



The Centre is engaged in a three-year (2003-2005) EU-funded project to develop an online central access point for information on cross-border issues in Ireland. **BORDER IRELAND** will provide access to an online searchable database of cross-border information in the six areas laid down for co-operation by the 1998 Belfast Agreement: Education, Health, Agriculture, Transport, Environment and Tourism. The database will act as a one-stop-shop for researchers, policy makers, community workers, business people and the general public, providing for the first time an electronic gateway to the full range of cross-border research material, publications, funding opportunities and other information available in Ireland, North and South. It will feature research summaries which are easy to read and understand, with an emphasis on policy relevance. It will provide e-mail addresses, telephone and fax numbers, hyperlinks and information about source materials to improve the flow of knowledge and interchange on cross-border issues between information generators and information users.

Information Architecture

The initial phase of the Project has concentrated on defining the blueprint of the **BORDER IRELAND** IT systems in terms of clarifying and balancing the needs of the Centre and the potential needs of users; determining what content and functionality the IT systems will contain; specifying how users will find information in the system by defining its organisation, navigation, labelling and searching functions; and mapping out how the system will accommodate change and growth over time.

The structure of the Project is centred on four inter-related areas: information, activities, organisations/ contacts and funding.

1. Information

The main focus of the Project is on the information¹ outputs that have resulted from cross-border² work since 1990. The actual information is being sourced from four key areas: EU-funded programmes and other key funding organisations, academic institutes, government bodies and other organisations.

2. Activities

In order to obtain a complete picture of cross-border work since the 1990s data collection has been expanded to include comprehensive information on all cross-border activities³ including those which have not produced any information in the past or may result in information outputs in the future. This will allow us to look at areas where there is active cross-border co-operation but no written documentation of this work.

3. Organisations and Contacts

The Project will hold details of all organisations which have been involved in cross-border work since 1990, including a generic contact point and the details of any authors who have produced cross-border information. The level of information stored on organisations has been expanded to include more details on the nature of the organisations and descriptions of their work. This will allow us to track individuals over time through different organisations and to match organisations on the island based on their descriptions and outputs.

4. Funders

The Project will hold details of funders and funding allocated to cross-border work since 1990. This will allow us to analyse the nature and level of funding for different cross-border sectors and sub-sectors over time and to look at any gaps in funding.

¹ Information is broadly defined as any reports, leaflets, papers, books, or articles with a cross-border element.

² The level of cross-border co-operation is coded as one or more of the following: back-to-back (joint funding only), joint planning, periodic involvement between bodies on either side of the border (networking), joint management (formally constituted cross-border board), joint service delivery and joint dissemination.

³ Activities are broadly defined as projects, conferences, workshops or seminar series.

Technological Design

The technology selected for **BORDER IRELAND** has been driven by the availability of hosting space and in-house support services within the Centre's existing QUB web server arrangements. The feasibility of the various IT systems was tested to ensure that the various software packages interacted correctly and that the inevitable move to external hosting arrangements would be possible at an acceptable cost (estimated external hosting at £500/ annum).

Essentially the IT systems are composed of two elements – a back-end exclusive to the Centre and a front-end publicly available over the Internet. The back-end will store the comprehensive dataset within the Centre and will include a built-in capability to analyse the data and produce in-house structured reports. The front-end will extract subsets of data and make it available over the Internet. It will also advertise any specialist services which the Centre can undertake.

Currently, the back-end element is being used to store data. This element is being continually updated as different samples of data have been stored to ensure that we have a stable platform for expansion. Import utilities for uploading any existing approvals and monitoring databases are in place and export utilities for downloading the data to statistical packages where it can be analysed in depth are being developed. Sample data searches have been performed to ensure that each step of development of the IT systems has been validated, from data collection and storage through to the extraction of data and posting on the Internet.

The specific technology arrangements and sample screens of the back-end element are outlined in the appendices.

Data collection

Typically, the collection of data is being conducted in a cascading manner, beginning with the identification of cross-border activities and followed by the identification of any information outputs associated with those activities.

EU Community Initiatives (Peace, INTERREG and Leader Programmes)

Mr Shaun Henry, Director of Peace II, Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), has been extremely helpful in granting access to the two existing Peace I databases which are held by Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency.

The Central Applications and Approval Database (CAAD) which was operational from 1998 has captured contact details, measure applied for, amount applied for, location, sector of organisation and activities envisaged for Peace I projects, and the Optimum Monitoring Questionnaire (OMQ) database which was operational from 1999 has captured Peace I project monitoring information. These databases provide a clear starting point for collection of relevant information.

Briefly, the Peace I programme funded 1303 cross-border projects which range in size from the 360 projects which received small grants (<£3,000) to the 226 projects which received large grants (>£70,000). The key areas for cross-border funding were education and training (taking up over 30% of all funding). Health, tourism and transport are a much more likely to be funded as a cross-border activity than within Northern Ireland only. Agriculture and fisheries are not that strongly supported (which may be due to departmental supports through LEADER and their own rural development programmes). Sports and arts are surprisingly low receivers of funding on a cross-border basis.

Similar databases to those outlined above have been made available under the Peace II programme. These databases concern a much smaller number of projects with only 260 cross-border Peace II projects funded by 15 May 2004. However the Peace II dataset is much more comprehensive with few missing data fields.

The Centre hopes to gain access to any existing INTERREG data.

Briefly, no dataset exists for INTERREG 1 projects. The INTERREG II programme funded 854 projects in total and of these only 242 (or 28.8%) were described as "cross-border". It is not clear just how the projects were coded as cross-border, nor in what shape (whether as applications or as evaluations) this data is held. Discussions with PricewaterhouseCoopers, who undertook the evaluation of the INTERREG II Programme, suggest that the dataset is extremely patchy and may not be a valuable source of data. Many of the INTERREG II projects are larger in scale than those funded under Peace I with a leaning towards the infrastructural (in transport, environmental protection, etc.).

The INTERREG III database (similar to Peace databases) holds comprehensive data on current cross-border projects. At the invitation of Mr Jack O'Connor, Director, INTERREG IIIA and Other Community Initiatives, Dr Clarke attended an INTERREG IIIA Steering Committee meeting to observe the process of documenting and assessing INTERREG applications.

Over the coming months the gaps in activities data and the identification of subsequent information will be progressed. Meetings have already been held with a number of Intermediary Funding Bodies such as Co-operation Ireland and ADM/ CPA to establish the level of data they currently hold and to arrange access to this data. Following the addition of data held by all relevant implementation bodies to the IT systems, any gaps will be filled by contacting personnel involved in identified EU-funded projects directly to discuss their work.

Other funding initiatives

Cross-border activities funded by the International Fund for Ireland, the Department of Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the Atlantic Philanthropies foundation, the Health Research Board, the Ireland Fund and other funding bodies are currently being identified.

Government

On the advice of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC), the collection of government generated information was postponed until the end of Ireland's EU Presidency role in June 2004. It is proposed that the North/ South co-ordinators in the South and dedicated North/ South liaison personnel in the North will be formally involved in identifying information within their respective government departments.

Academic

The collection of academic data is progressing in a number of ways. Firstly, a review of existing bibliographies of academic work is being undertaken and has already identified over 100 academic papers. Secondly, relevant PhD, DPhil and research Masters from all Higher Education Institutes in Ireland are being identified through the online library catalogues and will be accessed at the individual library sites. Thirdly, all participants who have documented collaborative project work under the Conference of University Rectors in Ireland (CRI) North/ South University Collaboration Directory 2000 have been contacted to confirm that the documented project was completed and to identify any information outputs which have resulted. Fourthly, key academics in Higher Education Institutes North and South, have been contacted to identify relevant currently registered PhD, DPhil or research Masters students and to identify any other key cross-border research which is ongoing. Key starting points for this process included contacting the list of academics who have been funded under the Higher Education Authority Cross Border Programme for Research and Development (both Strand 1, funded by the Irish exchequer, and Strand 2, funded by the EU Peace Two programme), and particularly those involved in the Mapping Frontiers Project, plus those academics already identified from the CRI directory. Finally, a review of academic-business link programmes such as the *InterTradelreland* Fusion Programme will be undertaken to identify relevant information outputs.

Other organisations

Key organisations who work on a cross-border basis have been identified through the Centre's Contact Management System, previous work undertaken by the Centre on the NSMC Obstacles to Cross-border Mobility Study, and from lists of evaluators and private consultants provided by Co-operation Ireland and ADM/ CPA. These organisations will be contacted to request any available data on cross-border activities and information. All existing cross-border information collected by the Centre since its origin is being stored in the IT systems.

Schedule of Project

An information seminar involving high level policy people is planned for September 2004 to introduce **BORDER IRELAND** and to document the information needs of key information providers. It is anticipated that all the data collection will be completed by June 2005. At the same time an initial (alpha) version of the **BORDER IRELAND** online database will be released with authorised access only.

The following six month period (August 2005 – January 2006) will be essentially a maintenance and feedback phase which will see a beta version of the **BORDER IRELAND** website made available for testing purposes. During this period the website will be further developed to include areas such as good practice guides and statistical data sections. A second information seminar is planned for September 2005 with the same high level policy people to show how their expressed information needs have been incorporated into the finished product and to demonstrate the capabilities of the **BORDER IRELAND** website.

At the beginning of the final six month period (February 2006- June 2006) the **BORDER IRELAND** website and integral database will be officially launched. Following this event, training sessions will be held with 15 disadvantaged groups within the border region to promote the usefulness of the website in developing their cross-border agendas. A case study on the use of **BORDER IRELAND** will be undertaken.

Long-term value

An earlier mail shot of CCBS contacts has already seen 1300 individuals register to receive further details on the progress of **BORDER IRELAND**. Beyond the provision of the online database facility, there exists an expanded role for the Centre as a cross-border information broker for the island. Specific identified uses include:

- Defining research agendas, both for the Centre and for other policy-makers and funding bodies
- Producing information briefing papers on selected topics
- Hosting topical information seminars
- Adding statistical dimensions to cross-border work
- Identifying research questions which need to be addressed or have not been addressed sufficiently
- Critiquing reports, papers and programmes based on knowledge of past and current work
- Answering Parliamentary Questions
- Drafting conference papers
- Matching organisations/ groups who could work together on cross-border issues

It is proposed that following the completion of the EU-funding period the Centre will provide a subscription-based cross-border information service allowing access to varying levels of data online.

BORDER IRELAND Team

Dr Patricia Clarke, CCBS Research Manager

Dr Eoin Magennis, Research and Information Officer

Joseph Shiels, ICT Leader

Kate Ennals, Project Evaluator

APPENDICES - TECHNOLOGY ARRANGEMENTS

The technology being used for the development of **BORDER IRELAND** includes:

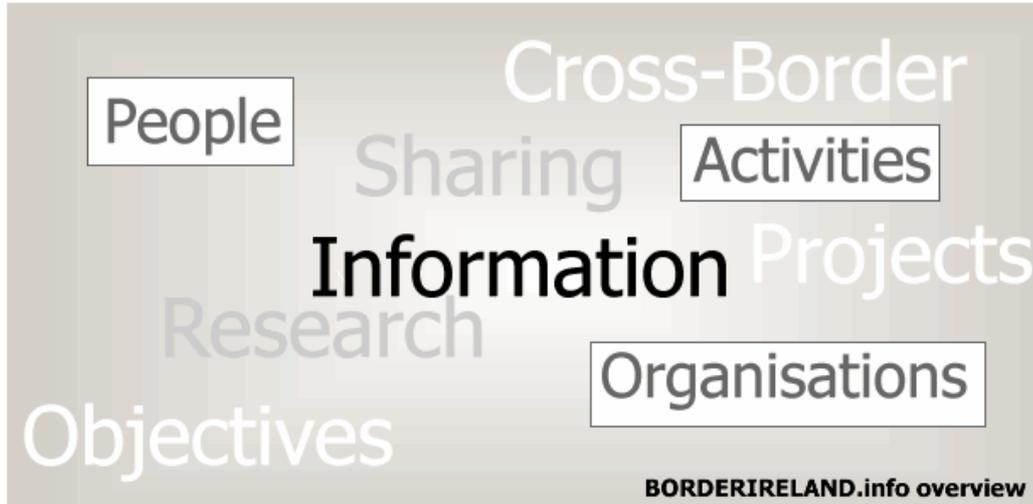
<i>PHP</i>	PHP, a recursive acronym for “Hypertext Pre-processor”, is an open source server-side scripting language designed for creating dynamic Web pages. PHP has built-in features to handle heavily trafficked sites and to simplify common web programming tasks. PHP recently surpassed Microsoft’s ASP to become the most popular server-side web scripting technology on the Internet. PHP supports a host of other features right at the technological edge of Internet development. These include authentication, XML, dynamic image creation, WDDX, shared memory support, and dynamic PDF document creation.
<i>MySQL</i>	MySQL database management system (DBMS) will be used to store, update and access the tables of data. MySQL is one of the most powerful Structured Query Language servers. Some of the attractive features of MySQL include its ability to handle large databases (in the area of 50,000,000+ records), the lack of memory leaks, the privilege and password system which is very flexible and secure, and which allows host-based verification and the security of passwords since all password traffic when connecting to a server is encrypted. PHP and MySQL are one of the world's best combination for creating data-driven sites. The PHP-MySQL combination is also cross-platform, which means you can develop in a Windows environment and serve on a Unix platform. Also, PHP can be run as an external Common Gateway Interface (CGI) process, a stand-alone script interpreter, or an embedded Apache module.
<i>Macromedia Studio MX</i>	Macromedia Studio MX 2004 will be used to design the website itself. Studio MX provides professional functionality for every aspect of web development and includes the Dreamweaver, Flash and Fireworks programmes. Studio MX provides seamless integration and a common user interface across all tools to streamline web development and application workflow, enhancing productivity and ease-of-use.
<i>Apache web server</i>	The Apache web server runs on a Solaris Unix server which resolves requests for information from a website. Both the Netcraft Web Server Survey and the Security Space survey show Apache as the leading software of Internet-connected computers with a current market share of 66%.
<i>Borland Delphi</i>	Borland Delphi is being used to develop a bespoke Content Management System. Content Management is rapidly emerging as a frontline, central component of all data-driven systems, connecting and leveraging such niche functionality as document management, search and retrieval, repositories, object technology, workflow, intranets, and portals. The strength of a content management system is that its back-end section is an easy-to-use interface that allows non-technical people to enter or change content. The server then takes that content, inserts it into the correct template and presents it on the front-end – on the appropriate webpage where it can be accessed by visitors to the website.
<i>EMS Import/ Export Utilities</i>	EMS Import/ Export Utility is a cross-platform (Windows and Linux) program to export and import data between MySQL databases and MS Excel, MS Access, DBF, TXT and CSV files to MySQL tables.
<i>SPSS v12.5</i>	A statistical software package for data analysis and reporting.
<i>WebTrends</i>	A statistical software package which records details of visitors use of the website

APPENDICES - SAMPLE SCREENS OF BACK-END ELEMENT



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www.crossborder.ie



Project supported by the
**EU Programme
for Peace and Reconciliation**



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ACTIVITY SCREEN - GENERAL DETAILS

BORDER IRELAND.info/Activity Details

General | Funding | Lists | Description

Name: Triangle Project

Dates
Start Date: [] Year: 1998
End Date: [] Year: []

Evaluation
Evaluation Complete: [0]
Type: [] [0]
Economic Appraisal [0]

CCBS Level: []

Region
Region Remit: Border [1]
Geographical Description: Catchment population of Sperrin Lakeland Trust, Sligo General Hospital and Ca

Sector
Sector: Economic Development
Sub-sector: Entrepreneurship

Information Source
Source Category: Other
Sourced from Contact: Frances McReynolds, Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) [Select Contact...]
Sourced from Organisation: Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) [Select Organisation...]

Delivery Agent: [] [Select Agent...]

Research:

Complete

Last saved by shielsj on 21/05/2004 11:51:07

[Save] [Close]

INFORMATION SCREEN - GENERAL DETAILS

BORDER IRELAND.info/Information Details
✕

General
Authors
Lists
Description
Table of Contents

Title:

Short Description:

Activity: Select Activity...

Contact: Select Contact...

Internal Catalogue Number:

External Catalogue Number:

Duration: Month ▼

Published Date:
 Day: Month: ▼ Year: 2002 ▼ Season: ▼

CCBS Rating:

Temporal Reference:

Updating Frequency:

Complete

Key Document: Confidential: Lost:

Cost:
 £:
 €:

Abstract Available Type:

Journal / Book Title:

Chapter:

Volume:

Edition:

ISBN:

Page Number:

Issue Number:

Number of pages:

Last saved by on 29/04/2004 12:28:49

Save
Close

ORGANISATION SCREEN - GENERAL DETAILS

BORDER IRELAND.info/Organisation Details

General	Type	Description
Name:	Centre for Cross Border Studies	
Contact:	Patricia Clarke, Centre for Cross Border Studies	Select Contact...
<p>Address:</p> <p>Address: 39 Abbey St</p> <p>City: Armagh</p> <p>County: Armagh</p> <p>Country: Northern Ireland</p> <p>Postcode: BT61 7EB</p>		
<p>GroupBox4</p> <p>Phone Business1: 028 3751 1550</p> <p>Phone Business 2:</p> <p>Fax: 028 3751 1721</p> <p>Email: patricia.clarke@qub.ac.uk</p> <p>URL: http://www.crossborder.ie/</p> <p>Secretariat:</p>		
Sector:	Organisation Region:	Organisation Type:
	All Island	
<p>Complete <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Last saved by on 29/04/2004 12:29:20</p> <p>Save Close</p>		

FUNDING SCREEN - GENERAL DETAILS

BORDER IRELAND.info/Funding Details [X]

General | Implementing Body | Notes

Name:

Programme:

Priority:

Measure:

Year (Start): End:

Amount

€ m :	<input type="text"/>	35
£GBP m :	<input type="text"/>	2
£IEP m :	<input type="text"/>	10
		55

Complete

Last saved by on 01/01/0001