



A Report for
the Centre for Cross Border Studies

Cross-Border Co-operation in Local Government Development, Management and Reconciliation

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May 2001

Cross Border Co-operation in Local Government

**Models of Development,
Management and Reconciliation**

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About the Centre for Cross Border Studies

The Centre for Cross Border Studies, based in Armagh, was set up in September 1999 to research and develop co-operation across the Irish border in education, health, business, public administration, communications and a range of other practical areas. It is a joint initiative by Queen's University Belfast, Dublin City University and the Workers Educational Association (Northern Ireland), and its principal funder is the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. Between March and May 2001 the Centre published research reports on cross-border telecommunications, cross-border health services, all-Ireland co-operation to tackle disadvantage in education, EU cross-border funding before and after the Good Friday Agreement and cross-border co-operation in local government.

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Note

This report was completed before the June 2001 local government elections in Northern Ireland.

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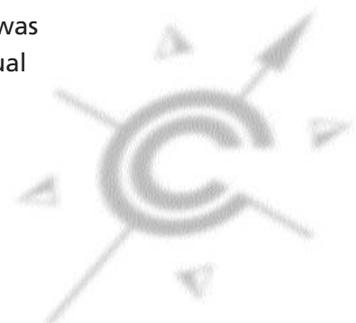
1.1 The Political Background to Co-operation

Cross border co-operation between local authorities has increased substantially in the last fifteen years. Before the 1980s co-operation was limited to a number of activities which arose out of a physical necessity, for example, the Erne Catchment Area scheme, and to some networking in the immediate border areas. The major impetus for the growth of co-operation came from two sources, political initiatives in Ireland and EU initiatives.

At a summit meeting in 1980 the Prime Minister Mrs Thatcher and the Taoiseach Mr Haughey agreed that special consideration should be given to the totality of relationships between Britain and Ireland and a number of studies were commissioned covering possible new institutional structures, citizens rights, economic co-operation and means to encourage mutual understanding. This led to the establishment of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Council to provide an overall framework for co-operation, but it was the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 that gave the major political boost to cross border co-operation. Following this Agreement an illustrative list of matters for cross border social and economic co-operation was published as an annotation to the Agreement (Hadden and Boyle 1989). This listed eleven sub-categories of cross border social and economic co-operation. The eleventh was classified as 'Miscellaneous' and specified district council contacts as one of eight items. However another of the eleven categories was 'Joint Studies', which did lead to an important North-West study which was to be pivotal in the development of a co-operative network across the border between local authorities in the North-West.

It was really in the 1990s that the two influences of political change and EU funding had a more direct impact. Significant funding became available in 1990 with the EU INTERREG programme to assist the economies of border areas and encourage cross border co-operation. This programme was to continue with INTERREG 2 in 1994-9 and was complemented by other funding from the International Fund for Ireland and Co-operation Ireland. In 1995 the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation was initiated as a programme unique to Ireland to promote social inclusion and reconciliation. The programme covered Northern Ireland and the six border counties in the Republic of Ireland, and several of the sub-measures were specifically cross border and aimed at public bodies.

The political talks process initiated in the 1990s developed with North-South relationships as an important strand. A Framework Document agreed by both governments (HMSO 1995) gave a more detailed consideration of North-South co-operative arrangements. A rationale for co-operation was given in terms of a common interest in a given matter, the mutual advantage of addressing a matter together, the mutual benefit of administration by a North-South body and the avoidance of unnecessary duplication of effort. An illustrative list of areas



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for co-operation was again given and was largely similar to that of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. There was no direct reference to local government but categories of EU programmes, marketing, culture and all-Ireland infrastructure were listed.

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement (HMSO 1998) set out the way ahead for increased institutional co-operation. The political parties agreed on a North-South Ministerial Council to develop consultation, co-operation and action including implementation bodies on an all-island and cross border basis. Detailed discussions led to agreement on six implementation bodies: inland waterways, food safety, trade and business development, language, aquaculture and special EU programmes. Several of these had significance for local government. A further six areas were identified and agreed for co-operation through the mechanism of existing bodies in each separate jurisdiction. These are tourism, the environment, transport, agriculture including rural development, education and health. The matters for co-operation were specified and it is noticeable that the words 'local government' do not appear, but the areas of tourism, environment and rural development had clear implications for local authority involvement.

Inter-governmental policy on cross border co-operation did not present co-operation between local authorities as a major specific area, perhaps because of the limited functions of district councils in Northern Ireland or the fact that up to the 1990s national politicians and the press in Britain and Ireland had a negative view of local government in Northern Ireland (John 1993). Carmichael and Knox (1997) note a change within local government in Northern Ireland, for so long a focus of sectarianism and political abuse, towards the accommodation of differences and a more inclusive approach, channelled towards the collective good of local communities.

1.2 The Aims of the Study

There has been little published on cross border co-operation in local government. In 1998-99 the main researcher on this study carried out a survey of cross border links between local authorities in Ireland through a postal questionnaire that provided a largely descriptive account of the nature of the linkages (Birrell 1999). In the 1998-99 study all but one of the twenty-six district councils in Northern Ireland reported that they were involved in some form of cross border linkage, usually with a county council in the South. County councils in the Republic reported significant links, but the number tended to decline with distance from the border. In the light of this study, the current research project was formulated to obtain more specific information on a number of key themes which have a particular relevance for the practice of cross border co-operation in local government. These themes were:

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- The development process in cross border co-operation;
- The management process in cross border co-operation;
- The relationship between cross border co-operation and reconciliation.

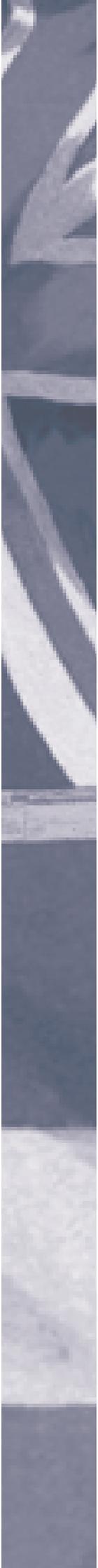
It was, therefore, the aim of the research:

- To investigate the nature of local authority cross border co-operation;
- To identify the different types of linkages;
- To examine models of the development process, the management process and the reconciliation process in cross border co-operation;
- To assess the potential way forward for local government co-operation.

1.3 The Structure of the Report

The report on this investigation is structured as follows. Section 2 explains the methodological approach that was used in the study and the details of the research process and sources. Section 3 sets out the context of the local government systems in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, specifying the major differences in structure, functions, and forms of governance with some analysis of the party political environment. Section 4 provides an analysis of the models of development that were identified in cross border linkages and relates this to types of linkages. Section 5 examines models of the management process in cross border linkages and the related role of project managers, and Section 6 discusses cross border co-operation and reconciliation. In Section 7 the results are reported of a questionnaire administered to councillors who represent their councils on the three local authority cross border networks, the North West Region, the East Border Region and the Irish Central Border Area. Section 8 briefly examines the relevance of some examples of the European experience of local government cross border co-operation. The penultimate section, Section 9, provides a summary of the main findings in relation to development, project management and reconciliation. Finally, Section 10 comes to some conclusions on the state of cross border co-operation, highlighting achievements, relevant strategic developments and barriers to co-operation. Some recommendations are also made in the context of the future potential of cross border co-operation.





2.1 Scope

The methodology used in the project was qualitative and consisted mainly of structured interviews. It had been the original intention to select samples of, for example, linkages sponsored by Co-operation Ireland and similar linkages not sponsored by this programme, well-developed linkages and not so well developed linkages, linkages with well-structured forms of management and linkages with less well-structured management. However an updating of the information of linkages available from the 1998/99 survey and initial analysis of development and management issues showed that the overall number of cross border linkages was not very large and an analysis of the development process by type of linkage could embrace almost all such linkages without using samples. It was therefore possible to carry out interviews with all councils in Northern Ireland having significant linkages and with all councils in the border countries of the Republic of Ireland plus the Dublin area. This meant that there was geographical coverage of almost the whole of Northern Ireland, and coverage of most unionist controlled councils in Northern Ireland as well as the nationalist controlled councils which predominate in border areas.

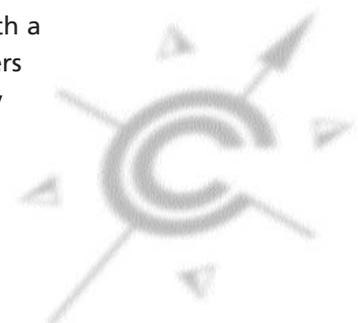
2.2 Structured Interviews

Structured interviews with representatives of councils were carried out normally in council premises. The number of representatives in attendance varied between one and four and these were normally council officials and/or project managers. In terms of cross border linkages, it was thus possible to carry out interviews in both jurisdictions with the councils involved in the linkage. In each interview the subject matter of the development process, project management and reconciliation dimension was discussed.

Structured interviews were also carried out with representatives of some relevant organisations outside local government with specific interests in cross border co-operation and reconciliation. These were Co-operation Ireland, Area Development Management, LACE-TAP (Linkage Assistance and Co-operation for the European Border Regions-Technical Assistance and Promotion) and Future Ways, which is a project promoting reconciliation among councillors in Northern Ireland.

2.3 Other Data Sources

It was also decided to complement the structured interviews with a short questionnaire administered to councillors who are members of the three Cross Border Networks. The overwhelming majority of local government councillors in Ireland have little involvement in the detailed operation of cross border co-



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operation and the selection of this group of councillors drew on a group with relevant experience. The responses of the councillors are analysed in the appropriate section.

Initial postal contact and the programme of visits yielded a large volume of documentation, letters, papers, council reports, evaluation and monitoring reports, publicity and promotional material and guidance material from projects.

The researcher and research assistant were invited to make a number of visits to councils and to some community based projects. This included attendance at one cross border meeting of councillors.

2.4 Summary of Methodology

The research methodology consequently consisted of:

- Updating of audit of linkages by post.
- Analysis of a number of evaluation and other reports.
- Structured interviews with council representatives.
- A questionnaire distributed to councillors from the Cross Border Networks.
- Structured interviews with a number of other organisations.
- A number of visits to meetings and projects.

The full lists of councils interviewed and linkages covered is given in Appendices 1 and 2. The interview schedule is given in Appendix 5.

Structure, Functions and Politics of Local Government

Local Government

The structure, functions and politics of the local government systems, North and South, provide the context for the study of cross border co-operation in local government. There are significant differences in structure and functions between the local government systems in the two jurisdictions.

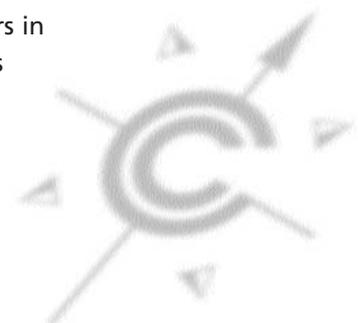
3.1 Differences in Structure

The local government system in Northern Ireland consists of 26 district councils, seven of which have boundaries with the South. The Republic of Ireland has a multi-tier system of local government with 29 county councils (CC), five county boroughs (cities) (CB), 54 borough (BC) and urban district councils (UDC), and 26 town commissions. Five county councils have boundaries along the border with a sixth, Sligo, very close to the border. There are seven urban districts and two boroughs within these six border counties. Some difficulties can arise in matching the multi-tier system in the South with a single tier system in the North.

3.2 Differences in Functions

Northern Ireland's district councils have a limited range of functions and lack some of the major functions which remain the responsibility of local government in the Republic of Ireland, particularly housing, planning and roads. The main direct functions of Northern Ireland's district councils are leisure services, community services, building control, environmental health, refuse collection, tourism, parks and cemeteries, harbours, community relations and aspects of economic development. Local councils in the Republic are mainly responsible for local roads, housing, planning, environmental regulation, water services, waste management, urban renewal, traffic management, building control, fire services, public libraries, arts and culture, parks and recreation. They do not have the same responsibilities as councils in the North for economic development, tourism and community services. The full range of functions is vested in the county councils/county boroughs while the urban authorities (the borough councils and the urban district councils) have a fairly extensive range of functions but are not responsible for the full range. Some functions are carried out by county councils throughout the entire county, including the urban council areas. Thus roads, libraries, fire, building control, emergency planning, motor tax and pollution control are generally the responsibility of the county council in all areas.

In both jurisdictions there has been some increase in recent years in functional responsibilities. In the Republic legislative change has given a general competence to local authorities to improve the social and economic development of their areas and this has been used to increase tourist-related activities or promote



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industrial development. Local authority roles have also grown in areas such as the environment, urban renewal, social housing and general development. In Northern Ireland powers have expanded in the areas of community services, support for consumer advice, community relations, recycling and waste management and emergency planning, but perhaps most significantly in economic development. New legislation in 1992 provided district councils with the statutory authority to set aside funds to promote economic development including promotional information.

The district councils in Northern Ireland also have a consultative role in relation to planning applications, social housing programmes, and other services which maintain councillors' interests in these services. Overall the differences in functions can lead to a mismatch in areas of potential co-operation, which means that local councils from one side of the border often do not have a matching local government partner across the border. A full list of functions in each jurisdiction is given in appendix 3.

3.3 New Forms of Local Governance

A major trend in local government throughout Europe in recent years has been the replacement of traditional direct governmental action by wider structures of policy making and implementation involving representatives from the statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors. A study in the Republic of Ireland (Adshead and Quinn 1998) sees the Irish government's formal incorporation into the policy process of new actors and agencies as challenging the traditional structure of subnational (local) government. Walsh et al (1998) identify partnerships in Ireland as a formal organisational framework for policy making and implementation which mobilises a coalition of a range of partners around action to combat social exclusion.

In the Republic of Ireland County Enterprise Boards have existed since 1993, based on a partnership involving the local authorities, employers, trade union representatives and state agencies. Their main activity is to give enterprise support to new and existing businesses. The County Enterprise Boards are not responsible to the County Councils but to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in Dublin. There are also County Tourism Committees to support new projects consisting of members drawn from tourism and related sectors including local government. A further development since 2000 is the establishment of County Development Boards to produce an agreed co-ordinated strategy on the economic, social and cultural development of an area.

Membership of these boards is drawn from local government, state agencies, local development agencies and the business and voluntary/community sectors. Another recent change has been the creation of Strategic Policy Committees (SPC) in local government to help councillors develop policies and plans in the areas of

Structure, Functions and Politics of Local Government

economic development, environmental policy, transportation, community housing and cultural policies. One-third of the membership of each SPC is drawn from social partners and voluntary/community/disadvantaged groups.

There has also been growing pressure for the development of partnership working from the EU: this has influenced one major development in Northern Ireland, the establishment of District Partnership Boards in 1995 to deliver the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. A board was established in each of the 26 district councils composed of one-third councillors, one-third representatives of the community and voluntary sector and one-third covering private business, trade unions and statutory agencies. These boards allocate funding across the themes of employment, social inclusion, urban and rural regeneration and industrial development. It is the intention to reinforce and extend partnership working at the local level under the new Peace 2 Programme.

3.4 The County Manager System

The Republic of Ireland has often been described as having a unique form of policy making through the role of county and city managers (Collins 1987), who have executive responsibility for a wide range of functions. This means that they are in a more powerful position than chief executives of district councils in Northern Ireland. County managers frequently initiate policy for adoption by the local authority (Carroll 2000). However chief executives in Northern Ireland may also be in a position to give a lead to the district council on policy matters.

3.5 Political Context

Cross border co-operation between local authorities has been a sensitive political issue in Northern Ireland. Political divisions are most apparent in differences of attitude between nationalist councillors represented largely by SDLP and Sinn Fein and unionist councillors drawn from the UUP and DUP. The political composition of all councils in Northern Ireland (before the June 2001 local elections) showed 276 unionist councillors, 194 nationalist councillors, 41 Alliance Party councillors and 71 others (Birrell & Hayes 1999). The political profile, of course, changes with distance from the border. The table below breaks councils down into three groups and gives the unionist/nationalist proportion on councils.



Structure, Functions and Politics of Local Government

Table 3: Political Representation

Border Councils	Central Councils	North-East Councils
Derry Strabane Omagh Fermanagh Dungannon Armagh Newry-Mourne	Magherafelt Down Banbridge Craigavon Ards Cookstown Lisburn	Coleraine Moyle Ballymoney Ballymena Larne Antrim Newtownabbey Belfast Carrickfergus Castlereagh North Down
No of councillors	No of councillors	No of councillors
Unionist 65	Unionist 78	Unionist 157
Nationalist 98	Nationalist 48	Nationalist 37

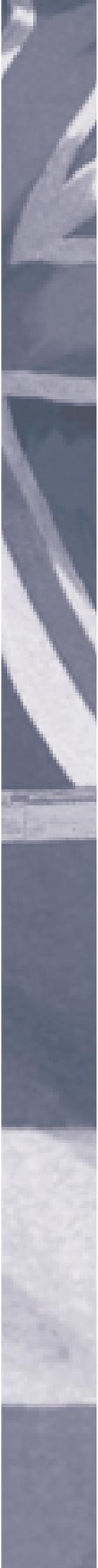
The use of PR in local elections in Northern Ireland means that it is very difficult for one party to have a clear majority, but in terms of the above party categories three of the seven border councils are nationalist controlled, two are unionist controlled and two have no majority (Knox 1996). In the six border counties of the Republic of Ireland the political composition of the councils is as follows: Fianna Fail 61, Fine Gael 51, independent 14, Sinn Fein 5 and others 5.

There has been one study of local government councillors in the Northern border counties carried out between 1991 and 1994 (O'Dowd and Corrigan 1995). This involved a survey of 296 councillors, a quarter of whom were unionist. Councillors were asked if the relationship between Northern Ireland and the Republic should be closer, is about right or should be less close. The vast majority of councillors thought the relationship should be closer, but Ulster Unionist councillors were evenly divided between those who felt it should be closer and those who felt it was about right. The majority of DUP councillors felt the relationship was about right. Even where unionists strongly favoured cross border economic co-operation, they rejected institutionalised political links in favour of informal co-operation. In his study of local government cross-border activity, Greer (2000) has noted that operating cross-border initiatives within a volatile political environment has proved to be very difficult. However in one of few studies (Birrell 1983) comparing councillors North and South, it was clear that councillors had similar experiences of council work, had contact with the electorate about similar matters, and expressed similar views about their role, careers and frustrations.

Structure, Functions and Politics of Local Government

It is noticeable that few political parties have developed a cross-border strategy. In the mid-1980s there was substantial opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement when eighteen unionist-controlled councils adopted a policy of adjourning council meetings and refusing to strike a rate (Connolly and Knox 1986). Knox (1997) saw the 1989 local elections as a turning point, with the growth of power sharing and a more responsive approach to the increase in powers and increased community relations activity leading to the Belfast Agreement of 1998. Party groupings in local councils in Northern Ireland have no cross-border policy, which is not really surprising as political parties have formal policies on few matters. There is also a strong tradition of councillors operating as individuals. There would, however, be a strong recognition that border areas suffer from unemployment, depopulation, isolation, poor infrastructure and deprivation, and councillors are supportive of policies and strategies to counteract this disadvantage.





The Development Process

In the analysis of the development of cross border co-operation, it is possible to distinguish five different types of linkages involving local authorities in cross border co-operation which represent different models of development:

1. One-to-One Linkages
2. Local Government Cross Border Networks
3. Linkages between Councils and other Agencies
4. Partnerships involving Local Authorities
5. Transnational Local Authority Linkages

4.1 One-to-One Linkages

This is the simplest form of development and contact and one-to-one linkages are fairly extensive. An important factor in generating this form of contact is the Local Authority Linkages Programme initiated by Co-operation North, now Co-operation Ireland. Co-operation Ireland is a voluntary body dedicated to creating a greater awareness and understanding of the diversity of cultures that exist in the island and is supported by a wide range of funders. The Local Authority Linkages Programme has as a stated aim the identification of compatible local authorities on a cross-border basis to facilitate economic and cultural programmes which are mutually beneficial. The specific aims and objectives of the project are given as:

- to improve working relationships with a counterpart from a different jurisdiction;
- to afford economic opportunities for small business;
- to facilitate tangible trade links;
- to exchange tourism related models of good practice;
- to promote and market the area;
- to strengthen local agency economic capabilities;
- to enable co-operative cultural initiatives.

The Linkages Programme provides a support base for local councils, elected representatives and officials to share and exchange ideas through initial financial support and technical assistance. The majority of one-to-one linkages have actively involved Co-operation Ireland. Through contact with Co-operation Ireland it was possible to obtain information on 17 linkages which divided into two time phases, those developed 3-5 years ago and those in the last 2 years. Further information was obtained through interviews with at least one side of the linkage on thirteen projects still ongoing.



The Development Process

Table 4.1: Local Authority Linkages Programme

Phase I	Recent Phase
Ballymena BC – Castlebar UDC Carrickfergus BC – Wexford CC Larne BC – Dunlaoghaire/Rathdown CC Limavady BC – Westport UDC Coleraine BC – Sligo BC Sperrins – Clare CC Antrim BC – Shannon Region	Ballymoney BC – Cork CC Moyle DC – Cork CC Cookstown DC – Tralee UDC Armagh CDC – Kilkenny CC Banbridge DC – Carlow CC Fermanagh DC – Leitrim CC Down DC – Listowel Strabane DC – Cavan UDC North Down DC – Roscommon CC Antrim BC – Tallaght Partnership

BC: Borough Council / UDC: Urban District Council / CC: County Council / DC: District Council

4.1.1 The Initiation of Linkages

Co-operation Ireland attempts to respond to requests from councils for assistance in finding potential partners. Co-operation Ireland reported that each year it surveys the activities of all councils in Ireland with a view to maximising cross border links and contacts between councils so all have an equal chance of partaking in the programme. Among the linkages investigated it appeared more normal for one-to-one linkages to have their origins in informal methods such as personal contacts between officials or councillors, perhaps through attendance at a conference. Councils could then turn to Co-operation Ireland for initial financial support. Co-operation Ireland has also identified a trend for councils which originally developed economic links consequently to pursue cultural links as well.

4.1.2 Phases of Development

The Local Authority Linkages Programme is particularly interesting because it has put forward a model of development for one-to-one linkages. Originally the project developed two slightly different models, one for economic linkages and one for cultural linkages, and subsequently a revised single model of the development stages of a linkage was produced. Table 2 sets out this step-by-step route to engagement between two local authorities, a model which Co-operation Ireland believes to be effective (Co-operation North 1996).

The Development Process

Table 4.2: Local Authority Linkages Programme. Development Stages of a Linkage

Development Stages			
	Economic Linkage	Cultural Linkage	Revised Linkage *
Phase 1	Initial Contact	Initial Contact	Identify Potential Partners
Phase 2	Research and Exchange of Information	Research and Exchange of Information	Initial Contact
Phase 3	Initial Meeting	Initial Meeting	Develop Action Plan
Phase 4	Reciprocal Visits	Reciprocal Visits	Reciprocal Visits
Phase 5	Practical Co-operation	Co-operative Projects	Practical Co-operation
Phase 6	Broadening Co-operation		Develop Joint Projects

*The two separate lists for economic/cultural linkages were revised into a single list of phases

Co-operation Ireland reported that most projects can reach Phase 4 without too much difficulty and that cultural projects were more likely to have completed all the stages than economic projects. It is not expected that all linkages necessarily should progress through all the phases. One or more of the phases may be omitted due to the particular make-up of a given link. There is no fixed entry/exit point and indeed there is no fixed time scale in moving from one phase to the next. The model is very flexible to allow the councils to progress linkages at their own pace.

When representatives of linkages were asked, few stated that they had deliberately followed such a clear-cut path of development. There was a realisation that some stages could be collapsed or passed through quickly while some representatives did not seem very aware of the details of the phases.



The Development Process

4.1.3 Range of Activities

Linkages involving the Local Authority Linkages Programme tend to be focused on a rather limited range of activities. An analysis of linkages shows that the economic linkages tended to involve visits, exchange of information and economic missions, the identification of areas of co-operation and discussion of tourism projects. Only in a few cases had progress actually been made to setting up a joint project: for example, in 1999 Armagh and Kilkenny County Councils organised a small business initiative involving the craft industry in both areas. The Fermanagh-Leitrim linkage evolved into a new project on waste management. The Antrim-Tallaght link has also broken new ground in developing into an exchange of ideas on tackling social problems, drugs, housing regeneration, community policing, retraining and unemployment. Linkages on the cultural and social side also largely consisted of visits and exchanges, including visits by councillors, officials, community groups, sports bodies and women's groups. Contacts also involved attendance at festivals, school visits and community workshops.

4.1.4 Continuing Development

In some cases these one-to-one linkages have led to actual cross-border projects or to a stage where a proposal was produced which could secure funding. The ideal model is demonstrated by the Fermanagh-Leitrim linkage which produced proposals for joint projects ready for funding applications. One of the most significant developments arising from the Linkages Programme has been the Fermanagh-Leitrim cross border waste management project. This has involved officers from both councils meeting in each area to learn how each authority is addressing the growing problem of waste management. The debate was opened up to the community through a waste management workshop which resulted in a number of ideas for joint projects, e.g. twin environmental libraries in each county. Arising from the linkage are other ideas for a cross border arts project and sports project. The Down-Listowel linkage has also been successful in attracting funding to develop their railway stations as tourist attractions.

It appeared difficult for linkages to develop into and beyond the final phase as set out in the linkages guidelines. The Coleraine-Sligo link had developed in 1994 in order to investigate business development possibilities and had led to economic trade missions. The formal council linkage had rather petered out, although from the linkage a proposal emerged for a community information network for Coleraine and Sligo involving four community groups, which in the end did not receive funding. After two years of negotiation, EU funding was accessed in 2000 to research the potential for a longer term project, entitled the Sligo-Coleraine Transnational Project for Innovation and Growth. This resulted in the South Sligo and Garvagh cultural enterprise project proposal relating to music, arts and museum links.

The Development Process

A few of the 17 projects which were examined had been brought to an end. The Moyle-Cork linkage did not proceed after initial visits when it was realised that it was a complete mismatch in terms of size as Cork is one of the biggest and Moyle is one of the smallest councils in Ireland. It did appear that quite a number of linkages were in a rather suspended state after the initial stages of activity, contact and planning, with relatively little happening or only occasional social visits. The link between Ballymoney BC and Cork CC was an example where limited social exchange was the only current activity. The Limavady BC-Westport UDC link was prospering although largely social in focus.

While the Linkages Programme model of development provided logical and practical guidance to councils, and Co-operation Ireland provided valuable funding, especially for initial visits, there was a lack of sustained development. The role of Co-operation Ireland is rather limited and the amount of finance available is usually only around £1,500 for each linkage for pump-priming and initial visits, with the total annual programme budget only around IR£15,000. Co-operation Ireland's hope is that linkages will become self-sustaining and it sees its role as not really going beyond the initial stages. Thus it is at the councils' discretion to develop these linkages further.

4.1.5 Other One-to-One Linkages

A number of one-to-one linkages can be identified, operating outside the ambit of the Linkages Programme. Again some of these linkages – for example, Omagh District Council-Sligo County Council – have developed further into a partnership (this example is discussed below). However others had fairly minimal development beyond initial contact or an examination of one issue, e.g. Limerick County Borough Council and Derry City Council on traffic management. A number of others fall into the twinning category.

One well established linkage was studied in some detail, the Newry-Dundalk Joint Committee. In 1990 a formal joint agreement was signed between Newry and Mourne District Council and Dundalk Urban District Council to initiate and develop a programme of cultural, social and economic activities between the two council areas and to encourage and foster a spirit of co-operation. Effective working relationships have been developed between elected representatives and officials from both councils, and the general view was that the linkage had led to a considerable increase in the awareness of each other's similar needs and also differences. This linkage had been able to employ an education officer to serve the needs of local museums in Dundalk and Newry, and was hoping to employ a cross-community development worker to develop sporting/cultural links. One of the main activities of this linkage was lobbying on roads issues, particularly seeking improvements to the Dundalk-Newry road. Lighting on this road had been upgraded through lobbying by the Joint Committee. It is currently lobbying the ministers from the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive as



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well as the National Roads Authority for adjustments to speed limits on the Dundalk-Newry road. The committee had also undertaken a media campaign to increase public awareness of the linkage. The Joint Committee meets bi-monthly and members believed that 'things are beginning to happen'.

One important aspect of this linkage is that it involves only part of one district council area i.e. only councillors representing the Newry urban area of Newry and Mourne Council are members of the Joint Committee with Dundalk.

4.1.6 Twinning

This is one of the more traditional forms of one-to-one transnational linkages in the local government sphere. Research (Ball 1992) has shown that 60% of local authorities in Britain were involved in twinning arrangements with local authorities throughout Europe. Twinning involves a formal twinning arrangement and is normally between towns with a twinning committee representing social and community interests as well as the council. The number of twinning linkages between North and South is quite small, totalling around six. The Banbridge District Council-Carlow County Council twinning was established in 1996 after council officials had participated in a job share initiative. This twinning has involved cultural, sporting and civic links as well as economic measures. There were proposals for further development through IT links with local colleges and reciprocal trade and craft schemes. Newry and Mourne District Council-Clare County Council had also started a twinning arrangement in 1990 and there had been exchanges involving large numbers of people from community groups, but it was reported ten years on that the twinning was rather static. However Moyle's twinning with Ballinasloe appeared to have largely petered out. The Limavady BC-Westport UDC linkage was now aiming to set up a formal twinning.

Twinning does not seem a popular model of development even though twinings do tend to involve community groups, schools, chambers of commerce etc. There does seem to be a view that twinning is more appropriate with councils in other countries rather than within Ireland, and the opinion was expressed that twinning may not bring economic advantages.

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4.2 Local Government Cross Border Networks

This is the oldest and most developed model of cross border co-operation. There are three networks of local councils stretching along the whole border, often referred to as the Border Corridor.

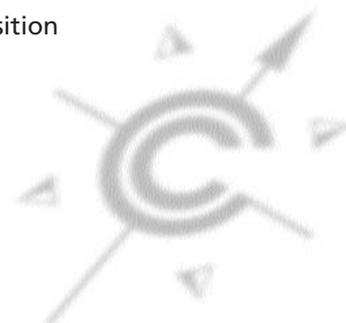
Table 4.3: Cross Border Networks

East Border Region Committee	Irish Central Border Area (ICBAN)	North-West Region Cross Border Group
Newry and Mourne DC Down DC Banbridge DC Louth CC Monaghan CC Craigavon BC	Cavan CC Donegal CC Leitrim CC Monaghan CC Armagh CDC Sligo CC Omagh DC Dungannon DC Fermanagh DC Cookstown DC	Derry City Council Donegal CC Limavady BC Strabane DC

DC: District Council / BC: Borough Council / CC: County Council

4.2.1 Initiation and Growth

All the networks have grown in number from their date of origin. The North-West Region network goes back to 1975 when cross border co-operation was far from fashionable, but Derry-Donegal share a natural hinterland and there were obvious benefits in co-operation. The publication of a North-West Region study commissioned by the British and Irish governments in 1987 gave a boost to the network's activities and expanded them to include Limavady. The East Border Region was established in 1976 after an approach by Monaghan to Newry and Mourne. It started with four councils, with Banbridge joining in 1998 and Craigavon in 1999. The Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) is the youngest network but is now the largest. It has grown since its establishment in 1995 to a cross border grouping of ten local authorities. Cookstown became the tenth member in 1999. A number of councils in the networks have no boundary adjacent to the border, and different views were expressed about the inclusion of more 'distant' councils in all three networks. One view was that this had upset the 'cross border' ethos somewhat, but there were other views that it had produced more 'balanced' networks in terms of political composition and had provided a larger population base.



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Although each council in the network has always been committed to providing funding to run the networks of approximately £10,000 each per annum, it was access to EU funding that provided the key to significant development. The North-West and East Border Regions were able to capitalise on INTERREG I to acquire significant funds which facilitated a secretariat. In 1996 all three networks were funded through the INTERREG II Infrastructure/Regional Development Sub-Programme (Economic Development Measure) which supplied 75% funding with matching contributions shared by the councils. This INTERREG funding underpinned an operational programme with the twin aim of building the network of member councils and developing a number of collaborative projects. The EU funding clearly built the capacity and confidence of the networks and the establishment of administrative/ secretarial support helped them to develop.

4.2.2 Objectives of Networks

The objectives set by the networks are very much geared to the strategic development of the infrastructure of their regions. The North-West Region network has the overall purpose of helping to foster the future development of the local economy and overcoming peripherality through creating the infrastructure for a sustainable region. Five main targeted economic development themes were set out: marketing for tourism; capacity building; promotion for investment; regional waste management; and a developmental approach to the local river estuary.

The East Border Region network has aimed to take the role of the lead organisation in the development of the region as a vibrant economic unit through tackling barriers to economic growth and inward investment. The five main themes it developed are tourism; indigenous business growth; infrastructure and environment; community economic development; and human resource development. The East Border Region network objectives also stress the value of a regional framework that permits all areas to work together in developing actions and setting priorities, and of the network's pivotal role in the formation of strategic alliances between the key stakeholders in the region.

ICBAN's strategy is to forge lasting co-operative links to support economic development by building on the councils' shared and complementary strengths. The objective has been to produce a realistic and innovative economic plan focused on achievable and mutually beneficial outcomes. The areas for development were described as transportation, telecommunications, environmental regeneration, tourism, energy, agricultural diversification and community development. The ICBAN strategy also stresses the importance of greater co-operation between elected representatives and collaborative arrangements with the community.

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4.2.3 Cross-Border Schemes

The range of schemes to date reflects these objectives. The North-West Region network has been responsible for one of the most high profile projects, the Lough Foyle Car Ferry project. It has also tackled the controversial issue of waste management. Other activities have included the Foyle Basin Project, a transportation study, a heritage trail, a countryside brochure and a North-West Regional Profile. The most recent project has been the production of a brochure 'Ireland North West: The Solution to Your Investment Needs' to encourage inward investment.

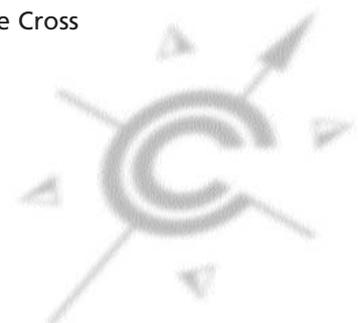
The East Border Region network has also been examining a ferry project on Carlingford Lough as well as exploring waste management strategies. There have also been projects on developing canals and waterways and coastal tourism. The main ICBAN schemes have been a transportation infrastructure study, an OPTIMA Cross Border Sales Development programme aimed at SMEs, a Border Towns Internet Marketing Project, which has a tourism focus, and the Higher Bridges Project aimed at developing an Interactive Technology Centre.

The networks, whether individually or collaboratively, have been active in making representations to central governments and they have established ready access to the European Commission. They have contributed to the consultation processes on a number of key government policy initiatives including the Structural Funds plans. The networks are seen as a strong, credible lobby group on behalf of cross border work and have held meetings with Northern Ireland Ministers, border MLAs, the Taoiseach, border TDs and Senators, MEPs and European Commission officials. In 2000 a delegation of councillors and officials from the three networks travelled to Stormont to discuss the issue of European Structural Funds.

4.2.4 Future Development

The networks established the ethos of cross border co-operation and border region development during the years of political difficulty. They have been significant in establishing an integrated approach to economic development in the border regions where the local cross border economy can be seen as a single entity. They have also been successful in gaining acceptance of a more regional and strategic approach to the identification of common problems. The Cross Border Networks have also provided a critical mass of population and capacity to bring about improvements.

However the networks also have limitations in that activity is project driven and limits on funding have raised issues about sustainability. The Cross Border Networks have consequently taken the opportunity provided by the INTERREG III Community Initiative for 2000-2006. In 1998 the first ever joint delegation from the three networks visited Brussels to discuss integrated area planning.



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The three groupings have produced a Border Corridor Strategy and Integrated Area Plans. The Border Corridor Strategy is the essential common framework under which the Integrated Area Plans of the three border networks will be organised and implemented. There are similarly structured but distinctive Integrated Area Plans for each region, although some actions can be implemented at the level of the whole Border Corridor rather than of the sub-regions. The proposed projects in the Integrated Area Plans cover the areas of economic co-operation, information and communication technologies, environmental infrastructure, transport and social infrastructure. As far as possible all projects shall be joint cross border projects.

This vision for the development of the Cross Border Networks envisaged an enhanced consultative role for them in setting broad and operational priorities for the use of INTERREG III and other funds; a role as a key source of advice and information about the needs of the Border Corridor in relationships with the two governments and the new Special EU Programmes Implementation Body, and also the direct administration by the networks of a specific sub-programme of INTERREG III to fund elements of the Integrated Area Plans. This new integrated approach shows that the networks are increasingly aware "of how small and limited we are and if we are going to move forward we have to adopt a regional approach". The issue of sustainability has become evident as the networks have been waiting for the decision on EU INTERREG III funding, and a number of comments were made that the activity levels of the networks had dropped, even giving rise to concern from some councils about whether they were receiving a return for their annual financial support.

4.3 Linkage Between Councils and Other Agencies

Given the mismatch of functions in certain areas of provision, a council from the South sometimes has to enter into a linkage with a non-council body in the North if it wishes to pursue cross border co-operation. There did not appear to be a large number of such linkages, and in this research it was possible to look at six such linkages, two relating to housing, one to libraries, two to roads and one to community regeneration.

4.3.1 Louth Local Authorities – Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Newry

The objectives of this project were to establish and develop communication channels, organise an awareness seminar, a staff exchange programme and a research project to develop areas of mutual interest, commonality and good practice. It was thought that an increased understanding of the housing policies and practices in both regions would assist staff in dealing more effectively with the problems which customers experience, and ultimately provide a better service. The project between Louth County Council, Dundalk Urban District Council and Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Newry was funded by EU Peace

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and Reconciliation money. The project was able to take a wider view of the accommodation needs of the Newry/Dundalk border community by including in the steering group representatives from the Simon Community in Newry, Newry and Mourne District Council and two health boards. The project had gone on to report on anti-social behaviour, tenant involvement, allocations, traveller accommodation and homelessness. A total of 26 people took part in a staff exchange, and all those interviewed on the project wished that the linkage could be continued to create greater understanding and bring together ideas, although it was noted that differences in legislation were a barrier to co-operation in relation to certain issues. Funding was not available, however, to develop the project into a further phase.

4.3.2 Leitrim County Council – Northern Ireland Housing Executive

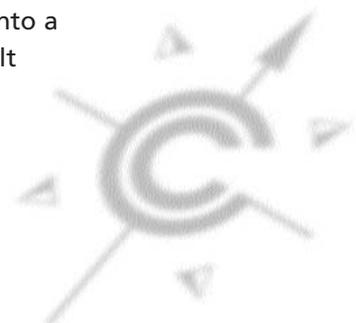
This project had examined the housing needs of rural areas and had been funded by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the North's Rural Development Council. The main purpose had been to test the applicability of the Northern Ireland model of improvement grants for unfit housing in rural areas. The project had also looked at the impact of social housing new-build close to the border. This project had enabled a £1 million submission to be made for a pilot scheme in County Leitrim to the Department of the Environment in Dublin and the outcome was pending.

4.3.3 Waterford County Council – Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Dungannon

This project had been undertaken a few years ago. The main objective of the project was to develop an efficient and effective system of rent collection and arrears management using modern technology. Waterford found the computer system used by the NIHE useful in the integration of applications, allocations, rent collection and maintenance, and the provision of management information for various requirements from a single database. This project mainly involved a transfer of knowledge from North to South.

4.3.4 Dundalk Urban District Council – South Eastern Education and Library Board

'Books Across the Border' is a cross border scheme funded by EU Peace and Reconciliation money to encourage young people to read quality Irish fiction and promote peace across the community divide. The project brought together Newry and Dundalk libraries which previously had virtually no contact with each other. The project has involved discussions, lectures by Irish writers, school exchanges and competitions. The project has been developed successfully into a second phase launched in October 2000 which will focus on adult and teenage reading.



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4.3.5 Monaghan County Council – Department of Regional Development Donegal County Council – Department of Environment (NI)

The Monaghan County Council/Department of Regional Development linkage developed around the specific upgrading of a road across the border. A steering group involving the two agencies was set up and has met regularly, and there are consultations with the National Roads Agency in the South which has a major funding role. It appears that the road will go ahead, and the linkage is also involved in consultation with local residents and groups on issues related to the new road. A previous example in relation to roads was a partnership between the Department of Environment in Northern Ireland and Donegal County Council to improve the Culmore Road near the border to enhance safety and improve access to Derry's hinterland. This project was largely funded by INTERREG II.

4.3.6 Antrim Borough Council – Tallaght Partnership

This is an unusual linkage in that it received initial funding from the Co-operation Ireland Local Authority Linkages Programme which is normally restricted to two local authorities. The initial contact had been made at a conference and the primary objective was to examine economic, community and youth projects. There are similar problems in each area concerning unemployment, drugs, housing and economic regeneration. A number of exchange visits took place, and it was reported that both sides were learning from each other on issues such as community policing, housing demolition on estates and re-training for unemployed men. The linkage is actually evolving towards Antrim District Partnership, as Antrim Council does not have direct responsibilities in this area.

4.3.7 Summary

All these links have certain characteristics in common, in that they are very focused on particular tasks and have very strong involvement from council officials but little involvement from councillors. They also appear to come to an end when the funding mechanism ends and/or the original task is completed. This form of linkage has potential for development, and shows how collaboration is possible between councils and other agencies, whether quangos or government departments. Examples can be found in a wide range of public services: for example, between county councils in the South and the fire service and harbour authorities in the North. This form of linkage may be short-term and limited, and funding for development may have to fall on the bodies involved.

4.4 Partnerships Involving Local Authorities

Outside the local authority cross-border networks, the most developed examples of local authority linkages take the form of partnerships involving other agencies. Several of these linkages began as links between local authorities, but in order for

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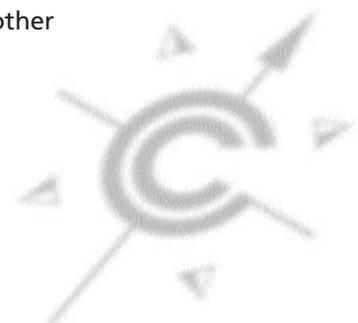
them to develop activities it proved necessary to establish links with other related agencies, and this reflects the limitations on the functions of local government in each jurisdiction. Three examples of well-developed partnerships are analysed below as well a number of economic development partnerships and tourism partnerships.

4.4.1 The Blackwater Catchment Scheme

One of the most developed cross border links involves three local authorities: Dungannon and Armagh District Councils and Monaghan County Council. These three councils developed a rural strategy, the Blackwater Catchment Scheme, which has secured funding of £207,000 from INTERREG II since 1995, with matching funding provided equally by the three councils. The scheme was originally developed through links between the Chief Executives of the councils in the early 1990s at a time when cross border communication was difficult. This contact led to a commissioning of a rural strategy for the area which was the basis of the application to INTERREG II. The catchment area consists of the cross border region of Armagh city and district, north Monaghan, and Dungannon and south Tyrone, but the river Blackwater forms the bond. The length of the rivers within the catchment area is over 1,000km and linked with the rivers are over 600 lakes. The scheme was initiated to address the deficiencies caused by the combined effects of the border and the peripherality of the area. The main objectives have been to support communities and other interests within the region towards economic regeneration and a sustainable rural environment. The scheme has identified a number of natural linkages across the border in the areas of economic development, community development and tourism.

The Blackwater Scheme has grown to cover a number of projects, including a Blackwater holiday cottage initiative, a mill village restoration scheme in County Monaghan, a farm plastics recycling initiative, an energy efficiency study in council buildings, spent mushroom compost management and alternative energy resources. The Blackwater Scheme has also grown through seeking other funding for new initiatives. A cross border council, Network for Environmental Awareness and Professional Practice Transfer (CNET), is funded 75% by EU PEACE money and the remainder by the three councils. This programme operates in the areas of energy conservation, waste management, parks management and technical assistance, and a major focus has been on ways in which staff may learn from the work of each other across the border. The Blackwater Scheme has also supported the Blackwater Angling Development Programme which has obtained funding from Co-operation Ireland.

The Blackwater Scheme has also developed further through linking with a number of other local community based schemes funded from other sources, e.g. Leader. The Blackwater Scheme has entered into partnership with other groups or agencies, for example local development associations, in relation to the village restoration project.



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Plato Blackwater is a project funded by Co-operation Ireland which established a local business network of 120 owner managers and 10 large companies to provide training and business development. This involved the Blackwater Scheme and the three councils entering a partnership with Monaghan County Enterprise Board, Armagh Business Centre and Dungannon Enterprise Centre. Overall the Blackwater Scheme is able to report on six completed projects, ten current projects and five projects in development.

The Blackwater Scheme has often assisted groups in relation to applications for funding and the organisation of community involvement. The Scheme has been moving to "a role in facilitating local groups to develop projects". It has thus evolved its own relatively successful development strategy: identifying and implementing a programme of measures to include short, medium and long-term activities; seeking simultaneous development on a number of fronts through partnerships with other projects addressing similar objectives; seeking available and future funding to expand its capacity and activities (Blackwater Project 1997). The strategy contains seven priority headings: economic diversity; enhancement of river resource; enhancement of the environment; image and promotion; community linkages and development; tourism infrastructure; and management. The existence of a clear strategy, a dedicated project manager and an effective management structure, plus the commitment of the three councils to work together, have contributed to the success of this scheme.

4.4.2 Tradenet Ireland

Tradenet Ireland is a project which clearly illustrates the value of partnerships with bodies other than local councils. This is a project to give companies, mainly from the Belfast-Dublin corridor, the opportunity to meet like-minded businesses across the border using the Internet. The idea evolved from cross border contacts between local authority economic development officers. This is the most comprehensive business development project involving local authorities. However while councils from Northern Ireland are involved, it is not the county councils from the South but the County Enterprise Boards who form the linkage. The County Enterprise Boards focus on information, support and counselling to start-up and established businesses.

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Table 4.4: Tradenet Ireland – Partnership

N. Ireland	Republic of Ireland
Ards BC Armagh CDC Banbridge DC Belfast Corporation Craigavon BC Down DC Lisburn BC Newry-Mourne DC Newtownabbey BC	Dublin City Enterprise Board Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown CEB Fingal CEB Louth CEB Meath CEB Monaghan CEB South Dublin CEB

One of the consequences of this structure is that there is relatively little involvement of councillors. Tradenet has been listed by Co-operation Ireland as one of the flagship programmes of PEACE funding with 1300 companies involved, although several of the participants reported that the uptake of the project was patchy. Ards Borough Council reported that only 20-25 companies out of some 1,000 in the area had participated, whereas Lisburn Council had 100 participants. There are plans for further development to cover the whole of Ireland and plans to produce information on a greater product range.

Tradenet Ireland is one of the few large partnerships which has been reasonably successful. Two similarly structured projects in the economic area are the **Common Action Project** and the **Furniture Manufacturing Project**. The Common Action Project involved bodies examining their local development plans to identify common elements and projects, and again involved County Enterprise Boards from the South.

The cross-border Furniture Manufacturing Project was supported by INTERREG and involved councils in Lisburn, Omagh, Newry and Mourne, Monaghan and Meath. This was, unusually, a project involving the private sector. However neither of these projects has been very successful, with limited interest from the partner council bodies. The furniture project was so large that no-one wanted to lead it and it remained under-resourced.

4.4.3 Omagh-Sligo Partnership

The Omagh-Sligo partnership was initially a partnership between two local authorities begun in 1995. The recognition of the existence of a range of common socio-economic problems in both areas led to the consolidation and expansion of the initial contact into a local authority linkage. The cessation of violence and EU funding were seen as offering the opportunity to maximise the potential of the linkage through the establishment of a socio-



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economic regeneration initiative. The two councils produced a cross border co-operation and development strategy based on their collaboration over the first two years. The strategy aimed particularly at creating a cross border development unit to produce projects to alleviate the impact of border peripherality, to combat social exclusion and provide economic development. In 1997 the PEACE Programme funded 80% of the cost of a cross border economic research officer, with the remaining funding coming from Sligo County Council. The economic research officer appointed was able to work together with a special projects officer in an economic development unit. The economic research officer, based in Sligo, provided socio-economic data to private business, development agencies and the public, and took a pro-active role in local development and cross border agency meetings. The performance of this office was somewhat Sligo-focused, and in the second phase of the project the economic research office has been relocated to Omagh and a project research officer appointed.

In order to expand the activities of the Omagh-Sligo linkage it was accepted that it was necessary to develop the linkage into a partnership with other development agencies. The Omagh-Sligo Cross Border Partnership now includes Sligo Corporation, Sligo County Enterprise Board, Sligo and Omagh Chambers of Commerce, the Sligo and Omagh Leader companies and the Omagh Enterprise Company.

The Omagh-Sligo Partnership has been able to promote a number of joint initiatives including business seminars targeting the SME sector, promoting learning in cross border business practice and an exchange programme on sharing knowledge of community projects. Some 83 community groups attended a recent seminar in Sligo and the project is moving on to look at the training needs of community groups. There have been further projects to assist SMEs with e-commerce and export marketing, and there has been an Omagh-Sligo comparative retail study. Another project has developed links between Sligo Institute of Technology and Omagh College of Further Education in a computer assisted design project where Sligo has expertise.

Representatives of the Omagh-Sligo Partnership have articulated the factors central to the development of this linkage as:

- Commitment to the partnership ethos
- A shared desire to provide real and tangible benefits
- Board membership offering experience and knowledge in cross border exchanges
- Equal representation from North/South
- Councils provide accountable local leadership
- Bottom up approach promoting inclusion, subsidiarity and complementarity
- Linkage acts as a catalyst for producing initiatives

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4.4.4 Economic Development Partnerships

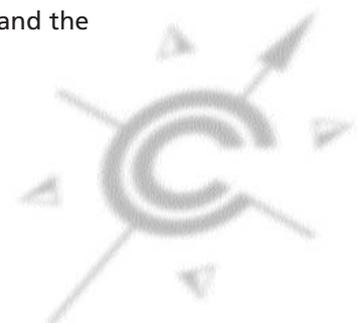
Given the limited responsibilities of local authorities for economic development, it is necessary for councils to link with other agencies to develop economic projects. This is a popular area of activity and a number of examples of such partnerships are described below.

The **Newry-Dundalk Business Linkage Programme** was established through a partnership between Newry and Mourne Council, Louth County Council, Louth County Enterprise Board and Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency in partnership with the North's Local Enterprise Development Unit (LEDU). This programme aims to build on the strong trade and economic links between the two towns by capitalising on the region's location at the centre of the Belfast-Dublin corridor. The councils involved have provided substantial funding for this linkage.

The **Strabane-Lifford Development Commission** is an economic regeneration initiative which has existed since 1993. It is supported by Strabane District Council and Donegal County Council which contribute £10,000 each per year, and the commission is made up of representatives from business and community organisations and both local authorities. This project seeks to identify and deliver projects to promote the area, but also supports the working of existing agencies and organisations. The commission has developed a Finn Valley Enterprise Park with work spaces, and is assisting with a major commercial and community resource centre for Strabane. The commission has also a 'Border Reach' project - a community arts initiative and millennium arts project - which has led to a unique cross border sculpture landmark trail on the border crossing between the two towns.

The **Lakeland Partnership for Innovation** involves Fermanagh County Council, Cavan County Enterprise Board, the University of Ulster and the University of Limerick in a project to introduce modern technology and technological capacity to the more remote but developing central border areas, where there are low levels of new business start ups, low technological capacity and little inward investment. The project has created centres in Enniskillen and Cavan to provide technological support and has a project manager.

The **Armagh-Monaghan Digital Corridor** is a new project mainly involving Armagh District Council and Monaghan County Enterprise Board and largely funded by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI). It aims to develop ICT expertise for micro-enterprises in the area, including training programmes and incubator/science park initiatives. A project manager is in place and the intention is to have a full formal board.



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The EU funded **Plato Small Business Development Programme** involves a strategy to increase the potential of small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) through the help and support of larger local companies. A number of areas in the Border Corridor have benefited from the Plato concept: for example, Plato North West, Plato Blackwater and Plato Louth, Newry and Mourne. Some Plato partnerships involve district councils but others do not, involving instead local economic development and enterprise groups.

The **Tyrone-Donegal Partnership** is a development organisation set up to act as a catalyst for identifying new initiatives to promote economic and social advance: for example, through a major craft initiative. The partnership is supported mainly by Leader groups and local authority involvement is limited.

These last two examples indicate that in terms of economic development projects there is a spectrum of local authority involvement ranging from substantial to minimal. These are examples of minimal local authority involvement.

4.4.5 Tourism Partnerships

As local councils have limited direct responsibilities for tourism, especially in the South, local government involvement again has to operate largely through partnerships. **The Strabane-Donegal Tourism Consortia** involves the marketing of Strabane and Donegal Town. The consortia includes Strabane District Council, Donegal Chamber of Commerce and North-West Tourism, and they have joined forces to market the two areas internationally by exploiting the technology of the Internet. Strabane Council reports that the initiative fits into the Council's overall vision of developing a community led rural tourism infrastructure.

The **Cavan-Enniskillen Tourism Initiative** involves a partnership of Fermanagh District Council, Cavan Urban District Council, Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism, Enniskillen Chamber of Commerce, Cavan Tourist Association and Cavan Chamber of Commerce and has produced a joint promotional brochure.

The **North-West Passage** is an older initiative launched in 1989 to develop a visitor traffic route. This interregional route commences in Dublin and traverses Meath, Louth and Monaghan before crossing into Northern Ireland. Here it passes through the district council areas of Armagh, Dungannon, Strabane and Omagh before crossing the border again into Donegal.

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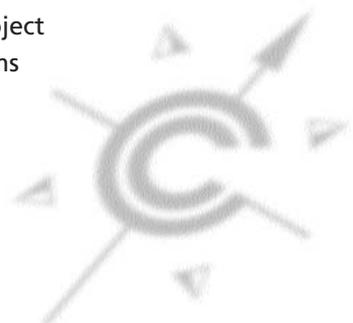
4.5 Transnational Local Authority Linkages

A number of linkages between local authorities in Ireland take place in the context of a wider European partnership of councils, and five such linkages are discussed.

The **Four Cities Project** links Dublin, Belfast, Liverpool and Brussels through an EU INTERREG funded initiative. The aim of this project is to maximise the involvement of local communities with local authorities in urban regeneration. Within each city the Four Cities project focuses on a particular area which is currently experiencing urban regeneration: in Belfast the Antrim Road/Shore Road area, in Dublin the Liberties/Coombe area. A core element of the Four Cities Project is an 'experiential action learning' programme that involves modules and workshops and also transnational exchange visits. In the Four Cities Project the lead partner is Dublin. The learning programme has been led by the National University of Ireland Maynooth.

The **Edge Cities Project** is a partnership of six local authorities on the edge of capital cities. This project involves Fingal County Council, North Down District Council and local authorities on the edge of Lisbon, Athens, London, Stockholm and Helsinki. The aim of the project is to support the internationalisation of small and medium enterprises and help create employment. The main activity has been the development of an interactive web site to exchange transnational information and build business contacts. This scheme is funded by the EU Recite programme as an inter regional co-operation project. Fingal Council is the lead partner, but North Down is seen as one of the strongest economic partners and a N.Ireland company won the computer tender. There is no participation by elected representatives on the project committee, but there have been exchanges of visits by councillors in relation to the project and close links have developed between Fingal and North Down. It was suggested that "links will endure and strengthen beyond the life of the project".

ERNACT (European Regions Network for the Application of Communications Technology) is a project to bring together local authorities to apply modern telecommunications to improve the performance of their functions and facilitate co-operation. It was developed by Donegal and Derry Councils, and an important element in the project was that a cross border alliance should be established between the councils to bring about the effective management of the project. Four other councils participate in the project - Aalborg in Denmark, Galway County Council, Leiedal in Belgium and Zeeland in Netherlands. A preliminary assessment had identified major deficiencies in the way communications technology was applied by the participating authorities. The project has involved the transfer of technological knowledge and systems telematics, the creation of economic databases and the application of ICT to the promotion of tourism. The operational management of the project was entrusted to Donegal County



The Development Process

Council and Derry City Council. It was reported that, despite some technical difficulties, the linkage had created a substantial number of jobs in the Derry-Donegal area. Less tangible has been the value of the exchange of experience and knowledge. The project has served to put the North-West of Ireland in contact with ICT developments under other European community programmes and to raise the North-West's profile at a European level.

The **BRAKS** (Brasov, Razgrad, Armagh, Kilkenny, Szombathely) project involves Armagh City and District Council and Kilkenny County Council with cities in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania and is part of the EU Ecos Ouverture programme. The principal objectives of the project are the transfer and development of expertise between the partners in the areas of small firm development, local capacity building, the creation of an enterprise culture (especially among young people) and the promotion of a partnership approach to local economic development. The project has focused on transferring expertise from Ireland on small business development, community enterprise development, development of young people and the exchange of marketing opportunities to the eastern European partners. The Irish councils have found it useful to call on local economic agencies, Kilkenny County Enterprise Board and Armagh Business Centre.

Such transnational projects tend to have very specific objectives, are very much led by officials and require substantial administrative input from the lead partner. The number of such transnational links involving councils from North and South is not large, but they have some attractions in areas where there may still be unionist political concerns. As the Irish cross border dimension is not so prominent, one such link which it is hoped to develop is the **Cities of the Isles Partnership**, formerly known as the Irish Sea Partnership, involving Glasgow, Dublin, Belfast and Liverpool. The partnership was extended to reflect the 'Council of the Isles' structure arising from the Belfast Agreement and now also involves Cardiff and Edinburgh. Every year each city authority in turn hosts an annual conference as a platform for sharing experience, best practice and information on urban regeneration and corporate strategic issues such as civic leadership. These cities are all members of a Eurocities network. Belfast City Council has taken an initiative to link the six Cities of the Isles with another six Scandinavian cities to make a bid for INTERREG III funding based on the use of brown field sites.

This was analysed under two main headings: models of formal management committees and the role of project managers. One of the distinguishing features of more developed linkages was the existence of a clearly structured management committee for the linkage. The following is a typology of formal management committees identified in the linkages studied.

5.1 Councillor Dominated Formal Management Committees

In this model councillors clearly make up the majority of members of management committees. The clearest examples are in the local government Cross Border Networks, the Dundalk-Newry linkage and the Blackwater Catchment Scheme.

Table 5.1: The Cross Border Network Structure

	Councillors	Officials	Total
North-West	3 per Northern council (6 Donegal)	1 per council	19
ICBAN	5 per council	1 per council	60
East Border	6 per council	1 per council	37

Table 5.2: Blackwater Structure

Armagh	2 councillors	Chief Executive
Monaghan	2 councillors	County Manager
Dungannon	2 councillors	Chief Executive

Table 5.3: Dundalk-Newry Joint Committee

Dundalk	12 councillors + 1 official
Newry	16 councillors + 1 official

The Chairman in each case is also a councillor and the post is rotated, whether annually or according to the location of the meeting.



Project Management

5.2 The Partnership Model

Where linkages take the form of wider partnerships, it is normal to have a management committee which represents the major partners. The Sligo-Omagh partnership has five councillors from each council but representatives from ten other partners. There is and will be a movement towards the partnership model. INTERREG III will require the Cross Border Networks, the Blackwater group and other linkages to expand their management committees to include economic and social partners. This model would be based on 50% existing membership from councils and 50% membership from other organisations such as community groups, business groups, trade unions and statutory agencies. It can, however, be argued that the achievement of having councillors as elected politicians sitting and working together across the border should not be lost in the creation of large, more inclusive committees. The ICBAN network, for example, wishes to retain the local authority identity of the network. The North-West network is examining the possibility of twin management boards or a local authority sub-committee.

Some linkages, however, have moved to a partnership structure even when it may not have been technically necessary. The Louth-NI Housing Executive linkage established a steering group of nine people representative of housing bodies and other agencies. This was seen as providing a unique forum drawing together different organisations to exchange best practice and share experiences, and led the project towards an inter-agency approach.

5.3 Official Led Committees

A number of projects report a management committee consisting only of council officials. These are normally smaller projects, but the large Tradenet project has a management committee of local economic development officers. This may reflect the technical nature of this project and the fact that the link south of the border involves County Enterprise Boards rather than councils. Council-agency linkages are also likely to have small management committees which exclude councillors. These tend to be focussed on one specific task and involve specialist officials. The 'Books Across the Border' project has a management committee of two officials from Dundalk Council and two from the South Eastern Education and Library Board. Projects, including the Local Authority Linkages Programme, which focus on initial contacts, are also likely to have a small steering or management committee of officials. There may be reasons for this model in terms of specialist knowledge or initial work, but the exclusion of councillors may be incompatible with the values of local democracy (although such committees are accountable to each council). The Limavady-Westport linkage does have a joint committee which is made up in part by councillors and in part by representatives of interest groups.

Project Management

5.4 Loose Associational Model

Quite a number of linkages, particularly one-to-one linkages or occasional linkages, have no permanent management committee as such. Linkages which mainly involve visits may have a largely informal 'business' meeting during a visit. Such meetings may consist of a substantial number of councillors or a group of officials or perhaps even only two officials, but they do have some status in that decisions about the linkage are taken on such occasions. One twinning linkage reported that they had a Twinning Committee which did meet, but only every six months. The term 'loose associational' is used to describe these less structured occasional management structures. Lisburn Borough Council-Meath County Council tourist linkage would be an example of this category.

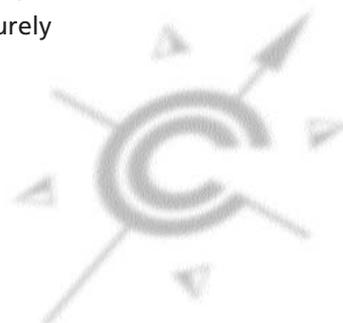
5.5 Accountability to the Council

An important context for the operation of all management committees is that they are accountable to each parent council. Such management committees have to seek council approval for major decisions. The North-West network reported that it met monthly, partly to ensure that there would be no excessive delay if ratification had to be obtained from the councils. A few linkages have established a separate legal status which facilitates more autonomous decision making. The East Border Region is incorporated as a limited company and ICBAN intends to become one. The ERNACT ICT partnership between Derry and Donegal is another limited company.

In practice, the principle of accountability means that the full council or relevant council sub-committee is kept informed, or reports are made as required concerning the operation of the linkage. There may not always be great interest from councillors, and some council officers reported that they sometimes invited councillors to see projects to improve the visibility and acceptability of linkages. In terms of operational practice, councils appear to be willing to allow management committees the discretion to take day-to-day decisions.

5.6 Management Committee Sub-structure

The larger and more developed management committees also reported a system of sub-committees. The North-West network has five sub-committees with a membership of councillors and one official. The East Border Region also reports a structure of five sub-committees for special tasks. ICBAN, however, has a somewhat different structure, with steering groups consisting purely of officials for a number of themes. These steering groups have also invited other bodies to join them, e.g. for transport and tourism.



Project Management

There are also a few examples of executive committees. ICBAN, with a 60 member management committee, has a strategy group consisting of the council chairpersons and chief officers which implements agreed strategies, and there is also a management executive of the chief officers responsible for the day to day running of the network. The East Border Region has an executive committee of one councillor and one official from each council.

The ERNACT project has an interregional management committee of representatives from each of the participating authorities, but it also has a board of management of representatives from Donegal and Derry councils (2 councillors each plus the county manager and chief executive) which has overall responsibility for the management of the project and provides for the financial control and maintenance of accounts. It was also decided to create a European Economic Internet Grouping (EEIG): this creates a legal entity with the status of a limited company, and its board of management can liaise with the European Commission on behalf of the six authorities and enjoy a measure of independence.

A number of linkages base their sub-structure on geographical location. For example, the Four Cities Project has an international steering group consisting of the project leader, the international co-ordinator, four city managers, four city co-ordinators and representatives from the councils. However there is also a local steering group for each city. This has representatives from the community, business, cultural and educational sectors. This project also makes provision for meetings of the four city co-ordinators and the international co-ordinator.

5.7 Project Managers

5.7.1 Dedicated Project Manager

The most effective and popular model is for a dedicated project manager to manage the day to day running and development of cross border projects. However this tends only to exist where sufficient special funding is available, as local authorities have to regard cross border work as an extra beyond their normal functions and staffing levels. The larger cross border linkages had the appointment of a project manager as a key requirement in their applications. Thus the three Cross Border Networks, the Sligo-Omagh partnership, the Blackwater Catchment Scheme, the Four Cities Project and ERNACT all have project managers or co-ordinators. The value of a dedicated project manager is seen in the development of specialist expertise, building up networking, co-ordinating across the border and adapting to the sensitive aspects of cross border working.

Project Management

The use of special funding for project management is fairly essential, but this can put pressure on the person appointed to the post as s/he may be working only on a one or two year contract. Some projects have avoided this potential difficulty through the secondment of a council employee to the post of project manager. This is the position with the ICBAN network, and also with the Louth-NIHE project which appointed a co-ordinator seconded from the Housing Executive.

There is evidence that a dedicated project manager is essential to the efficient working of a project. During the interviews the researchers met project managers who are highly enthusiastic about cross border work and have provided the developmental cutting edge to move linkages on. The local authority Cross Border Networks and the Blackwater Scheme have benefited from leadership from dedicated project managers with a degree of secretarial/administrative assistance. However the networks especially could draw on management resources from county managers and chief executive officers as well as other development supports. It was reported that in some other projects project managers had been left rather isolated with no organisation behind them.

5.7.2 Shared Managers

In the majority of projects, especially the one-to-one linkages, the responsibility for project management often rests with an officer who has other responsibilities in the North, usually an economic development officer or sometimes a community services or tourism officer, and in the South usually a development officer or sometimes a recreation officer. Alternatively, with more specialist links, the responsibility simply falls on key staff in that area, whether it is roads or tourism or housing. If linkages are not extensive, it can hardly be expected that special administrative or development officers will be appointed, but existing practices mean that there may be a lack of specialist knowledge and commitment. There is also the problem that responsibility will be shared by two officers in each council, thus reducing the ethos of cross border working.

5.7.3 Cross Border Special Projects/Development Officer

There were few examples of the appointment of a Cross Border Development Officer with a general mandate to initiate, develop and manage cross border projects. The only two examples identified were both EU funded. Leitrim County Council had appointed a special projects officer whose role was to further cross border contacts including community links, and the Sligo-Omagh Partnership had also appointed a special projects officer, mainly to lead economic development within the partnership.



Project Management

5.8 Cross Border Development Units

There is little evidence of the existence of cross border development units whether in individual councils or in cross border linkages. The local authority Cross Border Networks have a fairly minimal administrative structure with a project manager and a clerical officer. Even clerical/secretarial assistance for networks may be externally funded and only secured through some form of services agreement. The Sligo-Omagh Partnership is of interest as an attempt was made to create a cross border development unit to pursue links, produce plans for co-operation and identify and facilitate projects. In practice it was eventually possible to appoint a special projects officer plus an economic research officer, forming an economic development unit, but this has now been revised to form a cross border development unit with a wider remit than economic co-operation.

It is interesting to note that, in relation to future developments, some linkages have indicated the need for a group of staff. The Integrated Area Plans for the local authority Cross Border Networks suggest staffing by a development officer/network manager, an administrative officer and one or two additional officers and support staff. This would be particularly necessary for any enhanced role in which the networks could be administering, approving and monitoring applications for funding. Greer (2000) has suggested that the networks are not competent enough, and have not the capacity, to administer funds and lead regional development. The three networks' submission to the EU recognises that the three groups do not have the human and organisational resources to directly administer the full INTERREG III funding. An enhanced management team will be necessary for even a more limited role (Colin Stutt 1999). The Blackwater Catchment Scheme, which also envisages an enhanced role for itself, has suggested it would need a project manager, project assistant and administrative assistant.

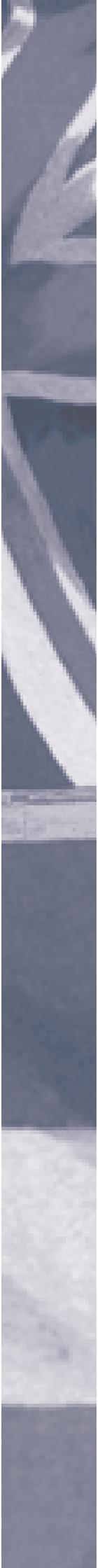
5.9 Location of Project Management

Given the nature of cross border co-operation, this is quite an important issue. A project manager or a management unit probably has to be based in one location and on one side of the border. This is generally seen as more workable than having two offices, as long as the project manager works across the border. The Omagh-Sligo Partnership had its office and two staff located in Sligo but has now decided to base the project manager in Sligo and the project assistant in Omagh.

Project Management

There are probably too few developed examples of project management to determine the most effective method. The Blackwater Catchment Scheme stressed the importance of having an accessible office out in the field with an outreach role. Most projects, although not the Cross Border Networks, were based in offices in one council premises rather than in a 'neutral' location. A project manager working across the border can give rise to certain employment difficulties, and the simplest model which is used is for one council to act as the employer.





6.1 Definitions of Reconciliation

When asked how projects had contributed to cross-border reconciliation, the majority of respondents indicated that there was no specific reconciliation agenda, but they would tend to endorse the hope that the processes and outcomes of the project would have a beneficial impact in that area. A number of projects did have some acknowledgement of reconciliation objectives in their objectives. The Local Authority Linkages Programme has the stated aim “to improve working relationships among local authorities in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland”. The mission statements and stated objectives of the three Cross Border Networks make no reference to reconciliation, and all such statements of objectives tend not to go beyond the endorsement of ‘working together’.

Those connected with projects tend to emphasise the practical nature and value of cross border co-operation, and there was little dialogue around reconciliation. The concept of reconciliation is itself not easy to define, and some interviewees asked “What exactly does reconciliation mean?” Others commented that reconciliation can mean different things to different people.

There are, of course, definitions available from work in the area. Co-operation Ireland has as its statement of intent “to advance mutual understanding and respect by promoting practical co-operation between the people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland”. Co-operation Ireland, ADM and the Combat Poverty Agency (1999) produced a report on reconciliation aspects of the EU Peace Programme and give three general levels of reconciliation:

- Contact – the opportunity to meet persons from a different community, culture, country, social background.
- Co-operation – joint problem solving with another group/community experiencing similar difficulty.
- Resolving conflict – communicating/negotiating with persons or communities within your district.

Other commentators have emphasised the change in perceptions needed for reconciliation. Wilson (1998) argues “reconciliation implies that those who have formerly lived apart in relationships of mutual suspicion will henceforth share in constructing and then inhabiting a common home, building trust along the way”. More recently it has been suggested that the term ‘conflict transformation’ would be a useful alternative description of reconciliation as it conveys a sense of journey rather than a fixed objective (Irish Peace and Reconciliation Platform 2001).



Reconciliation

6.2 Models of Reconciliation

One objective of the research was to identify possible models of reconciliation which underpinned cross border co-operation between local authorities. We have identified four models or approaches to reconciliation from this study.

i) A Negative Model

There was in relation to some projects a denial from respondents that the co-operation had anything to do with reconciliation: "don't talk about it", "the border is not an issue", "there is no overt reconciliation dimension" are such responses.

ii) Working Together Model

This approach stresses the importance of working together and this in itself is seen as 'reconciliation'. As senior managers expressed it: "the biggest success is bringing everyone together"; "the fact that co-operative activity has increased dramatically in the last 15 years"; "the fact that unionist councillors are participating and travelling South to meetings without any problems". Consequently the actual existence of joint activity across the border, participation by councillors of unionist and nationalist traditions and the delivery of services to local populations on both sides of the border demonstrate reconciliation. Greer (2000) identifies within the local authority Cross Border Networks a notion of co-operation as bringing unionists and nationalists together to work towards common goals. Councillors are together on a regular basis, there are opportunities to meet socially and relationships between councillors are built up. One manager described another dimension of this model of reconciliation as "tackling it without declaring you are tackling it".

iii) Mutual Understanding Model

In some councils it was recognised that cross-border co-operation had achieved desirable goals through improving understanding across the border. These included improved understanding of the two different systems of local government; greater awareness of differences in political and administrative cultures; greater understanding of different political attitudes; the removal of misconceptions about one another's views and institutions across the border; breaking down prejudice and distrust; and the realisation that there were shared common interests and that joint action could be undertaken to address common needs. Cross border co-operation is therefore a learning experience. Anecdotal evidence was given of councillors crossing the border for the first time to attend project meetings.

iv) A Conflict Resolution Model

In only a few linkages had there been a clear attempt to build in a reconciliation component. In two linkages involving Leitrim County Council, a worker from a mediation and reconciliation network had been employed to work with projects including elected representatives, officials and community representatives.

Reconciliation

Evaluation feedback from the Fermanagh-Leitrim cross border waste management project indicated that the participants had gained valuable insights into conflict resolution issues in the border area. Some commented that they had not met people of certain cultural backgrounds at such close quarters before and many felt that they would benefit from further work of this kind.

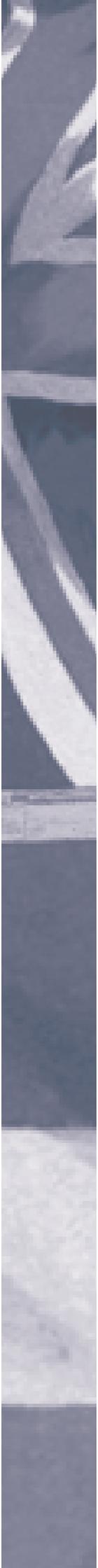
6.3 Reconciliation and Councillors

In considering the impact on reconciliation of cross border co-operation in local government there are, of course, three different groups of participants: elected politicians, council officials and employees, and the public as consumers of services which projects generate. Co-operation can improve knowledge and understanding of the neighbouring system among all three groups. However local government co-operation is particularly significant because it does involve representatives of all the main political parties.

Cross border co-operation does have a practical and largely economic orientation, but there is little doubt that the participation by unionist councillors has contributed, in the context of new political agreement, to greater understanding and mutual respect between politicians and assisted the implementation of the North-South aspects of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. Councillors from Northern Ireland may take different approaches. Some may settle for a polite avoidance of the politics of reconciliation and conflict resolution, as political relationships are still too volatile to start discussing rights and responsibilities. Another view is that the linkages do afford councillors the opportunity to adopt a civic leadership role in a new political and administrative context which can transcend the normal parameters and divisions. There was quite a widespread view that while ten years ago some unionist councillors faced difficulties from their constituency parties and others in relation to cross border activity, this was no longer an issue. Several respondents referred to a massive attitudinal change to cross border activity. The position of councillors from the South is somewhat different in that they tend to be very positive towards cross border co-operation but it is not of major importance to them.

The fact that many linkages are short-term, and related activities by councillors – for example, management committee meetings or visits – may be quite limited, also forms a barrier to the development of reconciliation approaches. The lack of resources or incentives to progress beyond basic contact activities may prevent the more purposeful exploration of deeper issues. This may prevent individuals and groups from making and developing more meaningful contacts and relationships of co-operation, trust and friendship.





Views of Network Councillors

Following an initial round of semi-structured interviews with personnel involved in cross border linkages, a questionnaire was administered to all elected local authority members of the three local authority Cross Border Networks – the North West Region Cross Border Group, the Irish Central Border Area Network and the East Border Region Committee. These groups cover 18 local authority districts in Northern Ireland and the Southern border counties and, together, make up the Border Corridor, as shown in the map.



Donegal is a member of both North West Region and ICBAN
 Monaghan is a member of both ICBAN and East Border Region

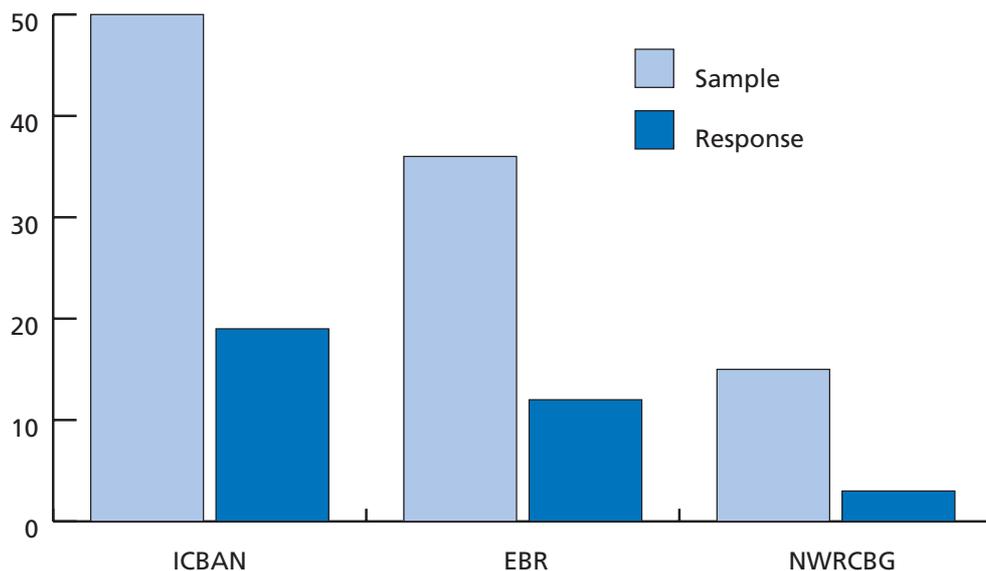
The questionnaire, administered with the assistance of the three development officers/network managers, consisted of five closed and three open-ended attitudinal questions (see Appendix 5). Councillors were asked to give their views on (a) the perceived value of cross border co-operation; (b) the main barriers to cross border co-operation; (c) cross border relations; (d) the main achievement of their network; (e) new areas of activity that should be undertaken by the local authority Cross Border Networks. The survey data presented in this section of the report is based on 44 returns and represents an overall response rate of 44 per cent. The typical response rate for a mail survey is between 20 and 40 per cent (Nachmais and Nachmais 1992).



Views of Network Councillors

As Table 7.1 shows, it was possible to analyse the response rate by local authority network.

Table 7.1: Response Rate by Local Authority Network

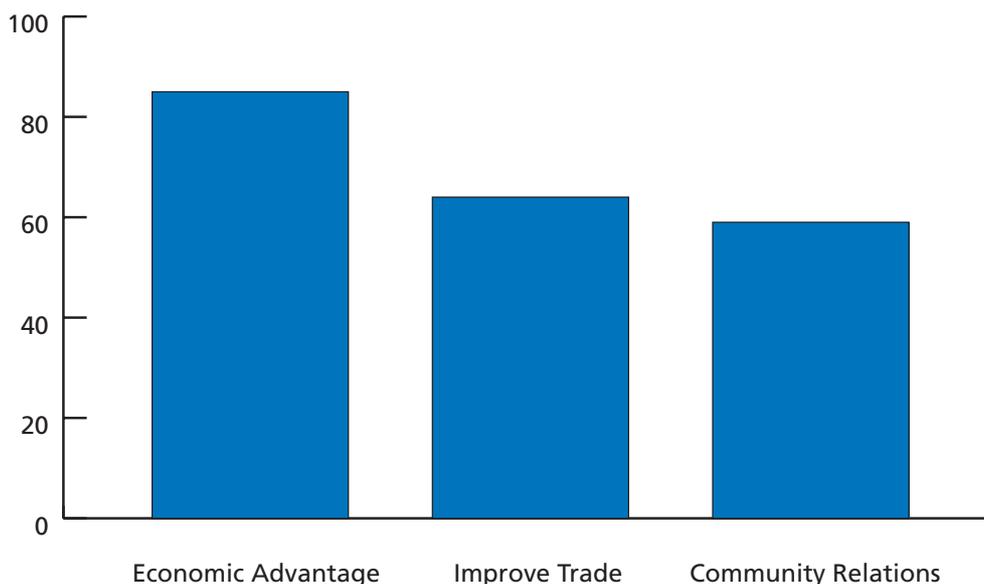


Data from the survey indicates a diverse profile of political affiliations as follows: Social Democratic and Labour Party (11), Ulster Unionist Party (9), Fianna Fail (6), Sinn Fein (5), Fine Gael (4), Independents (4) and Alliance (1). This is indicative of the cross-party participation in local authority networks.

Respondents were asked to rank from 1-6 a set of perceived values of cross border co-operation in order of importance. Overall the most important value cited by councillors was 'economic advantage' (85 per cent). It was interesting to note, though, that further analysis of the data revealed that of the 85 per cent, the vast majority were Northern councillors. This finding may indicate the stronger Northern emphasis on economic reasons for co-operation. Also a joint IBEC-CBI cross border study (1999) showed North to South trade to be much more extensive than South to North trade. Overall values concerned with building economic capacity, 'economic advantage' and 'improve trade', were ranked first and second, with 'improve community relations' being considered the third most important value, as shown in Table 7.2.

Views of Network Councillors

Table 7.2: Main Values of Cross Border Co-Operation



The Networks straddle two government jurisdictions with different political systems and administrative structures, and the survey asked councillors to rank from 1-4 a number of aspects considered to be barriers to cross border co-operation. The main points cited in relation to barriers to co-operation were 'lack of resources' by 46 per cent and 'lack of co-ordinated policy' by 39 per cent. When the data is analysed by membership, North and South of the border, it reveals a slightly higher percentage of Northern councillors citing 'lack of resources' as the main barrier.

As stated earlier in the report, the range of functions over which councils in Northern Ireland have control is narrower than the range of functions provided by local councils in the Republic of Ireland. Therefore it was interesting to note that although ranked only third out of a possible four barriers, 25 per cent of Northern respondents viewed the current system of administration as unsatisfactory and consequently view the mismatch of functions as the main barrier to cross border co-operation.

When the categories 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' are collapsed for both the East Border Region Committee and the North West Region Border Group, councillors appear generally satisfied with the efficacy of both their border group's board and sub-committees. Some councillors in ICBAN were inclined to express



Views of Network Councillors

dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of their board and committees, 29 per cent and 43 per cent respectively. Some of the comments voiced in the qualitative comments to this question were:

"not having sufficient clout"

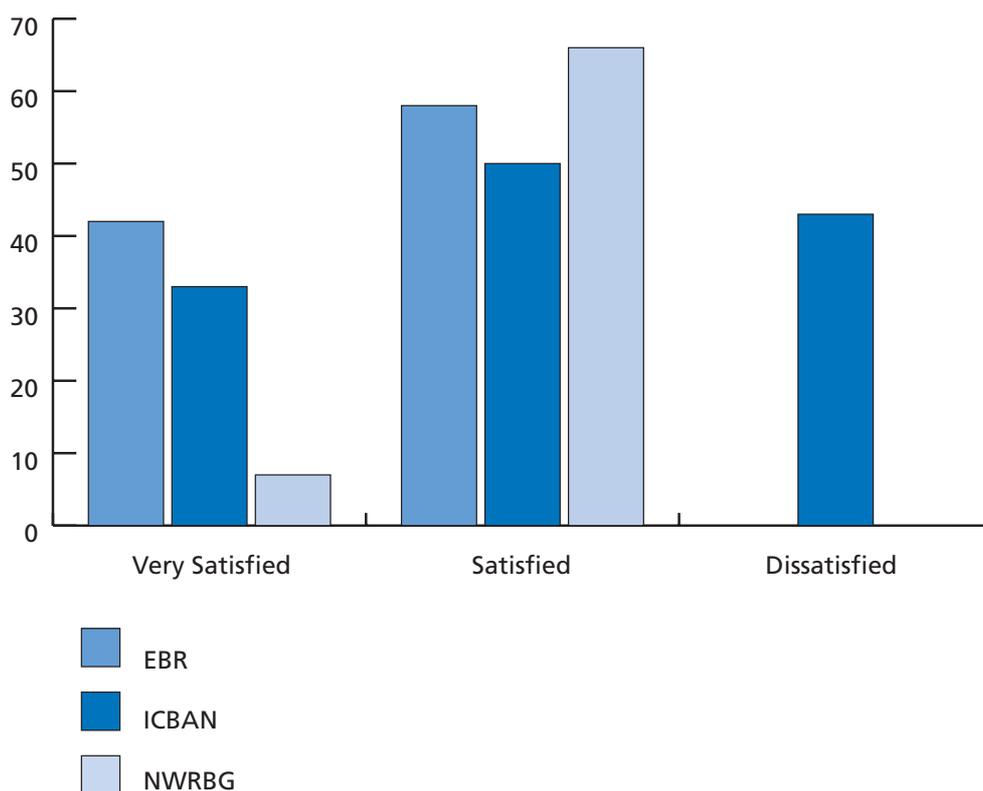
"lots of meetings but have achieved very little practical results on the ground"

"more co-ordinated and focussed approach needed"

"poor co-ordination and communication between nominating authorities"

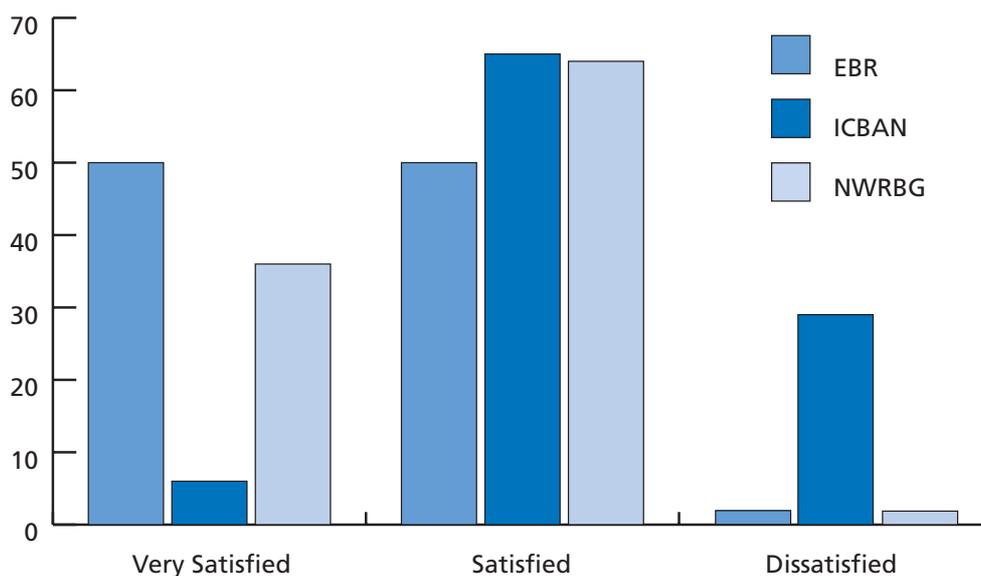
One explanation for this dissatisfaction, suggested by an official at the operational level, was that not only is this the youngest network, established June 1995, it is also the largest network. Remarks such as "not enough work to do" made by councillors in all the networks may be explained by the fact that until a further allocation of development funding through the EU INTERREG III programme becomes available, progress is frustratingly slow.

Table 7.3 Effectiveness of Committees



Views of Network Councillors

Table 7.4 Effectiveness of Board



The survey also asked respondents to indicate how successful their network had been, in particular areas of activity. These areas were:

- Community Economic Development
- Business Development
- Tourism
- Environment.

Collectively there was no one overall activity clearly identified by respondents as a major success and views on the degree of success across the areas of activity were very mixed. However 50 per cent of respondents from both the East Border Region Committee and the North West Border Region Group stated that their network had been 'very successful' in the tourism area. The most common activity in which networks felt they had been 'somewhat successful' was community economic development. This was cited by 70 per cent of all respondents.

25 per cent of questionnaire respondents agreed that the 'environment' was the area where the networks had been least successful. Respondents were then asked to indicate an activity considered the main achievement of their network. The main achievement reported from each network was as follows:

- cross border transportation study (ICBAN)
- the first cross border tourism brochure (EBRC)
- Foyle Car Ferry (NWRCBG)



Views of Network Councillors

However it also emerged that, despite individual network achievements, the overall main achievement reported has been the establishment of effective working relations, or as one councillor succinctly put it 'co-operation!' Typical of the comments expressed by questionnaire respondents were the following:

"Bringing councillors of both traditions together and realising how many common problems we have"

"Social and administrative interaction, development of a cross border spirit at local authority level"

Respondents were also asked to identify the ways in which networks had improved cross border relations. Not surprisingly, 80 per cent of respondents stated that networks have improved contact between councils, and as a consequence of this the personal friendships that have developed over time have also improved cross border relations (62 per cent). This finding was evidenced by such qualitative responses as:

"Build up of trust among members"

"Produce harmony among diverse groups"

In addition, respondents stated that the networks had enabled elected members to exchange ideas and experiences (46 per cent), identify common needs (46 per cent) and expand their knowledge base about differences in structures and cultures North and South (39 per cent).

Respondents were also asked to state what new projects networks should undertake and who should fund future development. From the questionnaire responses it became clear that respondents felt that there was a need to progress projects already identified for the development of the border region through the Integrated Area Plans co-ordinated by the local authority Cross Border Networks. Key areas targeted for development include:

- Improve road and rail infrastructure
- Provision of natural gas
- Energy efficiency/renewable energy actions
- Electronic-commerce awareness training
- Support for border region.

However the apparent frustration at the speed of progress with projects, noted earlier, was highlighted once more:

"Europe should ensure that the two governments give existing cross border projects more importance. Frustration beginning to creep in at apparent slowness to approve worthwhile projects."

"Not to subvert but to act as a catalyst over a wide range of activities and procure enough funding to nurture the acorns."

Views of Network Councillors

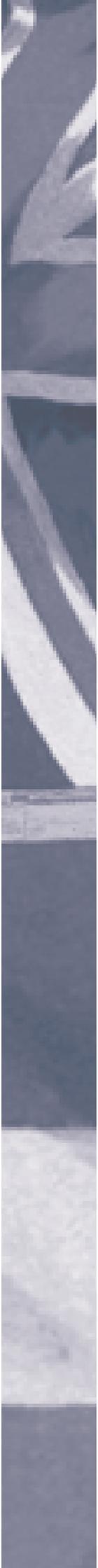
In response to the question regarding sources of funding for future development, 10 per cent of respondents cited EU money, but the vast majority (90 per cent) stated that the respective governments should undertake this role with assistance from other funders. The following comments demonstrate the main sentiments:

"INTERREG in the interim, but mainstreamed in the long term."

"Both British and Irish governments with help from Europe and America."

"Local authorities plus EU agencies, because without the bodies investing some of their resources it will not be of the same importance."





8.1 LACE-TAP

There is in place a mechanism for the dissemination of European practice in cross-border co-operation. LACE-TAP (Linkage Assistance and Co-operation for the European Border Regions – Technical Assistance and Promotion) was established by the Association of European Border Regions as the observatory for cross-border co-operation. This action was implemented to provide technical assistance and foster cross border co-operation for border regions in and around the European Union, and especially for those regions involved in INTERREG.

LACE-TAP has 12 offices throughout Europe, and an office for the Ireland/Northern Ireland border region has been set up in Monaghan jointly by the Association of European Border Regions, Co-operation Ireland and the three local authority Cross Border networks. This office operates through a development officer. It disseminates information; produces and distributes publications; organises workshops, seminars and conferences; encourages the exchange of information and experience, and facilitates direct contact among practitioners of cross border co-operation through hosting /arranging study visits. This role covers local government but it is not exclusive to local government co-operation. The LACE-TAP office in Monaghan has a database of information on its website which contains models of good practice for projects approved under various cross border programmes in Ireland.

8.2 European Guide to Co-operation

The European Commission through the LACE-TAP project has published *A Practical Guide to Cross-Border Co-operation* (European Commission 1997). This guide recommends a systematic approach to cross-border development through three steps:

- A socio-economic analysis of the cross-border region
- Development of a common strategy based on appropriate themes
- Identification of a selection of measures and projects.

The recommendations and observations of this guide provide some interesting comparisons with the Irish experience.

In relation, for example, to start-up:

- Cross-border co-operation usually starts with individual initiatives
- Once-off activities are found at the beginning of co-operation
- These once-off activities create networks which can have a multiplier effect.



European Experience

In relation to processes:

- Experience shows that co-operation comes first and structure follows
- A variety of interface arrangements may be required
- Advance co-operation requires more permanent and binding structures
- Programmes and projects should be truly cross-border in character
- There should be parity of representation from both sides of the border
- There should be provision of funds from both sides of the border

In relation to subject matter, the main areas of co-operation are presented as:

- Spatial planning and development planning for cross border geographic units
- Economic development, particularly the promotion of small and medium enterprises in border regions
- Transport and infrastructure
- Tourism as a route to diversification and development of border regions
- Environmental issues which may be inherently cross border
- Education, training, health and culture.

LACE-TAP has also published extensive information sheets on cross-border co-operation to disseminate experiences and examples of good practice from different European regions. This documentation tends to show a list of measures similar to Ireland, with priorities in transport, environment, tourism, and SMEs.

8.3 European Structures for Co-operation

The European Commission's *Practical Guide*, based on the experience of the Operational Programmes for INTERREG II, produced a typology of four principal types of structure for cross border co-operation.

i) Long-Term Integrated Cross Border Structures

These are structures which have evolved over decades and show a high level of integration with a complex organisation and cross border capacity. They include a political decision-making tier and cover a range of projects.

ii) Integrated Structures Associated with Specific Cross Border Programmes

These have an organisation with a technical and administrative capacity but are geared towards a specific programme and do not comprise a political tier.

iii) Interlinked Structures

These bring together existing structures, often using existing administrative and technical capacity.

European Experience

iv) Cross Border Information and Consultation Forums

These structures represent various possibilities ranging from working groups to *ad hoc* co-operation arrangements.

Many of the projects given as examples in this typology are actually very large, and the most advanced structures are more akin to forms of regional government and administration. EUREGIO, an example of a typology I structure, comprises 105 municipalities organised in three regional associations with a population of 3.2 million on the German/Dutch border, and directly manages the INTERREG funding for its region. The EUREGIO Rhein-Waal body has an independent legal status with its own authority and staff and high level political representation. The ARGE-ALP project consists of two German länder, three Austrian länder, three Italian autonomous regions and three Swiss cantons. PAMINA is a structure on the German/French border which manages an INTERREG programme and is given as an example of a typology II structure, but actually comprises representatives of the regional governments and has a truly cross border secretariat.

It is questionable how applicable this typology is to cross border co-operation by local authorities in Ireland, where everything is on a much smaller scale. Two of the cross border networks meet the criterion in typology I of a long-established structure. The emphasis in typology II on a structure associated with a specific cross border programme suggests the Blackwater Catchment Scheme and ERNACT. The model in typology III of interlinked structures may be exemplified by several examples: Sligo-Omagh Partnership, Newry-Dundalk Joint Committee, Louth and NIHE link. There are also quite a number of examples of loose *ad hoc* arrangements which are appropriate to typology IV.

8.4 European Development Model

Insofar as the *Practical Guide to Cross Border Co-operation* suggests a model, it consists of key points in stages of co-operation not dissimilar to Co-operation Ireland's Local Authority Linkages stages:

- Once-off activities and initiatives by individuals
- Strategy for exploiting potential of the border region through co-operation
- Familiarisation with partner areas
- Working jointly to develop objectives
- Programme management and implementation as the most advanced stage.

It is perhaps noticeable that there is an emphasis on the establishment of structures with technical/administrative, financial and decision-making capacities. It has been argued (Christiansen 1999) that many cross border endeavours are low-key, mirroring some of the difficulties of European integration in general. Stutt (1997)



European Experience

argues that cross border co-operation in Europe has been facilitated by decentralised administrative traditions and levels of regional autonomy which are not found in Ireland. There is not much material relevant to the particular Irish context of political divisions/conflict resolution/reconciliation. An account of a Tyrol-South Tyrol linkage, an area of ethnic division, discussing collaborative projects, has been issued by LACE-TAP, but mentions neither conflict nor reconciliation. In general, the growth of inter-regional cross-border co-operation among EU members may serve to lesson the sensitivity of Irish cross border co-operation, and it can also be suggested (Tannam 1999) that the EU provides a neutral forum outside Westminster, Dublin and Northern Ireland, where Northern Irish politicians can co-operate on non-constitutional issues.

Summary of Findings

9.1 Models of Development

1. The most articulated model operating in Ireland is Co-operation Ireland's Local Authority Linkages Programme (Model 1) which is disseminated to councils as a practical guide (see page 19 for list of models). This is an appropriate and valuable model as far as it goes, but it is applicable mainly to initial preparation and contact and then comes to an end. The model has not really been developed as a guide to more sustained cross border work and more complex structures.
2. The most advanced model of development between local authorities is the Cross Border Network model (Model 2). The network model has appeal both in meeting practical strategic needs and requirements in collaborative ventures across the border, and in creating networks with resources, capacity, population and lobbying power. Significantly, the networks have been able to generate cross community political support for their activities. The cross-border network model has grown slowly, but has potential as the mechanism for the development of greater cross border collaboration in local government.
3. The study suggests the importance of the partnership model (Model 4) for the continuing development and enhancement of linkages. This is particularly useful for the expansion of local authority linkages given the limitations on the functions of local authorities North and South, the mismatch of those functions, new concepts of governance and EU requirements. It is a model that linkages can pursue to develop activities particularly in such areas as economic development, tourism, housing and community development. It is also a model through which local authority linkages can reach into and relate to the community sector as well as the rest of the statutory sector.
4. Cross border development is to a large extent funding driven, and the availability of EU funding, particularly through the INTERREG and PEACE programmes, has determined the nature and scope of cross border collaboration. EU funding requirements have set guidelines for the subject matter of projects, the management of projects and the monitoring of projects, as well as determining the resources for cross border work. EU involvement also serves to maintain cross border developments as additional to the normal functioning of councils.
5. The activities undertaken in cross border collaboration have focussed on certain areas, particularly economic development. An economic development model of cross border co-operation tends to dominate, particularly related to SME



Summary of Findings

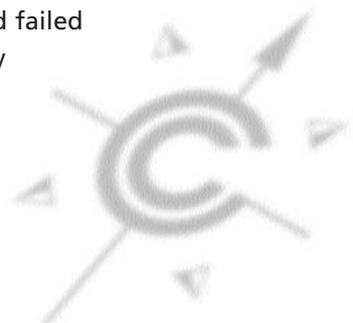
development, ICT projects, E-business and the promotion of inward investment. This dominates not only because of funding but also because of the desire for projects to address economic disadvantage in the border areas. In addition, elected representatives of all parties can agree on practical economic action to improve living standards.

6. It does rather appear in the study that cross border linkages are often initiated by councillors, but their further development is often led by officials rather than councillors. Among some councillors there may be apathy or even hostility, and officials are more ready to recognise the practical and professional benefits of co-operation. Although many councillors are strongly supportive of cross border linkages, a development process may require officials to lead councillors sensitively through the process. Officials are also, of course, in a position to appreciate the legal and technical difficulties of cross border working.
7. The Newry-Dundalk Joint Committee demonstrates what might be called a local lobbying model. This is a model where councillors from contiguous areas across the border meet to share concerns and to lobby in the interests of the local region on issues which have a cross border dimension.
8. The twinning model is another model of development for cross border collaboration. This is not, in practice, popular, although it is a form of co-operation that is generally well known and extensive throughout Europe. There are a few cross border examples in Ireland, since it is generally thought to be more appropriate to links with other countries.
9. The role of facilitating/promotional bodies and intermediary bodies in the development process is also significant. It is the case that the model of facilitating/intermediary bodies to promote development is taken mainly from the voluntary/community sector. This is a well accepted model in Ireland though the cross-border facilitating work of such bodies as Co-operation Ireland, the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust, Area Development Management Ltd and the Combat Poverty Agency. The role of Co-operation Ireland's Local Authority Linkages Programme has been crucial in the initiation of many cross border contacts, particularly outside the border areas. There was also a view from some of the larger, well-established networks and linkages that they could themselves move towards a facilitating and promotional role. A unique partnership between Area Development Management Ltd and the Combat Poverty Agency (ADM/CPA) was established in 1995 to jointly administer a significant proportion of the EU Peace and Reconciliation Programme in the Southern border counties and, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust, to manage the community reconciliation measure of the cross border development sub-programme. ADM/CPA also reported that it had acted

Summary of Findings

(ADM/CPA 1999) to support community led development through local authorities and to ensure that its work complemented and supported the ongoing work of the local authorities.

10. It is noticeable that there is no strategy endorsed by governments or departments to promote cross border local government co-operation. It appears that no guidelines have been issued by the Departments of the Environment in either Dublin or Belfast. The document 'Better Local Government: A Programme for Change', published in Dublin in 1996 by the Department of Environment and Local Government, made no reference to cross border co-operation. The Department of Environment and Local Government has issued some guidelines about cross border purchasing. It has also referred to regional and cross border opportunities for development and has exhorted local government to make the best advantage of these. However the documents 'Focus on Strategic Policy Committees' (1998) and 'A New Vision for Our Counties and Cities' (2000), explaining the new system of county and city development boards, both published by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, again make no reference to cross border co-operation. The Northern Ireland Local Government Staff Commission does not provide any specific guidelines and has not offered any training in cross border co-operation.
11. It is also useful to identify a more informal, fragmented model of development. Most local authorities, especially in border areas, have in practice a portfolio of cross border links. Some of these may be small in scope, related to one function; they may be short-term, lack permanency or involve a limited form of participation in a large partnership. Donegal County Council reported a portfolio of eight linkages but some of these were loosely structured. It is also the case that the size of this portfolio reduces with distance from the border.
12. It is necessary to comment on the relatively limited extent of cross border co-operation. The study found that the number of major projects is quite small and other linkages rather limited in their development. The reality, then, is that most local authorities have not experienced major cross border engagement. 25 out of the 26 councils in Northern Ireland reported that they had cross border linkages, which suggests potential for further development. It was quite surprising to find so little cross border activity among the seven urban district councils and two borough councils in the six southern border council areas. Unsurprisingly there are very few linkages with councils in the south and west of Ireland and even in the midland counties, and some attempts at contacts here had failed largely because of the distance involved. The seven county councils and three county boroughs in Munster had only three projects between them. It is also noticeable that links between Belfast and Dublin Corporations are fairly



Summary of Findings

limited, although these are mainly focussed on urban regeneration. Relationships between officials are good and regular contact is reported, although the attitude of Belfast councillors, including mayors, towards co-operation can vary depending on their political complexion. Both capital cities tend to the view that any cross border links should be with each other and not with other councils, as a consequence of their status as capital cities. Belfast Corporation is mainly involved in large transnational links which have an attraction in moving the focus away from just North-South links.

9.2 Models of Project Management

1. The traditional local government committee structure tends to dominate larger linkages, with a management committee largely composed of councillors along with a senior official and the project manager in attendance at committee meetings.
2. With the development of partnerships, local councillor representation is reduced on management committees. This trend is in no way peculiar to cross border co-operation as it reflects changes in local governance, which is moving towards the fragmentation of formal closed structures and into partnership forms of governance. Partnerships may be the dominant future form of local governance (Walsh 1998).
3. There was much evidence of small committees, composed of officials without councillor involvement, used to manage more limited and specialist projects.
4. Where management committees of councillors existed, it was always the case that the representation from Northern Ireland included councillors from unionist parties. The cross-community dimension was implicitly built into cross border management structures.
5. A dedicated project manager is the most effective and desirable management mechanism for projects and is to be found in nearly all the most successful projects. Project managers can provide a specialist, full-time focus; carry out co-ordination across the border, and act as a single link with other agencies.
6. There were very few examples of a specialist cross border development officer working for a council or between councils, and able to cover a range of projects or develop new projects. In practice project management in the majority of linkages was carried out by officers who undertook these tasks as part of their wider responsibilities. Their official designation was in

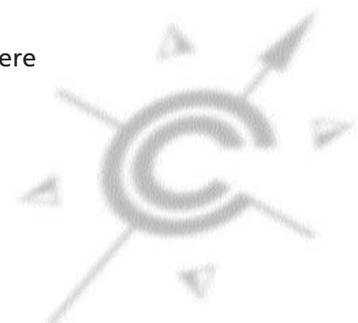
Summary of Findings

the area of a major council function and they were usually economic development, tourism, community services or environmental services officers.

7. It is possible to note a range of management skills peculiar to cross border work: for example, flexibility to work across jurisdictions, sensitivity to the political context and reconciliation dimensions, ability to relate to councillors, patience in making gradual progress and experience of the implementation of EU programmes.
8. There appeared to be little detailed material on effective cross border project management in local government. Co-operation Ireland's material relates mainly to structures, and to date LACE-TAP has published mainly newsheets and summary information. Nor did there appear to be many opportunities for officers and members of management committees to meet to share experiences, expertise and problems. There were some opportunities for economic development officers to meet together and councillors did on occasions attend North-South conferences on a range of topics. In addition, LACE-TAP has organised a number of seminars and conferences on aspects of cross-border working.

9.3 Models of Reconciliation

1. Most cross border linkages do not have an explicit model of reconciliation built into the linkage.
2. There is, however, often an implicit model in building trust and understanding and finding common ground between unionists and nationalists.
3. There is widespread recognition of the significance of finding ways in which politicians representing the Irish political divide can work together. Councillors who responded to the questionnaire rated improvements in cross border relations as one of the main benefits of cross border co-operation.
4. It would be possible to build in a stronger reconciliation dimension to projects as demonstrated by a few projects.
5. One factor in accommodating local government cross border co-operation is the extent to which councillor participation, especially on the unionist side, is a personal matter i.e. there is little evidence of strong party policy positions in local councils.



Summary of Findings

6. There is little evidence of willingness in co-operative ventures to confront the dimensions of political conflict. However this is not surprising in that current local government collaboration is largely 'voluntary' and the emphasis is on practical economic outcomes.
7. It may not be appropriate to look at cross border co-operation in local government as a mechanism for changing deeply held political convictions or as a means of conflict resolution. What is being achieved is more in the form of building relationships, working together and promoting mutual understanding and respect.

10.1 The Achievements of Local Government Co-operation

Cross border co-operation within the overall activities of local government North and South plays a limited role, but it is at its most developed and most significant along the Border Corridor. Cross border co-operation in local government is important as a means of addressing social and economic disadvantage in these border areas and in reducing the significance of the border as a barrier to the improvement of living standards. Instrumental to this has been the status of cross border co-operation as a means of accessing funding for local areas, particularly from EU programmes.

The practical achievements of co-operation are most clearly to be found in the enhancement of the economic infrastructure and information and communications technology; in the promotion of small and medium enterprises; in community enterprise development, and in the creation of a range of employment opportunities. The other main areas of achievement include transportation, environmental and energy issues, joint marketing of tourism, and cultural and community activities. The local authority Cross Border Networks have also provided a strategic vision for economic and infrastructural developments along the border.

A major achievement of cross border co-operation to date has been the creation of working relationships across the border and the establishment of cross border structures involving local government and other agencies. From an initially small base, the last ten years has seen a successful development process and communication across the border has improved at all levels.

Local government cross border co-operation has not had a very high profile, but the peace process and the new structures following the 1998 Good Friday Agreement have brought it more to the fore. There is evidence that cross border co-operation has helped in the promotion of contact, friendship and mutual understanding among both local government councillors and officials. Cross border working has also helped correct the negative image which had been attached to the border areas.

In terms of the whole scenario of local government activity in the Republic of Ireland cross border co-operation is still a small element, but in Northern Ireland it can be seen as part of a process where local government has extended its role into new activities which did not exist at the time of reorganisation in the early 1970s.



Conclusions and Recommendations

10.2 Barriers to Development

The achievements of cross border co-operation and its development must also be seen in the context of overcoming barriers to cross border co-operation. Local government co-operation differs from most other sectors of co-operation in that it is highly politicised through the predominant role played by local politicians. Cross border co-operation is still a sensitive political issue among many councillors who represent unionist parties. O'Dowd and Corrigan (1995) showed that practical economic co-operation was acceptable to most unionist councillors but support was divided for development into other areas. There still appears to be a lack of political will in councils outside the border areas to give much importance to cross border co-operation. A few examples of political difficulty were reported: for example, in one council unionist councillors had prevented Sinn Fein councillors travelling to visit a council in the South as part of a council deputation. The perception of unionist councillors of the state of the peace process may also influence their views on cross border co-operation.

It can be difficult to identify common interests in areas away from the border. Moyle District Council in north Antrim is largely nationalist but found it difficult to develop linkages. However some councils located further away from the border do have links, and the distance factor becomes less significant in the context of wider links with councils in Britain and other European counties.

In this study there have been frequent references to the mismatch of council functions as inhibiting cross border co-operation. Almost all respondents questioned acknowledged this as a problem. The lack of compatible partners can impose restrictions on what can be done. The major problems are the Northern councils' lack of responsibility for housing, planning, roads and fire services, and the Southern councils' lack of responsibility for economic development, community development and tourism.

Although there has been substantial funding from the EU, the issue of adequate and sustained funding was often raised as a difficulty. Local authorities throughout Ireland are not funded by governments to engage in cross border co-operation. In some circumstances they could face legal or audit difficulties if they spent money on cross border activities. As one council representative expressed it: "co-operation without proper resources is not productive for anyone". Central authorities in Dublin and Belfast may not be entirely aware of the scope of cross border co-operation and the need for adequate financing may be lost against the backdrop of EU Structural Funds.

A further obstacle identified was the general lack of communication between councils across the border even at the level of chief executive and county manager. Councils and staff generally do not have detailed knowledge of how local government works in the other jurisdiction. This means there is a learning

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process to be undertaken in many cross border projects. One project was able to report that it had built on a strong component of staff awareness of policies and provision in the other jurisdiction.

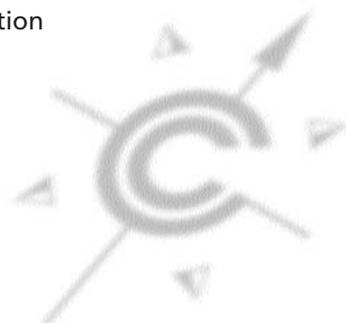
There are significant differences in the operation of councils which can produce some difficulty. County managers in the South have more powers than chief executives in the North. There were also comments that councillors in Northern Ireland had little tradition of policy making compared to their Southern counterparts. There were also differences in the category of officials, North and South, who took on responsibilities for cross border projects where there was not a dedicated project manager. Local authorities are often implementing nationally set social and public policies and there are significant policy differences in areas such as housing and planning. There are further differences in legal procedures in such areas as employment law, health and safety, licensing and audit procedures.

Summary of Barriers

- **Political sensitivity/political legitimacy**
- **Mismatch of functions**
- **Inadequacy of funding**
- **Distance from border**
- **Lack of communication and knowledge**
- **Differences in the operation of councils**
- **Legislative differences**

10.3 The Significance of Strategic Developments

There are a number of significant strategic decisions and policies which have a major influence on the development of cross border co-operation. The availability of extensive EU funding has been a critical driving factor and this will continue as a key influence. The EU PEACE II programme will provide 536 million Euro of funding for Northern Ireland and the Southern border region over the period 2001-2005. The cross-border INTERREG III programme will be worth 170 million Euro to Northern Ireland and the border region until the end of 2006. There has also been funding for economic development projects from the International Fund for Ireland. Other EU initiatives, Leader, Equal and Urban II, may also have some impact on local authorities. These EU initiatives do carry with them conditions and technical requirements that influence the processes used in cross border co-operation in terms of strategies, co-financing, voluntary contributions, partnership management, monitoring and evaluation procedures.



Conclusions and Recommendations

EU influence on local government co-operation may actually increase with the establishment of the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB). Under the Good Friday Agreement six new North/South implementation bodies were set up under the overall auspices of a North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC). The SEUPB has the most relevance for local government cross border co-operation, although the Trade and Business Development Body and Waterways Ireland have functions which are also relevant.

The SEUPB has a wide range of responsibilities, including co-ordination of EU funding programmes, advising the government on further applications and providing assistance in the administration of existing programmes (Coakley 2001). The lead departments through the North/South Ministerial Council in the EU programmes sector are the Department of Finance in Dublin and the Department of Finance and Personnel in Belfast. The chief executive of the SEUPB is a former chief executive of Omagh District Council, John McKinney. In one of its first activities, the NSMC received a report from the SEUPB on the future role of the local authority Cross Border Networks (now also known as the Border Corridor Groups). A set of principles was agreed to underpin the work of the Border Corridor Groups with the aim of giving them greater input into deciding on the priorities for spending EU funds in the Border Corridor region. The NSMC also agreed that a substantive allocation of funds should be made to the groups and that they should be involved in the decision making process in implementing the new INTERREG programme.

A further major strategic influence on local government co-operation is change in the local government systems. The growth of cross border co-operation in the last fifteen years has coincided with new forms of more participative local governance. This trend had developed in the South with county enterprise boards, county tourism committees and other area partnership groups. The Department of Environment and Local Government's 'Programme for Change' proposals in 1997 supported new forms of participation by local communities in the decision-making processes of local government. The Local Government Bill 2000 contained several measures to implement community involvement with local authorities in a more participative way. These new initiatives included the County/City Development Boards; Strategic Policy Committees and the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network.

In Northern Ireland new forms of local governance were exemplified most clearly in the establishment of District Partnerships, composed of councillors and representatives of the voluntary/community sector and business, trade unions and statutory agencies, to deliver EU PEACE funding. This partnership model has worked well and has not led to the marginalisation of local government (Hughes et al 1998). Many Northern councils also extended their activities into economic enterprise partnerships (Birrell and Hayes 1999).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The trend to partnerships and forms of governance embracing local government, the rest of the statutory sector, the voluntary and community sector and the private sector has facilitated a range of inter-organisational structures to carry forward cross border co-operation. Such structures have allowed a number of cross border projects to develop in new and more sustainable directions through the mobilisation of a range of partners. The actual structure of local government in the South has not changed significantly, but the structure in Northern Ireland may be reformed to reduce the number of councils, although it would be difficult to generalise on the impact of this on cross border co-operation.

While the general attitude of the British and Irish governments to local government cross border co-operation has been positive (insofar as they have an attitude), cross border co-operation has grown without the existence of any specific policy or guidance from governments North and South. The view of many in local government is that cross border co-operation has tended to be overlooked by the relevant government departments in Dublin and Belfast, even though Irish and British government policy currently favours such co-operation. The draft programme of the Northern Ireland Executive (2000) stated that the Executive will focus on the delivery of tangible activities for mutual benefit on an all-island and cross border basis, although there was no specific reference to local government. The final Northern Ireland Programme for Government (2001) commits support to the work of the cross-border Implementation Bodies. The creation of the North/South Ministerial Council and the Implementation Bodies will give a higher profile to cross border co-operation in general, including local government co-operation.

The state of the peace process clearly impinges upon the state of cross border co-operation. The peace process has encouraged some councils to develop and enhance their cross border collaborative activity and has made it more acceptable. The existence of the Northern Ireland Assembly does take some political pressure off councillors, as during its absence they formed the only political forum in Northern Ireland. However the difficulties with the peace process can have adverse effects on North/South co-operation, and the NSMC has already been affected by political actions taken by the First Minister and Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, and Democratic Unionist Party ministers.



Conclusions and Recommendations

10.4 Potential for the Future and Recommendations

Giving councils a specific responsibility for cross border co-operation would help with future development. It is noticeable that individual council strategy documents, even when councils are involved in extensive cross border work, do not appear to refer to cross border co-operation. Mainstreaming cross border co-operation would mean either an allocation as part of normal council expenditure, a developmental budget, or a system whereby councils could bid for resources for cross border work. This would not necessarily interfere with applications for EU funding.

There is, however, an argument that making a cross border strategy obligatory might be counter productive and an approach based on gradualism/voluntarism would be best. Mainstreaming through council funding or a central government grant would be popular with councillors. Mainstreaming could be underpinned by the adoption by the two governments of a strategy on cross border co-operation which could be couched in fairly flexible terms or presented as guidance. The Special EU Programmes Body has a role in relation to EU funding and thus the local authority Cross Border Networks, but it does not have a role in relation to local government co-operation. In future, however, the North/South Ministerial Council may be able to endorse a cross border local government strategy.

Mainstreaming through a funding allocation may allow the funding of a cross border development officer in each council dedicated to the development and co-ordination of cross border co-operation. This could be wholly or partly written into a job description. In Northern Ireland, for example, each council already has a community relations officer.

Mainstreaming would also enhance the development potential of cross border co-operation, as it would remove the total dependency on special funding initiatives and the restrictions this imposes. Fragmentation caused by the use of a number of funding sources, particularly in the areas of economic, rural and community development, also produces administrative complexity. As a recent Northern Ireland Economic Council Report (2000) expressed it: "the playing field for local development has become increasingly crowded and complex".

In assessing the potential for development, it is necessary to look at the subject areas. This study identified three constraints: the mismatch in functions, the limitations on functions, and funding. It is difficult to tackle the mismatch of functions as this involves the whole system of local government. The development of social partnerships is the main way to surmount this difficulty, and there could be more involvement of councils in areas where they are currently excluded. If one takes the example of housing, the full potential can only be realised by mainstreaming cross border housing links rather than relying on the funding of a few special projects.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Some recent changes in local government do point to new avenues of co-operation. In the South councils do not have direct community development responsibilities, but county development boards have recently been set up to promote social, cultural and economic development through the production of local integrated plans. The County Development Boards in the border counties have set up sub-committees under the headings of economic development, social development, cultural development, agricultural and economic development and social inclusion. County Development Boards do not have a specific cross border role and to date have quite small budgets, but they have the potential to relate to Northern councils. Community services have developed as a major area of activity for councils in the North, covering the funding of community groups, advice centres and community centres.

The government (DSD 2000) has announced its intention to enhance the community support role of district councils. Changes in responsibilities for economic development may provide even more opportunities for expansion. The Northern Ireland Executive is restructuring all the economic development agencies and has declared its intention to strengthen the role of local government in local economic development. It is also possible that the functions of County Enterprise Boards in the South may be transferred to local authorities.

A number of items have forced their way on to the local government agenda, in particular waste management, and a number of other topics have the potential for development: environmental awareness, energy efficiency, natural gas, arts and cultural projects, rural housing and emergency services. Councils could aim at a more balanced portfolio of activities. There could also be much more exchange of information relating to new financial management systems in the South and the 'Best Value' initiative in the North.

The potential for cross border co-operation could also be enhanced by more effective and specialist project management. This appears to be a key to successful and sustained delivery. It may be possible to move to cross border development officer posts and eventually units within councils or shared across the border. Apart from training in the management of specific functions – for example, economic development – it would be useful to draw up a range of management competencies specific to cross border working and its development. There is a need for the dissemination of best practice in the detailed management of cross border projects and/or for the provision of technical assistance for more developed forms of co-operation. LACE-TAP could be a vehicle for this, and it has plans for the production of a manual on cross border working (although LACE-TAP has limited resources). An enhanced role for Co-operation Ireland would be another alternative.

It has been suggested that dependence on European funding for cross border co-operation has led to the dominance of a 'European model' in North-South arrangements which has



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been called a strategy of 'functional co-operation'. This European model is described by Coakley (2000) as based on the assumption that political accommodation will be facilitated by establishing patterns of contacts between elites. The strong European framework in which local authority cross border co-operation takes place may deflect some potential political criticism in the Irish situation.

The European emphasis on the involvement of social partners at the decision-making level of cross border structures (Knox 1998) and in INTERREG III will reinforce this. However it may not in the Irish context be desirable to downgrade the role of councillors where new partnerships are required to replace existing networks of boards largely composed of councillors. Under INTERREG III there has to be 50 per cent representation of social partners on management boards. It is a political achievement to have councillors who represent all political interests and diverse communities co-operating across the border and this should not be undermined. Although there are different views on this issue, the Border Corridor Groups may move to maintain a committee of councillors as well as a social partnership board. Alternatively the social partnership board required by INTERREG III may be a sub-committee of each Border Corridor Group's board, which will continue as a local government body.

Many councillors in Northern Ireland, both unionist and nationalist, now belong to the National Association of Councillors (NAC), which has very close links with its Irish equivalent, the Local Authority Members Association (LAMA), and holds joint conferences with it. This has the potential to encourage greater cross border co-operation between councillors.

At the more local level it may be possible to find potential in the example of the Newry-Dundalk Joint Committee in forging more localised links along the border in those areas where it is easier to identify common interests, although such activity may fall largely into the lobbying category. The study found a lack of involvement by Southern urban district councils even in the border areas, and again it may be possible to produce guidelines for a way ahead for such councils, particularly in cross border tourist links. There is a difficulty in involving councils located at a distance from the border in cross border activity. Co-operation Ireland has promoted some success in this area, but there do appear to be large areas of untapped potential, requiring some resources and guidance for development.

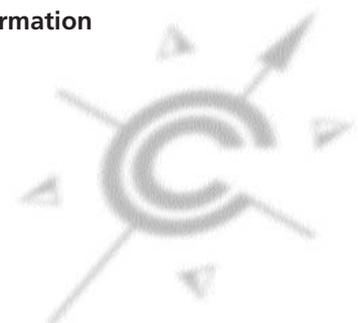
Has cross border local government co-operation the potential to advance reconciliation? It is necessary to give councillors space to build higher levels of trust. Local authority linkages may provide an enabling environment within which new forms of association can flourish. Large networks and partnerships may provide such an environment away from very localised institutions. Local government linkages can afford councillors the opportunity to become civic leaders in a new environment which transcends traditional identities, and in this

Conclusions and Recommendations

way the linkages can develop into a new normality. Unionist councillors need reassurance about their role in cross border linkages, as they have to interact with both nationalist councillors from the North and councillors from the South. Some councillors in the South may regard reconciliation work as a 'Northern' problem and nothing to do with them. Consequently it is necessary to convince them that they have some responsibility to help enhance reconciliation.

Summary of recommendations

- **Consideration to be given to the establishment of cross border co-operation as a local government function.**
- **Mainstreaming cross border co-operation through a funding allocation.**
- **The respective Departments of the Environment to produce a joint strategy with guidelines on the development and management of cross border co-operation.**
- **Creation of posts of cross border development officers.**
- **Protection of the role of councillors when social partnerships are required by EU funders in cross border networks.**
- **Identification of new areas with potential for co-operation, including energy, housing, community services, arts and culture.**
- **The adoption of a development model on a spectrum from one-to-one linkages to broad partnerships.**
- **Changes and reforms in local government, North and South, should be compatible with the requirements of cross border co-operation.**
- **The local authority Cross Border Networks (the Border Corridor Groups) with INTERREG III funding can produce strategic plans for cross border co-operation covering the Border Corridor and its 17 local authorities as a distinctive region.**
- **The success of cross border projects would be enhanced by resourcing more specialist project managers.**
- **Consideration of means to further disseminate detailed information about cross border project management.**



Conclusions and Recommendations

- **Cross border links as part of wider international links could be developed in larger numbers.**
- **Further guidance and assistance to be provided to encourage councils outside the Cross Border Networks, and particularly urban district councils in the South, to participate in cross border working.**
- **Guidance to be given to councils on how issues of reconciliation can be addressed in the context of cross border co-operation.**

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List of Councils and Organisations Interviewed

Appendix 1

Interviews were carried out with the following councils and bodies.

Cavan CC	Armagh City & DC
Cavan CEB	Ballymena BC
Donegal CC	Ballymoney BC
Dublin Corporation	Belfast Corporation
Dundalk UDC	Coleraine BC
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown CC	Derry City C
Fingal CC	Down DC
Leitrim CC	Dungannon and South Tyrone BC
Louth CC	Fermanagh DC
Louth CEB	Moyle DC
Monaghan CC	Newry and Mourne DC
Sligo CC	North Down BC
	Omagh DC

East Border Region Committee
North-West Region Cross Border Group
Irish Central Border Area Network
Blackwater Catchment Scheme

Area Development Management Ltd – Monaghan
LACE-TAP – Monaghan
Co-operation Ireland – Belfast
Future Ways Project – University of Ulster

Antrim BC/District Partnership – Tallaght Partnership
Armagh City and DC – Kilkenny CC
Armagh-Monaghan Digital Corridor
Ballymena DC – Castlebar UDC
Banbridge DC – Carlow CC
Ballymoney BC – Cork CC
Blackwater Catchment Scheme
Border Reach
Books Across the Border
BRAKS Project
Cavan – Fermanagh Tourist Initiative
Coleraine BC – Sligo BC
Community Information Network for Coleraine and Sligo
Cross Border Council Network for Environmental Awareness and Professional Practice Transfer
Cities of the Isles Partnership
Common Action Project
Derry City Council – Limerick CBC
Donegal CC – Dept of Environment (N Ireland)
East Border Region Committee
Edge Cities Network
Down DC – Listowel UDC
European Regional Network for the Application of Communications Technology (ERNACT)
Fermanagh DC – Leitrim CC
Fermanagh-Leitrim Cross Border Waste Management Project
Four Cities Project
Gurteen and Garvagh Cultural Enterprise Project
Irish Central Border Area Network
Lakeland Partnership for Innovation
Larne BC-Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown CC
Lisburn BC – Meath CC
Leitrim CC – NI Housing Executive
Louth Local Authorities – NI Housing Executive
Monaghan CC – Dept of Regional Development (N Ireland)
Moyle DC – Cork CC
Newry – Dundalk Joint Committee
Newry and Mourne DC – Clare CC
North-West Region Cross Border Group
North-West Passage
Omagh-Sligo Partnership
Plato Blackwater
Regenerate Urban North Dublin
Strabane – Lifford Development Commission
Strabane DC – Cavan UDC
Strabane – South Donegal Tourism Initiative



Linkages Included in the Study

Sligo Cross Border Economic Research Unit
Tradenet Ireland
Waterford CC – NI Housing Executive

Linkages which supplied information but were not interviewed:

Ballyclare – Dungloe
Carrickfergus BC – Wexford CC
EU PACTE Project, Laois CC – Armagh CDC + European Partners
Limavady BC – North West Tourism/Letterkenny UDC
Limavady BC – Westport UDC
Limerick CC – Fermanagh DC + European Partners (Dares)
Newry – Dundalk Business Linkage Programme
Tyrone – Donegal Partnership
Western Regional Energy Agency and Network

List of Local Government Functions Appendix 3

Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
<p>Building Control Environmental Health Air Pollution Leisure and Recreation Parks and Amenities Waste Management Economic Development Tourism Promotion Licensing Premises Cemeteries Community Services, Community Development Consumer Protection Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages Control of Dogs Food Safety and Hygiene Some Historic Buildings/Museums/Zoos Community Relations Public Conveniences Refuse Collection Street Trading Travellers Sites Aspects of Emergency Planning</p>	<p>Water Supply Waste Management Environmental Protection Planning and Development Building Control Local Roads Motor Tax/Driving Licences Housing Fire Services Public Libraries Arts, Culture, Theatres Parks and Amenities Leisure Services Control of Dogs Sewerage and Sanitation Services Road Safety Community Centres Rate Collection Markets and Trading Museums and Historic Preservation Urban Renewal Emergency Services Irish Language Promotion Tourism Promotion Promotion of Industrial Development Travellers Sites</p>



DC	District Council
CC	County Council
CB/CBC	County Borough/County Borough Council
BC	Borough Council
UDC	Urban District Council
SPC	Strategic Policy Committee
EU	European Union
EBR	East Border Region Committee
NWRCBG	North-West Region Cross Border Group
ICBAN	Irish Central Border Area Network
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
CNET	Council Network for Environmental Awareness
CEB	County Enterprise Board
LEDU	Local Enterprise Development Unit
ERNACT	European Regions Network for the Application of Communications Technology
LACE-TAP	Linkage Assistance and Co-operation for European Border Regions-Technical Assistance and Promotion
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
ADM/CPA	Area Development Management Ltd/Combat Poverty Agency
NIVT	Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust
SEUPB	Special European Union Programmes Body
NSMC	North/South Ministerial Council
NAC	National Association of Councillors
LAMA	Local Authority Members Association
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
DOE	Department of the Environment (N Ireland)
DSD	Department for Social Development
DOELG	Department of the Environment and Local Government (Republic of Ireland)

Interview Schedule

The following were areas asked about in the Mail Questionnaire to local authority Cross Border Network councillors:

- 1) What in your opinion is the main value of cross border co-operation?
 - Improve trade
 - Economic advantage
 - Aid political situation
 - Improve community relations
 - Improve services for population
 - Focus for securing funding

- 2) What do you consider to be the main barriers to cross border co-operation?
 - Lack of co-ordinated policy
 - Lack of resources
 - Mismatch of local authority functions
 - Legal barriers
 - Other

- 3) How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of the following:
(very satisfied) (satisfied) (dissatisfied)
 - The board
 - Sub-committees

If the reply is 'dissatisfied' to any of the above please state reasons.

- 4) How would you rate what has been achieved by your network in the following areas of activity:
 - Tourism
 - Community Economic Development
 - Aid to Businesses
 - Environment
 - Other

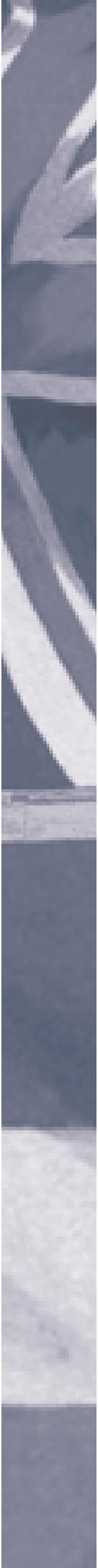
- 5) What do you think is the single major achievement of your network?

- 6) Networks have improved cross border relations in the following ways:
 - Greater contact between councils
 - Personal relationships
 - Knowledge of other council's cross border work
 - Knowledge of other jurisdiction
 - Identifying similar needs

- 7) What new projects should networks undertake?

- 8) Who should fund future development?





The Centre for Cross Border Studies, based in Armagh, was set up in September 1999 to research and develop co-operation across the Irish border in education, health, business, public administration, communications and a range of other practical areas. It is a joint initiative by Queen's University Belfast, Dublin City University and the Workers Educational Association (Northern Ireland), and is financed by the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. Between February and June 2001 the Centre published research reports on cross-border telecommunications, cross-border health services, all-Ireland co-operation to tackle disadvantage in education, EU cross-border funding before and after the Good Friday Agreement and cross-border co-operation in local government.

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