of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor and including two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a major water resource, and a prominent cultural and geological heritage, the twin cities have a mutual interest in promoting sustainable development. Complementary sustainability programmes linked to specific capital and demonstration programmes could lead to early collaboration.

Dundalk is part of a pan-European Project funded under a Framework 6 Programme, CONCERTO II, which has selected three European towns of approximately 30,000 to develop pilot sustainable energy zones. The towns of Dundalk, Mödling (Austria), and Neuchâtel (Switzerland), have defined sustainability zones within their borders to undertake concentrated demonstration activities that can serve as models for providing sustainable energy lessons and best practices to the broader community, region, nation, and continent.

Dundalk 2020, Ireland’s first sustainable energy zone, places Dundalk at the forefront of efforts to improve sustainable energy practice on the island. The demonstration project, coordinated by Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) and located in a four-square kilometre sustainable energy zone, will demonstrate multiple renewable technologies as well as strategies for managing energy supply and demand. Increasing both energy efficiency and the proportion of electricity and heat from renewable sources is predicted to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the pilot zone by 10,000 tonnes every year from 2010. The Dundalk sustainable energy zone has set the following targets by 2010:

- Energy efficiency in selected residential, industrial and commercial buildings in the zone, will improve by up to 40%;

- At least 20% of all energy used to heat homes and businesses within the zone will be generated by renewables; and
- At least 20% of all electricity used by businesses within the zone will be generated by renewable sources.



Dundalk 2020: Sustainable Energy Zone (Photo by ICLRD)

Each of the three CONCERTO II projects has a cross-border observer community which in the case of Dundalk 2020 is the Newry and Mourne District Council. Furthermore, the Dundalk 2020 project involves direct partners who have signed the HOLISTIC2 Consortium Agreement, direct stakeholders who have signed the Dundalk 2020 Charter, and members of the action groups. To date, 29 local and national stakeholders in the public and private sectors, including Louth County Council, Dundalk Town Council, and Newry and Mourne District Council, have signalled their intent to support the project by signing the Charter. Under the Charter all stakeholders have committed to

working within action groups to ensure the successful implementation of the energy efficiency targets.

This project holds immense potential to be extended in full to Newry within the context of the twin city concept and the sustainability agenda for the sub-region. In this regard, the Dundalk 2020 project is well established with Newry as an observer community applying the lessons to their own plans for sustainable development projects.



Sailing in Carlingford Lough
Source: Louth County Council

The links between Dundalk 2020 and Newry have grown substantially through the observer status arrangements. Over time, the relationship between the sustainable communities in Newry and Dundalk could take one of several forms: two close but unconnected sustainability zones; two zones with a relationship based on Dundalk 2020's early progress; two equally weighted sustainability zones with a direct relationship; two zones with an interconnected sustainability region; or two integrated zones based on a collective vision for the sub-region. To move implementation of a Newry sustainability zone forward, an incremental four-stage process over a short to medium term is suggested.

- *Stage 1:* The current 2008 position of the Dundalk 2020 Steering Group with representation from Newry. Now the impetus must be for Newry to develop a Newry Sustainable Energy Steering Group to effectively manage sustainable development as a core aim for the city. Moving the Newry piece forward requires the momentum of a number of key stakeholders coming together to create this Steering Group. Newry will retain its role as an Observer Community to the Dundalk 2020 project and will continue to sit on the Dundalk 2020 Steering Committee.
- *Stage 2:* A newly formed Newry Sustainable Energy Steering Group, led by Newry Vision/Newry and

Mourne District Council, identifies the specific zone to be developed and agrees to sustainable energy targets. Possible zones include the Albert Basin, the new train station, or new leisure centre.

- *Stage 3:* The commitment and buy-in of central government and the appropriate agencies advances the public-private-academic partnership approach used in Dundalk 2020.
- *Stage 4:* The process creates action groups to manage the specific work packages and to develop an implementation timeline and management plan (possibly to 2012).

Linking the Newry zone to the town and region will reinforce a two-way relationship in delivering innovative sustainable energy practices within the shared region. Eventually, a combined Newry-Dundalk Sustainable Energy Steering Group could allow for the roll-out of a joint sustainable energy communities programme in both jurisdictions. The greater scale of the sub-region will allow for the development of larger, more cost-effective renewable energy sources and perhaps reduced renovation costs when improving energy efficiency through the specialisation of area-based companies.

The International Services Zone

The business community and other local stakeholders in the Newry-Dundalk sub-region recognise the need to develop the services sector, notably the higher-value international services activities. There is a clear consensus among local stakeholders that the Newry-Dundalk sub-region, located at the centre of the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor, is in an ideal position to benefit from an international trend of polycentric urban development. This trend is driven by advanced producer services firms that are decentralising activities away from core metropolitan areas towards smaller urban centres located in the spheres of influence of the metropolitan areas. Although the sub-region possesses a number of positive locational and operational advantages there are a number of limitations which need to be addressed.

The proposed Newry-Dundalk International Services Zone (NDISZ) would be established to address these limitations with the aim of developing the Newry-Dundalk sub-region as a centre for high-value international services. The NDISZ is a cross-border business zone with the critical mass to harness the synergistic effects of linking populations, graduate pools, education and research institutions, and the property solutions of Newry and Dundalk. The zone will target a large range of high-value-added internationally traded service activities, including elements of financial

non-customer facing financial services and head office or business critical functions. Given the current relatively limited size of the regional labour market and the limited pool of skilled labour, suitable targets include relatively small operations, employing as little as 20 people, but providing high-wage jobs. The zone is expected to attract both indigenous and foreign investment. The key elements underpinning the zone include the development of the local skills base, the provision of high quality property solutions, and joint promotion of the zone by the responsible agencies.

Further development of the local skills base will involve encouraging and supporting local third-level colleges to develop courses and research projects that are relevant to the targeted sectors, including entrepreneurial skills courses and related continuing professional development programmes. This provision will need to involve enhanced linkages and greater co-ordination between Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), the Southern Regional College in Newry, and the promotion agencies in the respective jurisdictions.

The proposed NDISZ has the potential to offer and/or promote a range of high-spec. property solutions which match current best practice in office development. The property, which can be located in separate locations in Newry and Dundalk, will be marketed as part of a single zone. The property solutions can incorporate the existing solutions promoted by the agencies and private sector developers, plus new proposals specifically developed as part of the NDISZ project. In Newry the NDISZ will leverage and guide private-sector initiatives to provide high-spec. property solutions.

The NDISZ would be jointly promoted by the responsible agencies including Invest NI, IDA Ireland, and Enterprise Ireland. This includes a commitment by the respective agencies to promote the zone in their international promotion seminars as an integrated zone. The promotion programme will require the development of a suite of promotional products that identify the unique selling points of the cross-border zone, as well as the development of a regional identity. The levels of incentives in each location should be flexible to allow each promotion agency to maximise its total package (tax, finance, property solutions, etc).

The structure of the proposed delivery vehicle is in part modelled on the Virtual Cross Border Technology Zone in the Londonderry-Letterkenny region, but extends the concept of cross-border co-operation in new ways. In doing so it takes the current level of cross-border co-operation to its limits. The NDISZ would have a relatively uncomplicated structure, not involving a management company. It would include a

management committee, and an advisory committee. A full-time secretariat or dedicated project manager is considered crucial for a project of this size and serves to convey a sense of commitment and 'cross-border reality'. The managerial function is to provide momentum in driving the project forward on a day-to-day basis. The project manager could be funded on a 50/50 basis by the two prominent agencies, Invest NI and IDA Ireland.

The project manager would be directed by a management committee which would meet every other month. The proposed management structure would be made up of: the two directors of the educational institutions; the two directors of regions and the managers of the regional offices of IDA Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland; an executive of Enterprise Ireland; and an independent chairperson. The management committee meetings would be chaired by an independent chairperson with a reporting line to the two ministers (DETI/DETE). This would connect it to the political process, which is considered crucial for the success of the project. Finally, the advisory committee would consist of a representative nomination of key stakeholders. The function of the advisory committee meetings would be to inform the management committee on issues relevant to the development of the region as a centre for international services; and to facilitate co-ordination and co-operation between the actions of the NDISZ and relevant institutions.

In February 2008, a group of 'champions' was established to act as the initial catalyst. This group includes representatives of the IDA, Invest NI, Dundalk County Council / Dundalk Economic Development Group and Newry and Mourne District Council / the Greater Newry Coalition. This group will be instrumental in developing the wider advisory group and management committee. The success of the project critically depends on the endorsement and support of central government. Once the advisory group is in place and the necessary endorsement is guaranteed, the champions could progress with developing a management committee.

Sub-Region Resident Employment by Sector – 2005/2006

	Newry & Mourne 2005	Percent	Louth (No Drogheda)	Percent	Sub-Region	Percent
All Sectors	40,100	100%	33,828	100%	73,928	100%
Agriculture	1,203	3%	1,230	4%	2,433	3%
Extraction	0	0%	170	1%	170	0%
Manufacturing	5,614	14%	5,030	15%	10,644	14%
Construction	3,208	8%	4,192	12%	7,400	10%
Wholesale and Retail	8,421	21%	4,942	15%	13,363	18%
Hotels and Restaurants	2,406	6%	1,439	4%	3,845	5%
Transport and Communication	1,60	4%	2,308	7%	3,912	5%
Financial Services	401	1%	1,074	3%	1,475	2%
Business Services	2,406	6%	2,650	8%	5,056	7%
Public Admin. and Defense	1,604	4%	1,464	4%	3,068	4%
Education	4,812	12%	2,034	6%	6,846	9%
Health	6,416	16%	3,820	11%	10,236	14%
Other Services	1,604	4%	3,475	10%	5,079	7%

Source: Rol Census and Regional Forecasts

Geo-Tourism for the Newry-Dundalk Region

“I am sure that we all know what a remarkable landscape (the Cooley, Gullion and Mourne Mountains) provide, but not all will know about the many geologically unique features they contain. Geoparks are now internationally recognised as an excellent way to exploit these features as visitor attractions, but in a controlled way, which protects these important natural assets.”

Conor Murphy MP MLA, Minister for Regional Development

The Newry-Dundalk sub-region lies in the heart of an incredibly beautiful cross-border landscape with the Mournes, Slieve Croob, Slieve Gullion, the Cooley Peninsula, Carlingford Lough and Dundalk Bay offering a cross-border resource with unique geology, archaeology, ecology, and a history that is important to the region's heritage.

In the opinion of the Geological Surveys, north and south, the geological assets of the Cooley - Slieve Gullion - Mourne mountains area are significant and would constitute a strong case for an international Geopark. For the Newry-Dundalk sub-region, the Geopark option offers a means of promoting cross-border working relationships in sustainable development, heritage, conservation, tourism, and education associated with a regional and local economy. Moreover, since Geoparks are designated by the European Geoparks Network, a major advantage is that the designation would be non-statutory and could



Mourne Mountains (Photo by Mourne Heritage Trust)

be established even where differences in environmental legislation exist.

The proposed Geo-tourism zone in Newry-Dundalk would include a series of scattered sites in the Ring

of Gullion Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Mournes and Slieve Croob AONB, in Northern Ireland; and an area in the Republic of Ireland in North County Louth, north of the Castletown River and incorporating the Cooley Peninsula and Feede Mountain. The areas in Northern Ireland would coincide with those of the statutorily designated AONBs. The boundaries of the AONB are based on the geological landform of the respective areas and outline a landscape of exceptional quality. These areas also incorporate notably the Eastern Mournes Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Slieve Gullion SAC. In County Louth, the areas for the Geopark will encompass Carlingford Mountain SAC, Carlingford Shore SAC and Dundalk Bay SAC and the Louth County Council designated AONB.

The growing popularity of the area for recreational tourism will require some form of proactive environmental management that can work in co-operation with existing landowners and ensure that, where public access is allowed, proper and appropriate facilities are provided. The most viable management option for the proposed Geopark is for it to be led by a local authority, with a wide range of stakeholders involved in the management and decision making. A similar management approach has worked well for the Marble Arch Geopark in Fermanagh which is managed by the District Council and will soon include cross-border management with Cavan County Council. Both governments have also expressed a strong interest in the potential role of the Geopark concept as a key project to take forward under the Newry-Dundalk vision.



Newry City Centre
Source: Crown Copyright

Preparatory work carried out by the Joint Working Group outlined a five-year action programme (including staffing and funding requirements). Initial activities focus on promotion of the concept, acquiring funding, and setting up management structures. This will then be followed by assessment and recording of the geological and other heritage of the region. A capital works programme would also be prepared and implemented to improve access to the sites of interest and provide appropriate interpretation and facilities. There would also be an active promotion and publicity campaign, preparation of educational material, and development of educational activities. An application to acquire Geopark status would be prepared in year 4 of the programme.

A two-tier management structure to support the planning and development of geo-tourism has been suggested by the joint working group. It would consist of:

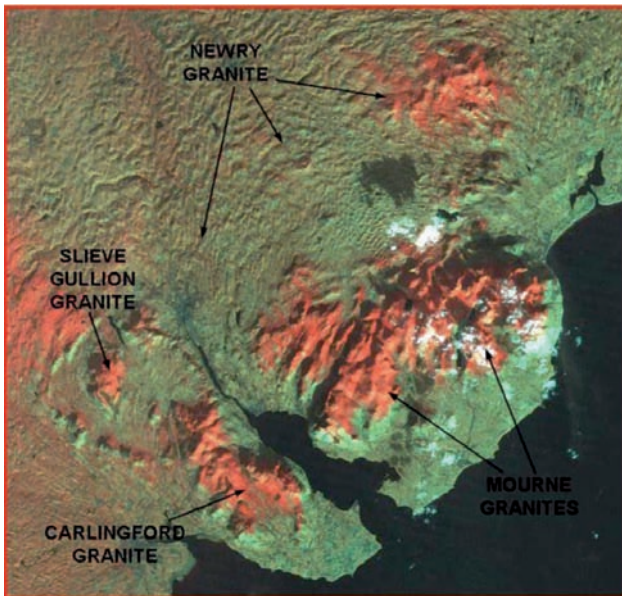
A Partnership Management Team comprising local authorities involved in the action programme, the Mourne Heritage Trust, and the Ring of Gullion AONB Initiative through Regeneration of South Armagh (RoSA). This team would meet on a regular basis to ensure that the aim of the Geopark Action Programme is being delivered.

A Liaison Group comprised of local, community, and national organisations having responsibility for conservation, tourism, local economic development, land management, and culture. The Liaison Group would meet periodically to discuss strategic issues, ensuring community liaison and complementarity with national, regional, and local policies and programmes.

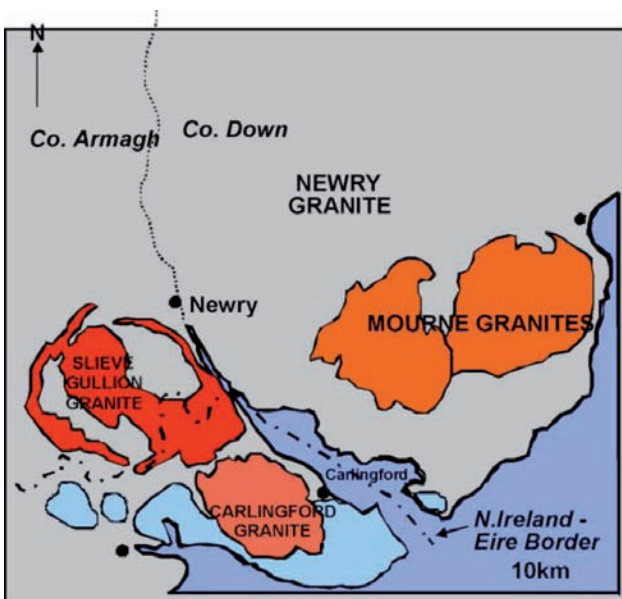
The Partnership Management Team will need the support and endorsement of central government and local authorities as they introduce the project. Local authority buy-in, including by the respective councillors on both sides of the border, is essential to get the project up and running through INTERREG funding and to ensure its on-going sustainability. Funding is being sought to develop a joint marketing plan and enhanced visitor infrastructure and services focused on the theme of geo-tourism. Additionally, given the geographic spread of the area under consideration for geo-tourism, other local authorities will become involved, namely Banbridge and Down District Councils.

The management team and the Liaison group will need to develop a proactive community consultation process. The successful development of Geoparks in other

locations on the island of Ireland has required close consultation among local and central agencies and land-owners in proximity to the designated geological zones.



Source: BGS Enhanced Imagery © NERC, 2007



Source: BGS Enhanced Imagery © NERC, 2007

Regeneration Strategy for Older Areas in Newry and Dundalk

The urban areas of Newry and Dundalk, located as they are at the centre of the Belfast-Dublin corridor, have an opportunity to capitalize on the key conditions for economic growth, inward investment, proximity to markets, and property solutions. However, accelerated development in the Newry-Dundalk sub-region will necessitate further investment in key local infrastructure,

supported by an innovative regeneration strategy and quality-of-life agenda at the urban level. A proactive approach to regeneration in both Newry and Dundalk would also reinforce sustainable development objectives through the concentration of growth based on the need for new housing and inward investment requirements.

Within the urban areas of Dundalk and Newry, a number of regeneration strategies and schemes are either proposed or under way. These schemes reflect the fact that some needs and goals are shared by both cities, for example:

- Create vibrant city centres based on mixed-use development;
- Generate better use of existing land assets and location advantages in supporting economic development and recapturing water-based assets such as river and canal fronts for tourism, commercial development, and leisure; and
- Promote better planning, urban design, and sustainable development geared to existing housing, social, and infrastructure needs.

The specific regeneration schemes are essential if the two urban areas are to fulfil their potential as attractive and inclusive places in which to live, work, invest, and visit. A collaborative approach to achieving common objectives can be facilitated by building upon existing schemes at the urban level and developing the linkages and synergies that will in turn facilitate meeting the strategic needs of the wider sub-region.

The regeneration of the sub-region needs to draw upon the inherent strengths in both Newry and Dundalk in terms of effective governance, stakeholder engagement, and operational benefits. Both Newry and Dundalk are developing urban regeneration strategies within increasingly competitive markets including proximity to the conurbations of Dublin and Belfast. Regular exchanges among central and local government officials, the Chambers of Commerce and Trade, and prominent stakeholders can facilitate in identifying key areas for co-operation on regeneration. As projects are developed in one jurisdiction – for example, the renovation of social housing using innovative sustainable energy approaches – the other jurisdiction can benefit from the transfer of knowledge and best practice.

The performance of Newry-Dundalk as a bi-polar regional centre will be largely determined by the extent to which it can attract investment from highly mobile and productive industries/services. At the urban level, the relative performance of the Newry-Dundalk twin city is important to the inward investment decision making process. Consequently, working collaboratively with the respective Chambers of Commerce and Trade

it is imperative that key performance data be collected for the Newry-Dundalk sub-region. Cross-jurisdictional data based on key social and economic indicators are necessary to accurately assess the property and land markets and monitor regeneration strategies going forward.

Collaboration on regeneration within the sub-region offers enormous potential ranging from the transfer of best practices to the implementation of a structured approach to joint marketing, monitoring, and financing arrangements, as follows:

Joint Marketing

- Planning and regeneration strategies underpinning the shared twin city approach;
- Collaborative cross-border projects such as the proposed Dundalk-Newry Sustainable Communities Zone and the Newry-Dundalk International Services Zone;
- Unique tourism product and environmental assets of the sub-region
- Strong sustainable energy credentials of the sub-region;
- Town/city centre promotional events engaging local retail businesses;
- Cost advantage on property relative to Dublin and Belfast;
- Retail draw based on competitive commodity pricing; and
- Commercial strength of port and waterfront facilities.

Joint Monitoring

- Respective planning policies in encouraging urban living and better quality of life;
- Regeneration policies and initiatives in complementing sustainable energy strategies;
- Zoned land to meet future needs of housing, industry and mixed use development;
- Socio-economic indicators of population, housing, employment and travel to work;
- Commercial and residential property prices and house price affordability;
- Economic competitiveness of the sub-region relative to other city regions; and
- Economic growth, enterprise start ups, and education and skills.

Joint Financing

- Attracting FDI and domestic investment to suit the respective regeneration strategies;
- Justifying central government funding to address high deprivation/disadvantaged status;
- Leveraging public funds from the respective

jurisdictions to reinforce 'linked and shared gateway' status; and

- Securing joint public funding (EU or new funding instruments).

Raising the physical and environmental profile of Newry-Dundalk represents a significant challenge for the two cities and will require a substantial funding commitment from both the public and private sectors. New opportunities are emerging whereby funding streams can be channelled into delivery vehicles for targeted urban infrastructure projects and brownfield redevelopment schemes. Local Asset-Based Vehicles (LABVs) operate by placing public assets such as under-used council property or land or funds into a portfolio for use in leveraging matching private sector investment. The revenue stream is then used to develop the property portfolio with the returns on the investment being shared. It is considered that local authorities could potentially gain from such vehicles by sweating their assets to generate a long-term source of regeneration funding.

The various funding sources also indicate a need to make the most of the Structural Funds in addition to taking advantage of wider initiatives within the European Union. Accessing these funds will depend on willingness to participate and to make quality applications on a cross border basis. An interesting development to assist LABVs is the recently approved EU Programme, JESSICA (Joint European Support for Investment in City Areas), which allows EU member states to invest a portion of their structural funds in urban regeneration projects and to secure a return on the investment. The uniqueness of the Newry-Dundalk twin city concept offers potential in this regard as a pilot scheme based on the grounds of being cross-border, cross-jurisdictional, and cross-impact.

Creating a collaborative regeneration strategy will require careful consideration of the areas and methods for co-operation. A starting point would be to develop a mutual understanding of the respective strategies and key projects that are coming on line and identify potential areas of overlap or opportunities for achieving economies of scale through co-operation. Each urban centre needs to inventory its land and building assets, to identify under-utilised land or buildings in locations suitable for redevelopment. A joint workshop or conference on regeneration initiatives facilitated by local councils and Chambers of Commerce would raise awareness of key areas of co-operation on collaborative regeneration strategies, funding mechanisms, and joint data collection and analysis. A Newry-Dundalk Regeneration Steering Group should be established

consisting of key stakeholders at central and local government level in both jurisdictions, particularly those directly engaged in regeneration project delivery in the two cities. The composition of the steering group should include representatives from the public and private sectors and financial institutions.

Project Integration

The delivery of the four core projects in an integrated manner is considered essential to the economic

development, social well-being and environmental sustainability of the Newry-Dundalk Twin City Region. Furthermore, the interrelationships between the four projects emphasises the importance of bringing them forward in parallel. These core projects, as well as others that may be identified in the future, will require the support of a number of cross-cutting themes.

cross-cutting initiatives

“Infrastructure ... is of no consequence unless you learn to use it and use it to its maximum benefit for all the people of this island.”

David Gavaghan, Chief Executive of the Strategic Investment Board, Northern Ireland (ICLRD Conference - January 2008)

Infrastructure: Transportation Improvements

The Southern Relief Route and the Narrow Water Bridge are examples of key infrastructural projects funded by central government that are of mutual importance to the economic positioning of both Newry and Dundalk. Intended to facilitate linkages within the sub-region and the economic corridor, these projects will have significant impacts on local development and investment potential. Adopting an agreed strategy on the positioning of both projects will ensure an equitable sharing of benefits and reinforce collaboration between the two jurisdictions.



The new 14 km A1/N1 Newry to Dundalk Link Road is currently used by an estimated 20,000 vehicles each day and is projected to double in traffic use by 2021. (Photo by ICLR D)

Within the context of infrastructure investments and a spatial planning framework, land use and transportation planning has an important role to play in delivering sustainable development to the Newry Dundalk Twin City Region. The increased need for additional homes to house the growing population over the medium to long term will necessitate the better use of land and infrastructure. An integrated approach to

spatial planning can help shape the future pattern of development and influence the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses, thus reducing the need to travel by car, facilitating freight access to key terminals, providing greater options for multiple modes of travel, and ensuring flexibility to meet the demands of the expanding local economy.

Linking the location, type, and density of residential and mixed use activities to strategic transportation networks offers the potential to promote the East Coast corridor and transit-oriented development within the twin city region. An integrated land use and transportation management plan should be prepared to address traffic growth and change, and efficient use of transport related space. Development control and urban regeneration policies can be used to support the implementation of integrated land use and transportation plans that are linked to better economic, social, environmental and community outcomes.

Education and Skills

Newry and Dundalk are endowed with valuable higher-education assets that should be utilised as key components of a collaborative strategy, to ensure the cities' continuing competitiveness as the all-Island economy develops in the context of an evolving global economy. The roles of the two main institutions – the Southern Regional College (SRC) and the Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) – should be clarified in order to avoid wasteful use of resources that could result from unnecessary competition between them; they should be encouraged to develop complementary educational specialties that meet the labour skill requirements demanded by current and future employers within the sub-region.

There is also a need to develop educational sequences recognised in the North and the South that allow

students to move from one institution to the other as they progress in their studies. Given the accessibility of Newry and Dundalk to a wider cross-border region, the choice between attending either institution should be made on the basis of their complementary academic offerings rather than on the country of residence of the student. This is particularly relevant for students interested in enrolling in continuing education courses to update their skills and take advantage of employment opportunities in emerging economic sectors such as financial and tradable services.



Dundalk Institute of Technology (Photo by ICLRD)

Senior personnel in DKIT and SRC endorsed a commitment that both institutions will work together to support the creation and future servicing of an international services zone. The establishment of an International Services Zone Working Group is fundamental to taking this initiative forward. The group will be led at a senior level with appropriate representation from curriculum managers and business support staff. The group will explore the following initiatives:

- Articulation agreements for progression from one jurisdiction to the other;
- Joint strategies to embed enterprise and entrepreneurship within the core curriculum, including promotion of pre-incubation opportunities;
- Student and staff exchanges; and
- Joint promotional activities across local colleges and schools.

Although much of what is articulated here will be developed and funded through both institutions, opportunities may arise in the future to seek support funding for further advancement of a collaborative education and skills strategy including:

- Collaborative partnerships with local employers to ensure that qualifications and training are fit for purpose;
- Joint e-learning strategies to support more flexible modes of curricular delivery, particularly in the financial services sector;
- Joint marketing initiatives to promote international tradable services;
- Establishing a joint Centre of Excellence for Financial and International Services in Newry (SRC) and Dundalk (DKIT), aligned with existing Business and Financial Service schools and departments;
- Shared branding and marketing of the Centre of Excellence; and
- Establishing an Inter Traded Services Centres in Newry and Dundalk providing flexible office space and support services (extension of existing incubation facilities).

Dundalk 2020 holds out the view that developing two strong sustainability centres in Dundalk and Newry could ultimately lead to the establishing of a Sustainable Energy Institute offering programmes based on modular units that would address topics related to energy efficiency and renewable technologies. The institute could provide courses for local authorities, agencies, and the private sector on sustainable energy practices, accelerating the sustainability development process, and helping transfer practical experience into educational programmes. Dundalk Institute of Technology currently offers sustainability-related courses and degrees through its Centre for Renewable Energy, which was founded in 2002. The DKIT centre, in collaboration with SRC, would play a key role in developing the Sustainable Energy Institute.

Sub-Region Educational Attainment Levels - 2006

	Working Age Population	Primary/ sub-Primary	Percent	Upper Secondary/ Level 2/3	Percent	Third Level +/ Level 4/5	Percent
Newry and Mourne	57908	25480	44%	14477	25%	8107	14%
Louth	86699	15377	18%	19877	23%	18325	21%
Sub-Region	117366	36014	31%	28033	24%	20335	17%

Sources: Rol Census, NI Census, Regional Forecast¹. Drogheda not included in sub-region.

Public Services

The provision of public services, including solid waste management, public transportation, education, and health care, obviously benefits from the economies of scale that result from cross-border collaboration, as has been demonstrated in several European cross-border projects. Harmonisation of the delivery of public services requires the accord of higher authorities; however, success in Newry-Dundalk will ultimately be dependent on initiatives originating at the local level.

Affordable Housing

The economic growth of the Newry-Dundalk sub-region is partially dependent on the critical mass of a labour force that will live and work on either side of the border. An adequate supply of housing, including an affordable component, is essential for attracting key workers. One of the outputs of a common inter-jurisdictional data base will be the ability to

forecast housing demand in the sub-region with greater accuracy than is possible at present. The ability of the two jurisdictions to meet this demand will require the joint action and support of the authorities and agencies responsible for social and affordable housing provision in both the North and the South.

Sustainable Development

Effective protection of the environment must be based on taking a sustainable approach to development and investment. It is expected that the experience gained in the joint management of environmental assets such as the unique landscape and natural heritage of the sub-region, can be extended through mutually agreed-upon policies to facilitate other sectors of the economy such as tourism development and leisure. An opportunity exists to promote smart growth based on mixed-use developments that reduce travel-to-work catchment areas.

“Whatever we do in future has to be sustainable.”

Dermot Nolan, Principal Officer, Department of Finance, Dublin (ICLRD Conference--January 2008)

¹ Actual figures from the 2006 Irish Census are used. Proportions of attainment levels are taken from the 2001 NI Census and applied to 2006 population estimates in order to estimate 2006 educational attainment levels for Newry and Mourne.

structured co-operation: making it happen

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“Our work suggests that the potential for both jurisdictions to help each other for mutual benefit is always open to new opportunity, new interpretation and increasing returns and rewards for everyone on the island. However maximizing these opportunities requires real commitment to overcoming barriers if it is going to be truly possible to translate policy into successful working models at an operational level.”

Nuala Crossin (Renewable Energy, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Belfast) and Gerard Monks (Competitiveness and EU Affairs, Department for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Dublin).²

The main challenge facing inter-municipal collaboration in cross-border regions lies in the legal and institutional differences that commonly occur across borders spanning different jurisdictions. Bringing these differences into harmony requires decisions at the national government level that support the interest of the local parties in coordinating their sub-regional development strategies. The main issues that have to be resolved to ensure full cross-border co-operation are:

- Identifying legal and administrative procedures on each side of the border that may hinder co-operation;
- Quantifying the potential for synergies for investment; and
- Proposing solutions to institutional obstacles.

Ideally, the sub-region should have a more integrated institutional structure to minimise the differences between its two components and to create a framework that does not favour one side or the other for the location of new economic activities. Local authorities and other stakeholders can assist in identifying institutional obstacles and propose ways to overcome them in co-operation with the relevant central government departments.

The successful development of Newry and Dundalk will depend on their capacity to nurture a mutually supportive relationship within the context of a coherent spatial framework and a common policy agenda. The principle of capitalising and counterbalancing growth at either end of the corridor by focusing attention on and concentrating development in the centre presents a real opportunity for enhancing the future investment prospects of Newry and Dundalk and for balanced development on the island of Ireland. A joint approach to project delivery and implementation will enable

the sub-region to increase competitiveness, sustain employment, and generate investment structured around the complementarities of sustainability, energy efficiency, and international business.

In Europe cross-jurisdictional arrangements have proved successful in delivering on a number of important operational outputs which have a clear resonance for the Newry-Dundalk sub-region, as follows:

- Improving the mobility of the population through the creation of cross-border public transportation;
- Providing partnerships for the delivery of public services that reflect development patterns rather than political jurisdiction;
- Promoting new economic activities by standardising regulatory measures;
- Achieving a more harmonious development pattern by coordinating land regulations and access to social housing; and
- Facilitating cross-border educational and cultural exchanges.

Moving Forward

Voluntary co-operation based on mutually agreed priorities offers opportunities for implementation of a sub-regional planning approach that takes a rational view at the governance level and the use of light administrative structures that reflect the operational needs of targeting development and investment opportunities. Rather than creating a new layer of institutional structures, it depends on coalition building, stakeholder consensus, and defining specific interventions through project identification, implementation, and delivery that have clear mutual benefits for the Newry, Dundalk, and the sub-region. Project delivery mechanisms stress the importance of

² Excerpt from *The Wind Across the Border in The Wind Across the Border and Other Award Winning Essays from the First Four Training Courses of the North/South and Cross-Border Public Sector Training Programme (2005-2007)*.

inclusive stakeholder involvement to achieve consensus. Specifically, it is suggested that a bottom-up approach led by local government and business leaders should be reinforced by the top-down commitment provided by central government ministers and departments. Engagement and commitment of the northern and southern administrations is crucial, to provide the impetus, guidance, and resources needed to implement cross-border interventions in partnership with local government. The review of local administration in Northern Ireland may result in local authorities assuming greater responsibility for development plans, local economic development, and regeneration on a par with their local government counterparts in the Republic of Ireland.

In terms of steering the process, the central/local government model that is currently being put in place in Northern Ireland for the Newry District is significant, as it involves the appointment of senior personnel from central government departments (Social Development, Regional Development) to work in collaboration with local government and other stakeholders in the Newry area on matters relating to spatial planning, infrastructure, and urban regeneration. Direct access to central government representatives should be maintained across the sub-region with regular dialogue on a cross-jurisdictional basis to meet the need for joined-up thinking and action.

Framing Further Co-operation

Newry and Dundalk should continue and further develop their current co-operation by building on the light administrative structure that has evolved during this study. To do this, the two jurisdictions will need to take the following steps:

(1) Continue and enhance the Joint Senior Management Group composed of the county and town managers and council executives and their senior department heads, to develop areas selected for future co-operation into a sequence of interventions to implement commonly agreed strategic objectives and projects. The team should have responsibility for the integration of the Newry-Dundalk sub-regional strategic plan in the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy. It will also ensure the necessary liaison with central government agencies and cross-border bodies. A very good opportunity exists to link the work undertaken to date by the three local governments to promote cross-border spatial planning at a sub-regional level with the review of the Regional Development Strategy in the North and the update report on the National Spatial Strategy in the South.

(2) Create a Twin City Region Advisory Group modelled on the Steering Committee established for this study. It should be composed of representatives of the Newry and Mourne District Council, Louth County Council, Dundalk Town Council, the two Chambers of Commerce, and Central Government representatives. The Joint Working Group should meet at least twice a year. It would be responsible for:

- Developing and adopting an agreed strategic plan for the development of the Newry-Dundalk sub-region;
- Facilitating coordination with other central governments and cross-border bodies;
- Identifying areas of future co-operation for the implementation of the strategic plan. These may range from the adoption of common development standards to specific projects, undertaken either separately by each municipality or jointly, to ensure the competitive advantages of the sub-region; and
- Creating consultative mechanisms to ensure the participation of stakeholders and the transparency of the process.

For this group to be effective, it will require clear channels of communication to decision makers in both jurisdictions. This can be facilitated by linking to the North South Ministerial Council, other cross-border bodies, and relevant ministers in the respective central departments involved in cross-border initiatives.



Harvard Graduate School of Design Studio on Carlingford Lough
Source: Newry and Mourne District Council

(3) Appoint Joint Technical Teams under the stewardship of the Advisory Committee and supported by the Joint Senior Management Group with responsibility for:

- Programming the nature of the intervention;
- Proposing an implementation sequence;

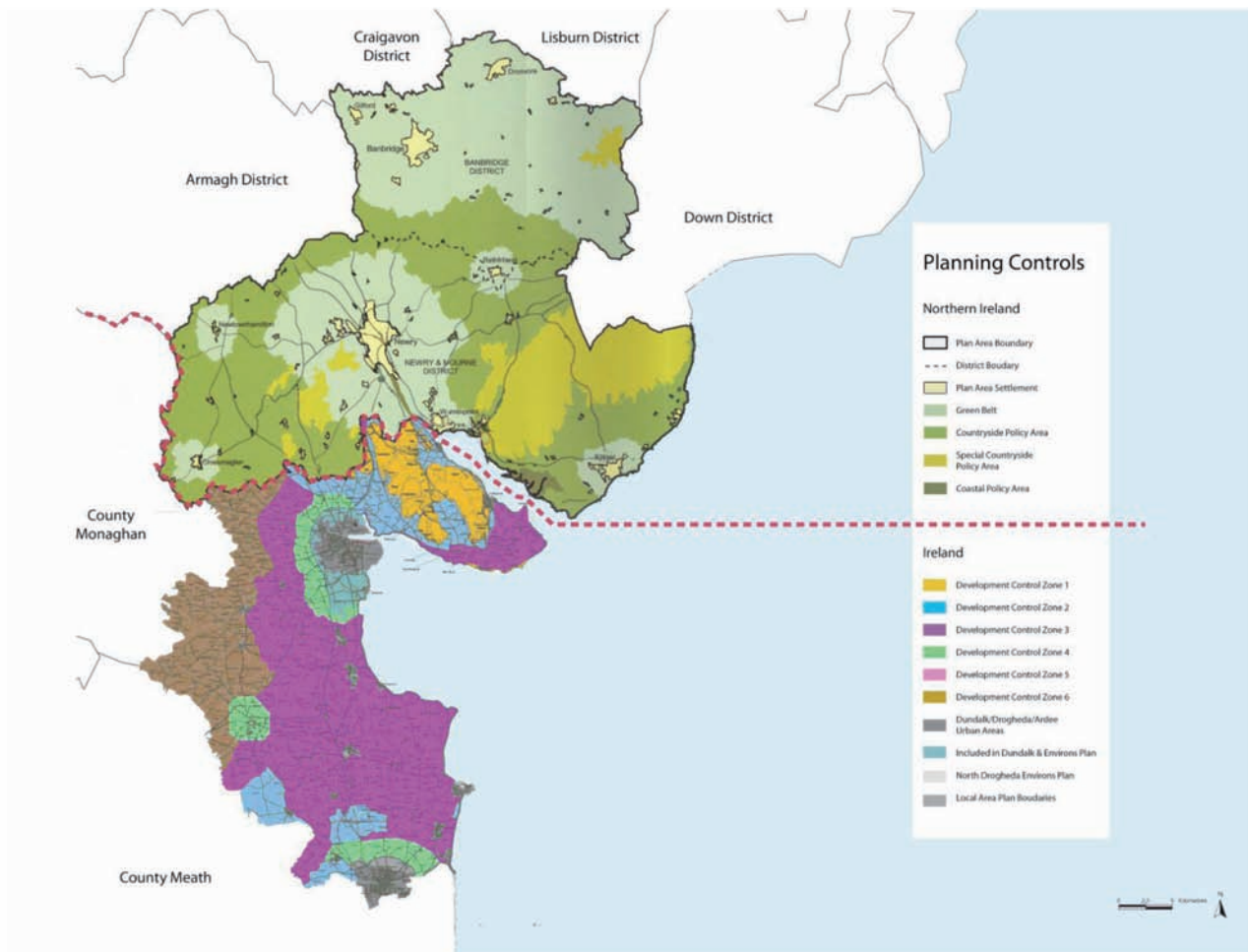
- Identifying local and external funding sources for the implementation of both joint and individual projects; and
- Recommending implementation structures to carry on implementation.

Supportive Policy Context

In the coming three years (2008-2011) major government policies and activities will take place between the two governments that will present unique opportunities to support regional and cross-border co-operation:

- Both governments have committed to strategic and operational co-operation between their respective spatial strategies through the adoption of a non-statutory collaborative framework for spatial planning;
- A major review of *Regional Development Strategy* (RDS) in Northern Ireland is underway and is indirectly linked to the implementation of the

- Review of Public Administration that anticipates transferring additional competencies to local councils in spatial planning and local development;
- A progress and update report on the implementation of the *National Spatial Strategy* in Ireland will begin in 2008 and will feed into the Mid-Term Review of the National Development Plan in 2010;
- The *Regional Planning Guidelines* will undergo a statutory review during 2009 and 2010 to revise and update priorities for regional growth, with a particular focus on the Gateways and Hubs and the mechanisms to accelerate their growth and harness their potential;
- Central government funding programmes in both Ireland (The *National Development Plan --2007-2013*) and Northern Ireland (The *Strategic Investment Plan -- 2008 to 2018*) are now more closely linked to spatial planning policies and cross-border initiatives;



Source: Banbridge/ Newry & Mourne Area Plan (2015 - Draft Plan and the Louth County Council County Development Plan, 2006

- EU programmes funded by the Special EU Programmes Body will increasingly be led by local authorities for SME development, tourism, environmental protection, health care, infrastructure development and access to transport networks and the promotion of education and cultural development; and
- The Census for the Republic of Ireland and the Census for Northern Ireland will both be occurring in 2011. The last time the two occurred in a same timeframe was in 2001/2002.

The Department of Regional Development has established a working group to provide strategic advice and is in the process of outlining the key issues and process for review. This review will be linked to the implementation of the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Executive has now agreed that local government in Northern Ireland will be restructured from the existing 26 councils to 11, and that the newly organized councils will acquire new competencies in aspects of planning as well as rural development, the public realm aspects of local roads functions, urban regeneration and community development, a range of housing-related functions, and local economic development and tourism. These new responsibilities will give border councils in the North similar responsibilities to those of their neighbouring county councils in the South.

Financing Cross-Border Co-operation

The projects identified in this report will need to rely on multiple sources of funding from the private and public sectors. By proactively stating the case as a cross-border region, opportunities can increase for EU and central government funding.

- The *National Development Plan* (2007-2013), which now includes a special chapter on cross-border programmes, has an ongoing monitoring process that includes an annual review of targets and projects.
- The *Strategic Investment Plan* (2008 to 2018) in Northern Ireland operates on a three-year investment cycle and will begin preparing for a new investment cycle that will start in 2011.
- The European Territorial Co-operation agenda for 2007-13 promotes cross-border co-operation involving a partnership of national, regional, and local agencies. Areas of co-operation that will increasingly be led by local authorities in conjunction with cross-border agencies include SME development, tourism, environmental protection, health care, infrastructure development and access to transport networks, and the promotion of education and cultural development.

Both the National Development Plan and the Strategic Investment Plan have explored opportunities for public/private partnerships when considering major infrastructure works. Private sector funding will be essential for regeneration initiatives within the urban areas of Newry and Dundalk and should be leveraged by Exchequer regeneration funds. In most cases, cross-border projects will require a packaging of funds from different sources and with various timeframes. This reinforces the key role that the three local authorities will have to play to bring together funding and coordinate project implementation.

An Emerging Cross-Border Model

The emergence of the Belfast-Dublin corridor, and its potential to be an economic driver for local development, led the respective local authorities and the Chambers of Commerce and Trade on each side of the border to collaborate in a more opportunity-driven manner. The Colin Buchanan study (2006), funded by central and local authorities, stressed the potential of a twin city region with a sufficient critical mass to attract investment, service the needs of the cross-border region, and become a growth pole in its own right.

In 2007-08, during the initial phase of this research, the importance and benefits of specific types of regional co-operation in Newry-Dundalk became manifest in a series of ICLRD-conducted interviews and panel discussions involving over 100 different key stakeholders.

The private sector and the leadership within the Chambers of Commerce are increasingly taking a proactive role in developing a regional identity. The Dundalk Chamber's annual conference in November 2007, entitled *Border Vision Gateway*, offered an opportunity for speakers from the North and the South to discuss opportunities for Newry-Dundalk co-operation. The 2006 *Strategic Vision for the Greater Newry Area* also speaks to cross-border co-operation.

As shown during the course of this study, officials from both sides of the border became actively involved in shaping potential cross-border projects based on sustainable energy, sustainable economic development, international services; infrastructure provision, and regeneration funding and investment. These initiatives represent a new level of public sector leadership among the three local authorities of Dundalk Town Council, Newry and Mourne District Council, and Louth County Council. The County and Town Council executives and their senior managers have taken an impressive step in meeting on a regular basis to discuss joint collaborative projects. Similarly, civic and business entrepreneurship is

evident from the proactive role of the two Chambers of Commerce in building a regional identity.

Furthermore, according to the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), cross-border co-operation brings added value to national measures on each side of the border and where the private sector and the universities can be involved; it can lead to joint research and innovation. The initiatives to develop closer links between the Southern Regional College and the Dundalk Institute of Technology in meeting the workforce training needs and research and development are important steps in this regard.

As local authorities in the Newry-Dundalk sub-region, supported by their respective central governments, engage in cross-border collaboration and exchange experiences of collaborative governance and citizen engagement in local decision-making, models of cross-border, and indeed inter-jurisdictional co-operation are beginning to emerge.

Key Actions and Next Steps

The following framework for co-operation draws from the working papers³ to suggested short, medium and long term actions within three key areas:

- Core Projects
- Cross-Cutting Activities
- Organisation

The short-term actions focus on the key initial organisational issues that need to be addressed and potential funding to launch initiatives. Each of the core projects and cross-cutting activities will need the support of existing or newly established champions.

For the sustainable energy communities, Newry should seek funding for a dedicated manager for the Newry Sustainable Energy Project. The opportunity for seeking co-funding and mentoring with the Dundalk 2020 programme should be explored. Membership of the International Services Zone Management and Advisory Committees can be formalized and initial tasks such as an inventory of existing and potential properties for headquarters companies in the twin city region as well as the core of a marketing and branding programme should be agreed upon. In the short-term, the geo-tourism initiative is seeking INTERREG funding for community outreach and education efforts on the geo-tourism concept and for capital works. Other projects such as urban regeneration, skills development and training, and data collection have already laid the

ground work for initial collaboration and are further highlighted in the working papers developed from discussions held with focus groups for each of the four core projects.

The medium-term builds on these actions by raising the profile of initiatives through outreach (regional conferences and workshops) and implementation of agreed upon work programmes. The long-term looks to future actions to promote beneficial outcomes for the sub-region.

Furthermore, the framework for co-operation tables highlight the importance of joined-government policy actions on a cross-border and cross-departmental basis. It also reinforces the need for integration between spatial planning and funding prioritisation on infrastructure, environmental management, and services. The successful generation of funding, implementation and delivery of projects within the Newry-Dundalk Twin City region will depend on this alignment.

The framework for co-operation lists the next steps for the respective Joint Senior Management Group, the Twin City Regional Advisory Group and the Joint Technical Teams. An initial task is to appoint a chair and members of the Twin City Regional Advisory Group and develop a larger roll-out strategy for the Twin City Region. The Joint Working Advisory Group will need a Chair who can be a champion for the Twin City Region.

³ Working Papers will be available for consultation on the ICLRD website at www.iclrd.org.

Framework for Co-operation

Core Projects	Short-term (1 year)	Medium-term (1 to 3 years)	Long-term (3 to 5+ years)
Sustainable Energy Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on Newry observer status in EU Concerto Programme • Identify key NI counterpart(s) to SEI for Newry • Identify technical partners to support initiative (SEI, SRC, DkIT) • Seek initial funding for a dedicated manager of Newry Sustainable Energy Project • Appoint Newry Sustainable Energy Steering Group • Identify specific Newry zone(s) and partners (private and government) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop academic and private partnership for research, training and knowledge management of sustainable development • Identify sustainable energy targets for capital projects and demonstration projects (infrastructure, new build, affordable housing etc.) • Apply energy technologies to capital programmes in Newry-continue in Dundalk • Identify work-packages, timeline and management plan for individual and joint-action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the employment and economic potential of environmental management and sustainable development to the sub-region • Market Newry Dundalk region as a sustainable community on the island of Ireland
International Services Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Management Committee and Advisory Committee and hold at least two meetings • Appoint Project Manager/Secretariat • Explore Joint Promotion Programme • Begin to build a data base on existing and potential properties for headquarter companies in Newry and Dundalk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose options for joined-up financial services curriculum between DkIT and Southern Regional College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Newry/Dundalk as a location for higher value jobs • Diversify socio-economic profile of the Newry Dundalk region

Framework for Co-operation

Core Projects	Short-term (1 year)	Medium-term (1-to-3 years)	Long-term (3-to-5+ years)
<p>Geo-tourism and Management of a Shared Landscape and Natural Heritage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for Interreg IV funding • Appoint Partnership Management Team and Liaison Group that includes a champion(s) • Develop Geo-tourism concept through outreach, community consultation and review of best practices e.g. visit Marble Arch and officials involved in cross-border initiative (Fermanagh and Cavan) • Begin to prepare educational materials and capital works programme as per Interreg IV application • Explore option of holding a technical workshop on Geo-tourism concept, specific topics TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement activities outlined in the Interreg application • Initiate/continue dialogue with stakeholders representing landowners, tourism suppliers and conservation groups • Explore option of holding a regional conference on best practices in Geo-tourism drawing from EU, US and island of Ireland • Review potential for UNESCO European Geopark status • Explore institutional, legal and financial options for protecting environmentally sensitive areas on a cross-border basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities and options of applying for UNESCO European Geopark status based on feedback from Councils and key stakeholders • Develop joined-up environmental management based on best-practices in cross-border co-operation
<p>Urban Regeneration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a Newry/ Dundalk Steering or Coordinating Group • Share experience of on-going regeneration plans • Explore options and timing for a workshop on City Centre Development Strategies (best practices). Use the workshop to identify areas and benefits of joined-up regeneration strategies and how sense of place can be enhanced in mixed-use and mixed-income developments • Explore opportunities to align sustainable energy guidelines and regeneration projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify common key data on property markets for collection in regeneration areas • Recommend infrastructure schemes that complement regeneration-led projects • Seek new funding mechanisms for individual and joined-up city regeneration initiatives that leverage private sector funding • Research EU programmes for joined-up financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas for strategic collaboration • Develop options for joint marketing of regeneration strategies for inward investment

Framework for Co-operation

Cross-Cutting Activities	Short-term (1 year)	Medium-term (1-to-3 years)	Long-term (3-to-5+ years)
Skills, Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Joint Management Team between DkIT, SRC, explore opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Staff and student exchanges ◦ An articulation agreement for progression from one jurisdiction to another ◦ Options for joint strategies to strengthen enterprise and entrepreneurship and environmental sciences and management within core curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop joint promotional activities across local schools • Identify potential collaborative partnerships with local employers in: enterprise; international tradable services and environmental management • Explore possible joint e-learning strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for establishing Joint Centres of Excellence (Financial Services, Sustainable Technologies and possibly Tourism) with shared branding and marketing • Continue and extend existing incubation facilities for business and support service
Joint Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on existing study on socio-economic profile for the Newry-Dundalk sub-Region • Identify key thematic areas for developing compatible data collection on a cross-border basis: e.g. employment trends, housing/business and land need study, service delivery and economic competitiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce an annual statistical report with maps on the Newry-Dundalk sub-region to market the sub-region and provide an evidence base for planning and monitoring collaborative projects, infrastructure, investments and service delivery • Identify indicators to benchmark the twin city region against other sub-regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to publish annual reports • Explore the opportunities to produce time-series analysis of key indicators to identify trends

Framework for Co-operation

Cross-Cutting Activities	Short-term (1 year)	Medium-term (1-to-3 years)	Long-term (3-to-5+ years)
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider closer collaboration and actions among agencies at central government level on integrated infrastructure and service provision for the region Identify targeted infrastructural investment in the network of distributor roads feeding into the East Coast Corridor Explore scope for enhancing public transport services for the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope options to address congestion in Newry and Dundalk City Centres Explore and scope out potential complementarities of port development in the region including impact on employment generation Investigate need for a research study on how infrastructural-led investments can leverage private sector development activity in the region Identify opportunities to position Newry-Dundalk region capital projects for next cycle of NDP investments and ISNI II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish framework for joint assessment of the benefits and impacts of infrastructure-led projects on the social, economic and environmental fabric of the sub-region
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore new forms of community engagement that appreciate local context and community assets Adopt stakeholder mapping for key projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and adopt best practices in project-led community engagement strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt community engagement based on partnership, team skills and reflective practice
Banbridge, Newry & Mourne Area Plan & Louth County Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise joint-meetings among senior management and technical staff to identify areas for cross-border co-operation within existing adopted area plans. Explore non-statutory mechanisms for coordinating environmental management of shared natural resources Explore implications of Newry Dundalk sub-region within ongoing review of Regional Development Strategy, refresh of National Spatial Strategy and review of Regional Planning Guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest non-statutory options for coordinating and planning land and housing markets Suggest non-statutory mechanisms for coordinating environmental management of shared natural resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop programme for joint-assessment of the growth dynamics of the sub-region: economic growth, population projections, housing growth indicators and land allocations

Framework for Co-operation

Organisation	Short-term (1 year)	Medium-term (1-to-3 years)	Long-term (3-to-5+ years)
Senior Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support cross-border initiatives and projects • Resolve institutional and financial coordination issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support cross-border initiatives and projects • Resolve institutional and financial coordination issues • Suggest new projects for cross-border co-operation that benefit from economies of scale, e.g. services public transportation, health, waste management etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review working model of Senior Management Team and adjust as necessary based on increased trust and opportunities for collaboration
Twin City Region Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm members, set strategic agenda for activities and hold at least two meeting per year to review progress • Develop a roll-out strategy for the Newry Dundalk sub-Region Study • Explore opportunities to organize an annual joint-conference/seminar to present projects, activities to promote the unique qualities of the sub-region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Annual Conference around key themes • Develop branding and place marketing of the sub-region • Identify new co-operation projects to benefit the sub-region (services, health, education, waste management, public transportation etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review working model of Advisory Committee, adjust as necessary based on increased trust and opportunities for collaboration
Joint Technical Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint new and/or confirm existing technical teams: Geo-tourism, Sustainable Energy, International Services and Urban Regeneration. • Prepare for roll-out event! • Confirm key activities for year one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint joint implementation teams for other identified projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review working model of Joint Technical Teams and adjust as necessary based on increased trust and opportunities for collaboration

Appendix A: Interviews

In the early stages of the research, the ICLRD study team held structured discussions with 100 interviewees. Later we worked closely with focus groups around the various key strategic projects considered under this research. The study team also consulted with elected representatives and senior officials from Dundalk Town Council, Louth County Council and Newry and Mourne District Council on the key findings and recommendations of the research. We gratefully acknowledge the time and insights provided by those who consulted with us in the course of the study.

Ref	Interviewee	Organisation
1	Feargal McCormack	FPM, Chartered Accountants, Newry
2	David Gavaghan	Strategic Investment Board, Belfast
3	Martin Spollen	Strategic Investment Board, Belfast
4	Liam Quinn	Department for Social Development
5	Councillor Michael Cole	Newry and Mourne District Council
6	Tom McCall	CEO Newry and Mourne District Council
7	Jonathan McCrilly	Newry and Mourne District Council
8	Mark Bleakney	Regional Manager, Invest NI
9	Pamela Authurs	CEO, East Border Region
10	Dette Hughes	Director, East Border Region
11	Declan Mealey	Sustainable Energy Ireland, Dundalk 2020
12	Dr Kevin Brown	Sustainable Energy Ireland, Dundalk 2020
13	David Hanna	Newry Chamber of Commerce & Trade
14	Connor Patterson	CEO, Newry & Mourne Cooperative and Enterprise Agency
15	Orla Jackson	CEO, Newry Chamber of Commerce & Trade
16	Brendan McSherry	Heritage Officer, Louth County Council
17	Dr Patrick O'Connor	Geological Society of Ireland
18	Martin Carey	CEO, Mourne Heritage Trust
19	Bill Tosh	CEO, Dundalk Chamber of Commerce
20	Brian O'Neill	R Q O'Neill's, Dundalk
21	Joe McCarthy	Dundalk Chamber of Commerce
22	Joan Martin	Services/Infrastructure, Louth Co. Council
23	Gerry Duffy	Acting Director of Planning Louth Co. Council
24	Frank Pentony	Town Clerk, Dundalk Town Council
25	David Storey	Senior Executive Officer, Dundalk Town Council
26	Gerry Mills	Director of Development, Loughs Agency
27	Councillor Peter Savage	Louth Co. Council & Chair of Loughs Agency
28	Rosemary Sexton	Enterprise Ireland Dundalk Regional Office
29	Pat Doherty	Manager Dundalk Regional Office, IDA
30	Brian Rowntree	Chair, Northern Ireland Housing Executive
31	Paddy McIntyre	CEO, Northern Ireland Housing Executive
32	Paul McTernan	Colin Buchanan
33	Louise Browne	Colin Buchanan
34	Stephen Wood	Colin Buchanan
35	Eoin O'Driscoll	Chair, Forfas
36	Deirda Lyons	Manager, Financial Services Division, IDA
37	Terry Savage	Border Regional Authority
38	Gerard McGivern	Newry and Mourne District Council
39	Peter Conway	CEO, Warrenpoint Port Authority
40	Leslie McCullagh	Roads Service, Department for Regional Development
41	Russell Bissland	Scott Wilson Consultants
42	Tony Donnelly	Principal Planning Officer, Planning Service, Department of the Environment, Craigavon
43	Dr Gerard O'Hare	Parker Green International, Newry
44	Aideen O'Hora	Sustainable Energy Ireland, Dundalk 2020
45	Matthew Busby	Mourne Heritage Trust, Newcastle
46	Ron Murray	Regeneration of South Armagh

Ref	Interviewee	Organisation
47	Richard Watson	Fermanagh Marble Arch Geopark
48	Michele Shannon	Fermanagh Marble Arch Geopark
49	Patrick McKeever	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Industry, Belfast
50	Trevor Killen	International Investment Division, INI, Belfast
51	Graham Davis	Director, Local Economic Development, INI, Belfast
52	Conor Simpson	International Traded Services, IDA, Dublin
53	Pat Doherty	Regional Manager, IDA, Dundalk
54	Pat Loftus	Area Director Border, IDA, Cavan
55	Aidan Gough	InterTradelreland, Newry
56	Eoin Maginness	InterTradelreland, Newry
57	Chris Ryan	InterTradelreland, Newry
60	Tom Hanney	North South Ministerial Council, Joint Secretariat, Armagh
61	Cathal McHale	Newry Chamber of Commerce & Trade
62	Denis Cummins	Director, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Dundalk
63	Brian Doran	Director, Southern Regional College, Newry
64	Seamus Crossey	Newry & Mourne District Council
65	Niall Houlahan	North South Ministerial Council, Joint Secretariat, Armagh
66	Colman Collins	MD, Collins McNicholas Recruitment
67	Cal Carmichael	General Manager, North & East, CIE Group
68	Padraic White	Chair of Voluntary Sector Groups, North & South, former CEO IDA Ireland
69	Peter Fitzsimmons	Urban Forest Limited, Newry
70	Pat Durkan	Director, Urban Forest Limited, Newry
71	Jack Hood	Director International Investment, INI, Belfast
72	John McCallister	Director International Services, INI, Belfast
73	Vincent Lusby	INI, Derry Office
74	Steve Chambers	Head of Property, INI, Belfast
75	Kevin Helferty	Manager, IDA, North West
76	Pat Hanratty	Director International Services Division, IDA, Dublin
77	Marie McDaid	Regional Office, IDA, North West
78	Elizabeth Maher	Manager, Vodafone, Dundalk Operations
79	Dermot Short	Vice President, European Operations, Vesta, Dundalk
80	Erick McCarthy	Manager, Daiwa, Dundalk Operations
81	Maria Kane	Head of Halifax Retail, Halifax/Bank of Ireland
82	Stephan Morrow	Northern Ireland Operations Director, Teleperformance, Newry
83	Jim Kelly	Department of Finance, Dublin
84	Paul Rutherford	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Industry, Belfast
85	Michael Curran	Director of Services & Economic Development, Louth Co. Council
86	Mary Bunting	North South Ministerial Council, Joint Secretariat, Armagh
87	Niall Cussen	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin
88	Dave Walsh	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin
89	Mike Thompson	Regional Development Division, Department for Regional Development, Belfast
90	Jim Hetherington	Regional Development Division, Department for Regional Development, Belfast
91	William Poole	IBEC/CBI Joint Business Council, Belfast

Ref	Interviewee	Organisation
92	Andy Pollak	Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies, Armagh
93	Con Murray	County Manager, Louth County Council, Dundalk
94	Bruce McCormack	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin
95	Catherine Duff	Economic Development, Dundalk Town Council
96	Irene McCausland	Dundalk Institute of Technology
97	Sean McEntee	Dundalk Institute of Technology
98	Emma Crossan	Research Analyst, Louth Co. Council
99	Alison Hanna	Department for Social Development
100	Mary Doram	Newry Chamber of Commerce & Trade

