

Evaluation of the Centre for Cross Border Studies

2005

by Brian Harvey

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Executive Summary

This evaluation of the Centre for Cross Border Studies covers 2002-5. It was carried out in May 2005 by desk research and examination of the documentation, statistics, products and records of the centre; 25 semi-structured interviews with staff and board members, experts and clients; and survey of people known to the centre (42% response rate).

The work of the centre shifted substantially compared to the previous triennial period. Although research activities, dominant before, continued, they were eclipsed by an expansion of the centre's work in conferences, seminars, training and networking, as well as servicing and providing administrative support for important north-south bodies such as the Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South and Universities Ireland. This practical work is making a major contribution to building positive relationships across the border between a diverse range of groups, especially government officials, educationalists, students and schoolchildren.

The analysis of the centre's performance is a positive one. The centre has maintained, even accelerated, its performance:

- Growth in website traffic, up in all indicators;
- Volume of research reports, publications, paper and grey literature;
- Numbers attending events, 1,297;
- Quality of national and international speakers at centre events;
- Publicity achieved;
- Finance, with income up 55%;
- Endorsement from political leaders.

In the survey of external opinion, the centre is appraised positively for relevance. Its effectiveness and impact have improved over the 1999-2002 period. The quality of its work was estimated at 7.02 on a 10-point scale. Training course participants rated their course highly for relevance, quality of organization and administration (100%) but improvements were suggested in working methods. Clients of the centre appraised its work as more than competent, demonstrating the highest levels of professionalism, coupled with commitment and invariable courtesy. Expert opinion likewise gave a high assessment of the centre's performance, admiring its quality, output, impact, relevance, value-for-money, working methods, expertise, vision, tact and diplomacy. Many seemed aware of the centre's struggle for resources. The board has performed its role effectively and the centre is regarded by staff as a good place in which to work.

Two key issues arose from the evaluation: the shift in the centre's mission over 2002-5 and the continued struggle for core and other funding. While all defended the mission shift into servicing, administration, training and

networking, there was a well articulated concern that the centre's policy-making role had fallen below an acceptable level and should be rebuilt.

There are two general recommendations: first, the centre should consolidate, expand and develop its existing activities in servicing, networking, training, conferences and administration, not only in the existing priority area of education but also into a wider range of common north-south issues such as the environment, waste, health, energy, transport, spatial planning and public administration. These can add considerably to the building of positive relationships and the promotion of reconciliation on the island. Spin-off products should be developed from this work (e.g. all-island public administration yearbooks, generic and sectoral). Educational cooperation can be extended into new thematic areas with new partners, especially institutes of Technology and Further & Higher Education. Second, the centre should rebuild its role as a critical space, independent voice and strategic commentator on the state of north-south relations and cross-border cooperation and the policy issues arising, both general and thematic. This role should initially be reinvigorated through an annual conference, run for profit, and an expanded own *Yearbook* modelled along the lines of continental yearbooks. This should address generic cross-border, north - south issues and also specific cutting-edge policy and research themes in frontline thematic areas.

The centre's current funding strategy is a correct one, but application for core funding should also be made to the Department of Education in Northern Ireland. The centre is right to pursue funding from government departments, agencies and public bodies for the current range of activities. This should be extended, making sure to build in a significant overhead. The centre must be prepared to be dynamic in developing such options in the future. A specific advertising pitch for such work should be made through a brochure and part of the website with the suggested strapline of *Cross-border? Yes, we can do that!* Consultancy options can be pursued more aggressively, subject to conditions on project size, profit margin, supervision, cross-border focus, policy relevance and public domain. There should, over time, be financial diversification along the lines of the new think tanks, starting with a system of member subscribers. An e-newsletter is an important part of such a strategy.

Finally, a number of organizational changes are recommended: to extend the board's coopted membership; include summary annual accounts in the annual report; develop the website (moderated forum, newsletter, hot topics, e-consultation, mail-a-friend, regular redesign and member's section); and evaluation of all events in real time.

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Terms of reference

The following were the terms of reference set for this evaluation:

- Describe the evolution of the centre during its second 3-year period (2002-5) in the context of cross-border work in Ireland generally;
- Outline how the centre's work has changed in response to changing demands and circumstances (e.g. demands from funders, demands from commissioning agencies, demands from governments);
- Measure, in particular, the impact of its changing emphasis from cross-border research to cross-border administrative support;
- Test whether its mission statement is up to date or should be adjusted in the light of the centre's development so far and these changing circumstances;
- Measure the product of the centre in terms of publications, commissioned products, administration products and other events;
- Test the impact and relevance of the centre in a period when the Northern Ireland peace process has been in crisis and its institutions suspended for long periods;
- Examine where it has allocated its human and financial resources during a period when its staff has doubled and its sources of finance have become more disparate;
- Look at the procedures for decision-making and accountability within the centre to check that they operate smoothly and efficiently;
- Study how the centre has reached out and publicized its work, particularly through the use of its website;
- Identify the centre's ongoing means for monitoring its outcomes and impact;
- Measure the level of external satisfaction with the efficiency, quality of service and administration of the centre;
- Assess the impact which the centre has made on its audiences through its research projects, conferences and administrative support for cross-border organizations;
- Identify any possible areas of work of activity which may have been insufficiently addressed or even missed;
- Make recommendations for the centre's 2006-9 programme and funding strategy in the light of the need to move toward greater sustainability and less reliance on EU programmes and American charitable support;
- In particular, make recommendations about which of its projects and programmes might be made financially self-sufficient and or provide funding streams to support the work of the centre in general.

Method

This research was carried out by the following methods:

- Desk research and examination of the documentation, statistics, products and records of the Centre for Cross Border Studies, including external evaluations of its individual programmes;
- Semi-structured interviews with staff and board members;
- Semi-structured interviews with experts on north-south and cross border issues;
- Semi-structured interviews with clients who had commissioned work, programmes or services by the centre;
- Survey of people known to the centre; survey of participants in the centre's north-south training programme.

Altogether, 25 interviews were carried out and written communications were received from a further three. 78 persons responded to the two e-surveys. A more detailed note on method is given at the end.

Acknowledgements

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Board members: Chris Gibson (chairperson); Pauric Travers (vice-chairperson), Jane Wilde, Eileen Connolly, Richard Jay, Stevie Johnston, Paul Nolan, Chris O'Malley. Written comments were received from Dr Liam O'Dowd, on leave in the United States.

Staff: Andy Pollak (director), Patricia Clarke, Eoin Magennis, Joe Shiels, Mairead Hughes, Patricia McAllister.

Experts on north-south or cross-border issues: Tim O'Connor, North South Ministerial Council; Pat Donaghy, North South Ministerial Council; Prof. John Coakley, University College Dublin; Tony Kennedy, Cooperation Ireland; Billy Tate, Belvoir Park Primary School, Belfast. Written comments were received from Ann McGeeney, Cross Border Centre, Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Persons who had commissioned work from or who had funded the centre, or who were otherwise familiar with its work: Ferdinand von Prondyznski, President, Dublin City University; Pat Colgan, Special EU Programmes Body; David Nicholl, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy; Dr Ioghnaid O Muircheartaigh, National University of Ireland Galway and Universities Ireland; Prof. John Coolahan, SCoTENS; Paddy McDonagh, Department of Education & Science. Written comments were received from David McAuley, Assistant Secretary, Department for Employment and Learning.

Participants in a discussion evening on the future of the centre, held in Bangor, co Down, on 7th June: Senator Maurice Hayes, Feargal McCormack, Colin Stutt, Sir Gerry Loughran and Chris Gibson.

The researcher wishes to thank all those who responded to the surveys and all others who assisted with the provision of other assistance and information.

Definitions and terminology

The term 'Ireland' will be used to refer to the geographical island of Ireland. The term 'Republic of Ireland', although it has no constitutional standing, is in common use, is well understood and will refer to the 26 counties of the island. The term 'British Isles' will be used as a geographical, non-political term to refer to the two main islands of Great Britain and Ireland. The terms 'north' and 'south' will, for convenience, be sometimes used as shorthand for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland respectively.

Chapter 1: Context

This short contextual chapter sets the backdrop for the work of the centre for its first three years (1.1) and then the broader political context (1.2).

1.1 Initial development of the Centre for Cross Border Studies

The Centre for Cross Border Studies was established in 1999 as a project of three founder bodies: Queen's University Belfast, Dublin City University and the Workers Educational Association. Its mission was and is to:

Research and develop cooperation across the Irish border in education, business, public administration, communications and a range of practical areas.

The centre was located in Armagh in the Queen's University campus there, with a contact office in Dublin City University in Dublin. The centre was governed by a board of nine persons nominated by the three founder bodies, with two coopted members. Legally, it is a non-profit company and charity.

In the first three years of the centre's operation, 1999-2002, the centre's work concentrated on research. The centre:

- Ran two rounds of research projects, which involved nine reports, six consultancy studies, four mapping exercises and three books;
- Held 16 study days attended by 1,300 participants;
- Developed a web resource on cross border research and activities;
- Brought cross border issues to a wide audience in government, policy-making, politics, the academic community and the media.

During this period, the centre had three staff. Funding rose from £170,000 in the first financial year to £327,000 in the second.

The centre was evaluated at the end of its third year. The centre was rated highly for the quantity, quality, substance and relevance of its work and was considered to be a dynamic, effective, independent and credible organization.

The centre's positive evaluation was not matched by a subsequent positive level of public financial support. Neither of the two founder universities was in a position to provide money resources for the centre. Neither of the two governments found their way to fund the centre, even though cross border cooperation was a common, declared political objective, both in the context of the European Union and the Good Friday Agreement. The principal funder of the centre during its initial three years was the European Union Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, popularly known as Peace I.2

1.2 Broader political context

Despite the importance of the border in the economic, social and political development of the island, cross-border bodies were remarkably slow to develop in Ireland. The contested nature of the border meant that the work of any such bodies was likely to be impeded by their real or perceived political role. Not only that, but the border was little studied or recognized as an academic or policy problematic until the advent of European Union programmes for cross-border cooperation in the 1990s. The level of cross-border non-governmental activities was also low. Apart from long-standing Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) operating on an all-Ireland basis, few NGOs operated cross-border programmes or activities, the most significant one being Cooperation Ireland.

The Good Friday Agreement of April 1998 formally elevated cross-border cooperation to an area of governmental cooperation with legal and constitutional standing. The agreement set down three interlinked strands of institutions: within Northern Ireland itself; between north and south; and a broader framework within the British Isles (east-west). The agreement established a Joint North South Ministerial Council with a secretariat, six cross border bodies and six areas of cooperation. The agreement provided a much more positive environment in which issues of cross-border cooperation could be analyzed, understood and developed. The Centre for Cross Border Studies, established the year after the agreement, emphasized then as now that it was interested to promote the understanding of cross border issues on a practical, non-political basis.

The Good Friday framework proved politically difficult to sustain. Disagreements between the political parties led to the suspension of the governmental arrangements within Northern Ireland on three occasions. These arrangements are now in their third and longest period of suspension, with, at time of writing, no immediate prospects for their reinstatement. North - south and east - west cooperation suffered in the absence of political consensus on the first strand. Although the north - south institutions continued to operate at secretarial rather than political level, their operation was more muted and less visible than they would otherwise be. The initially high level of activity of the North South Ministerial Council quickly declined. These factors provided a discouraging backdrop for the continued development of the Centre for Cross Border studies, whose evolution over 2002-5 will be examined next in chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Development and evolution

This chapter records the key developments in the centre over 2002-5 under a number of headings (2.1 to 2.15). Financial details are given, where appropriate, to indicate the size of the project concerned. The key milestones are summarized in the conclusions (2.16).

2.1 Research

The centre's research programme during this period was, in contrast to 1999-2001, limited. The programme comprised:

Research completed

Promoting mental health and social well-being: cross-border opportunities and challenges, by Dr Margaret Barry, Sharon Friel, Colette Dempsey, Gloria Avalos, Patricia Clarke, 2002.

Northern Ireland review of the 2001 foot-and-mouth crisis: the cross border implications, by Dr Patricia Clarke, 2002, completed as part of a team led by Pricewaterhousecoopers who were appointed by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (NI) to undertake an independent review of the 2001 foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in Northern Ireland.

Toward a green isle? Local sustainable development on the island of Ireland, by Geraint Ellis, Brian Motherway, William JV Neill, & Una Hand, comparing the state of implementation of *Local Agenda 21* in both parts of the island, 2004.

Research commenced

Mapping frontiers, plotting pathways - routes to north-south cooperation in a divided island: the centre is a partner in a collaborative research project commissioned by the Higher Education Authority and done in cooperation with the centre, the Institutes for British - Irish Studies and the Study of Social Change at University College Dublin and Governance at Queen's University, along with Democratic Dialogue, to map programmes of cooperation in Ireland. The centre has organized study days as part of this project, *The impact of partition on the border region*, Armagh, 2004 and *Identities and regeneration on the Irish border*, Monaghan, 2005. This is a €578,000 project, for which the centre was allocated €37,825 for its contribution of a research assistant. Reports were written by the centre summarizing the study days. Two more seminars are scheduled by end 2005: *Did the border matter? (Newry) Infrastructure* (Derry or Letterkenny), followed by a full conference. Research officer Eoin Magennis is carrying out a mapping study of cross-border programmes and projects since the 1980s based on the *Border Ireland* database.

Europe for patients. Here the centre is participating in a research project in the European Union Sixth Framework Research Programme to study access to healthcare throughout Europe for patients in Britain, Spain, France, Belgium, Slovenia and Estonia. The Irish contribution will be supplied by Dr Jim Jamison and the centre will receive €14,900.

The euro: A study on the impact of the introduction of the euro currency was commissioned. The work was submitted late, of poor quality, unpublishable, unusable and, due to the lack of preserved records, unrescuable.

2.2 Presentation of papers and speaking commitments

Staff of the centre presented the following papers and spoke at the following meetings:

Dr Patricia Clarke: *Cross-border electronic linkages*, presented to the International Symposium on Regional Policies in Europe, Austria, 2002.

Dr Patricia Clarke: *Cross-border health services*, presented to the European Health Forum, Austria, 2002.

Andy Pollak: US Institute of Peace, Washington DC and Boston, Mass. including meeting with potential donors. 2002.

Dr Patricia Clarke: Various presentations on Atlantic corridor trip to upstate New York and Texas. 6-17 July 2003.

Eoin Magennis: *Cross-border cooperation and its application in different political models*, San Sebastian, Basque country, Spain, 2004.

Dr Patricia Clarke: *Obstacles to cross-border mobility*. Dundalk Newry Forum, 2005.

Andy Pollak: *Educational cooperation on the island of Ireland - a thousand flowers or a hundred heartaches? Mapping frontiers* workshop, 2005.

2.3 Educational action research

The centre began work on four action-research projects funded by Peace II:

Pride of our place. This is a three-year, later extended to four-year cross border environmental project for twelve primary schools where 10 to 12 year olds in primary schools come together to study the environment of their locality. The programme costs £139,000. The centre is the managing partner, together with the Southern Education and Library Board and the Department of Education & Science. A report on the first year by Mary Burke was published and launched in 2004. In 2005, the project entered its third year of exchanges. Newsletters recording the progress of the schools in the project were published in both paper and DVD format.

CaSE, Citizenship and Science Exchange, action research project for 16 secondary schools. This is a 30-month, £150,000 project for 12 to 14 year olds and their teachers to look at common citizenship/science issues such as pollution and nutrition. It is managed by the centre for a steering group comprising the Western and Southern Education & Library Boards and Dublin City University. The first training workshops were held in 2003. Teaching materials on environmental perspectives, food nutrition and energy were developed by Charlotte Holland and Dr Peter McKenna (DCU), piloted and published in 2004. The Food Safety Promotion Board, *Safefood*, provided a further £10,000 for an end-of-project conference.

North - South Student Teacher Exchange Project. This is a three year £108,000 project bringing together 80 students in seven colleges of education in Dublin, Belfast and Limerick to study and do teaching practice in the other part of the island.

Diversity and early years education. This is a two year £58,000 study of how to work in the area of conflict and diversity in the classroom for 4 to 7 year olds. Researchers Helen McLaughlin (Stranmillis College) and Mairin Kenny (St Patrick's College) began this project in 2003 and their report *Diversity in early years education - implications for teacher education* was published the following year.

2.4 Administration/secretarial functions

In a significant new area of work, the centre became the secretariat for two important educational bodies: Universities Ireland and SCoTENS and, more recently, the International Centre for Local and Regional Development.

2.4.1 Universities Ireland

Universities Ireland is a collaborative structure for the nine universities on the island. Universities Ireland is funded by contributions from each university, the two departments of education and InterTrade Ireland to work together on issues of common interest such as research, conferences, the branding of Irish universities abroad, the development of university - industry - technology links and a common website (www.universitiesireland.ie). This work fits in well with the development of a common European Higher Education Area, called the Bologna process. This brought the centre funding of £88,360. As part of the Universities Ireland project, the centre:

- Began in 2003 a £25,000 research project on the harmonization of regulation, joint degrees and credit transfer arrangements within the Bologna process, carried out by Lewis Purser. First results were presented 2004 at a seminar in Dublin City University.
- Held a symposium *eLearning as a strategic imperative for universities in Ireland*, Dublin, 2004, which led to a follow-up working group.
- Held the first meeting of the representative bodies of universities in Ireland and Britain, Dublin, 2004.
- Commenced a study on the feasibility of an all-island technology transfer and intellectual property service with a first meeting in Dublin, 2004.
- Held a workshop in Dublin University in March 2005, bringing together Irish universities to discuss possible cooperation projects with the departments of education in southern and eastern Africa, to be followed by a visit to Ethiopia and Uganda in late 2005.
- Awarded two masters scholarships.

2.4.2 SCoTENS

SCoTENS in the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South and is funded by the two respective departments of education. It was set up by senior teacher education specialists and the centre acts as its secretariat. The main activities are conferences and research projects. The two-year contract was worth £40,710. This involved:

First conference *Challenges to teacher education and research, north and south*, Malahide, 2003.

Second conference *Changing contexts of teacher education, north and south*, Armagh, 2004.

Sectoral conferences and research projects on special educational needs; social, scientific and environmental education; citizenship education; building research capacity; children with profound and multiple learning disabilities; the learning needs of non-English speaking primary schoolchildren; young teachers attitudes to science, history and geography; universities and teachers continuing professional development; school leadership; and SCoTENS website.

2.4.3 International Centre for Local and Regional Development

The centre commenced work as secretariat for the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) which brings together spatial planning institutes from Harvard University, the University of Ulster, the Athlone Institute of Technology and the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. The ICLRDR will explore the contribution of

spatial planning to add to the quality of life on both sides of the border, especially disadvantaged and divided areas through research, teaching, workshops, professional training programmes (principally for the local authorities) and good practice networks. The first phase of this contract was worth €25,000 to the centre. A major conference was scheduled for autumn 2005 *The EU role in local and regional development*. A website is presently being prepared (www.iclrd.ie).

2.5 Training

The centre began to provide training services. The principal service is the *North - south and cross-border public sector pilot training programme*, carried out in conjunction with Cooperation Ireland and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and funded by the Peace II programme (measure 5.2). These courses began to run in 2005 and have four modules: *Cooperation in the public and NGO sectors; Public finance and government issues; Economic and business cooperation* and *Cooperation at local authority and community level*. The value of the contract to the centre was £32,900.

The second programme is *Openings*, provided with partner organizations the Open University in Ireland and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. This provides 250 places on return-to-study programmes for disadvantaged people on both sides of the border and was launched in 2005.

2.6 Resources: construction of *Border Ireland*

The original website of the Centre for Cross Border Studies provided information on the work and publications of the centre. In 2003, the centre attracted funding from the Peace II programme to begin development of a central access point for information on cross-border issues in Ireland. The new site, called www.borderireland.info, aims to be a one stop shop for researchers, policy-makers, community workers and business people, with a full range of cross-border information, focussing on education, health, agriculture, transport, the environment and tourism. Construction of this new site has taken two years and is due to go on-line in late 2005. An information seminar on the new site was held in Armagh in 2004, where the purpose, design, content, use and technical aspects of the site were outlined. By mid-2005, details of most aspects had been collected, with over 600 publications, 2,300 activities (many of these funded by EU programmes) and over 3,000 contacts (individuals and organizations). The database has headings for people, organizations, activities, publications and funding. Reports referred to on the site will be available for downloading, or referred to a URL site, or given a physical reference. A moderated forum will be established. The idea *Border Ireland* has, in advance of its launch, already received strong support from government departments, including those in Northern Ireland, which have helped to provide information for the site.

2.7 Consultancy

The centre carries out a limited number of consultancy assignments. The centre is sent many tenders for consideration, but the policy has been to apply only for those tenders that have a strong cross-border focus or relevance; are of sufficient size to make them worthwhile (more than £10,000) and when there is the time available to make an applications. During this period, the centre concluded a number of consultancy studies for outside agencies. These were:

Toward a strategic economic and business research agenda, for InterTrade Ireland (2002).
Review of cross-border mobility information provisions in the south of Ireland, for the North/South Mobility Information Group (2003).

Evaluation of the Education for Reconciliation Project, for the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee, carried out by Tony Gallagher, Andy Pollak and Michael Arlow (€11,400).

Evaluation of Upstate Theatre Project, Drogheda, co Louth, by Susan Coughlan (€6,000).

The centre commenced:

Public services for ethnic and immigrant groups. This is an 18-month research project managed by the centre examining services for ethnic and immigrant groups comparing the approach of the public authorities in Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland in such areas as health, social services, housing, policing, interpretation, information and advice, funded by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and carried out in partnership with the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, Dublin; the Institute of Conflict Research, Belfast and Organizational and Social Development Consultants, Edinburgh. Funding comes from OFMDFM (£70,000) and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (£10,000). The lead researchers are Philip Watt and Anna Visser, with Piaras MacEinri and Neil Jarman. The project draws into its steering group the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Northern Ireland Office, OFMDFM, the Department of Education (NI), the Department for Employment and Learning, the Department for Social Development, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Housing Executive and the Equality Commission.

2.8 Conferences

The centre organized five north-south conferences for a broad-based committee representing the Department of Education & Science, the Department for Employment & Learning, Universities Ireland, the Council of Directors of Institutes of Technology, the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges and the National Union of Students - Union of Students in Ireland to improve their understanding of educational issues between the two parts of the island. These were as follows:

Ireland as a centre of excellence in third level education, Armagh, 2002.

International education - a capacity builder for the island of Ireland, Cavan, 2003

Widening access to third level education on the island of Ireland - toward better policy and practice, Belfast, 2003.

Cross-border higher education cooperation in Ireland and Europe, Cavan, 2004.

Higher education and business - beyond mutual incomprehension. Belfast, 2005.

Other conferences:

Round table on a north - south consultative forum for NGOs, Armagh, 2002, funded by Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

Seminar in Newry to launch the *Toward a strategic economic and business research agenda*, for InterTrade Ireland (> 2.7 above).

Ageing, organized on behalf of Atlantic Philanthropies, Armagh, 2004.

Border Ireland information seminar, Armagh, 2004.

Toward better government policy and action in north - south waste management, Armagh, 2005.

2.9 Publications

The centre published its own annual report on each of the appropriate years. This took the form of *The Centre for Cross-Border Studies, year 3*, *The Centre for Cross-Border Studies, year 4*, *The Centre for Cross-Border Studies, year 5* and *The Centre for Cross Border Studies, year 6*. Years 3 and 4 had a slim, wallet style format and this was subsequently expanded into an A5 yearbook format, not only providing details of the centre's work and activities, board and staff, but also essays on current developments in cross-border relations.

2.10 Board

The board of the Centre for Cross Border Studies comprises eleven members: three each nominated by each of the parent bodies (Queen's University Belfast (QUB), Dublin City University (DCU) and the Workers Educational Association (WEA)) and two persons coopted. Over the three year period, the board was as follows:

<u>QUB</u>	<u>DCU</u>	<u>WEA</u>	<u>Coopted</u>
Chris Gibson	Pauric Travers	Colm McGivern*	Harriet Andrews*
Liam O'Dowd	Eileen Connolly	Stevie Johnston	Jane Wilde
Richard Jay	Chris O'Malley	Paul Nolan	Mari FitzDuff*
	Brian Trench*	Rev Liam Carey**	

* Resigned after end of term. Brian Trench was replaced by Eileen Connolly.

** Deceased

The board has met at regular intervals throughout the period, six times a year being the norm.

2.11 Staffing

Staffing within the centre grew from three to six:

Original staff

Director: Andy Pollak.

Research manager: Dr Patricia Clarke (responsible for research projects and *Border Ireland*).

Administrator: Mairead Hughes (responsible for financial management & liaison, assisting with projects and events).

New staff

Communications leader: Joe Shiels (responsible for information technology, website).

Administrative assistant: Patricia McAllister (4/5 time, responsible for event management and conference organization, mailing list, administration of SCoTENS and Universities Ireland).

Eoin Magennis (responsible for information and research for *Border Ireland* and conference organization and research for *Mapping frontiers, plotting pathways*).

2.12 Premises, location and facilities

The centre operates from Queen's University Belfast's Armagh campus. In 2004, the university announced that it would end its work in Armagh in summer 2005, but in subsequent discussions arrangements were made for a service level agreement to make it possible for the centre to continue its work there. An office is also available for the centre in Dublin City University and is used for one day a week.

Accounts are handled through Queen's University and this system generally works smoothly. The centre pays Queen's University £9,000 a year to handle its finances and for access to and use of its server. The principal problem area is the quarterly returns and audits

for the Peace II programme, which require documentation to be collected from Belfast, driven to Omagh for inspection and returned to Belfast.

Hard copies of reports coming into the centre have been assembled in a library of one shelf wall of four layers. All the items are catalogued by number in the chronological order in which they come in. Students come occasionally to look through the material.

2.13 Mailing list/Contact Management System

The centre has a mailing list, called the Contact Management System, also designed as an event management system. The entire list was updated in late 2003 when 3,000 notices were sent out inviting people to subscribe or remove themselves from the list. The system was then cleaned, duplicates removed and individual entries re-validated. The database sits on a shared drive which all staff members are in a position to add to, take away or change. Headings cover name, address and history (events attended/publications sent). A new mailing list is created for each mail-out and then stored in the system. The present list has about 2,500 entries.

2.14 Accountability and evaluation

The centre is publicly accountable through its annual reports. Internally, the director and staff are accountable to the board through progress reports sent by the director to the board for every board meeting (six times a year). Thirty three such reports have now been presented. Typically, they are in the order of four pages and provide an account of work in progress or planned. Annual accounts are not included in the annual report and it is presumed that they are submitted separately to the appropriate authorities. Evaluations are or will be carried out for each module on the north-south training programme and all EU- funded projects, but are not otherwise done for individual events.

2.15 Funding

In the first three year period, the centre attracted funding of £839,000, of which £640,600 was core funding, mainly from Peace I but with a smaller amount from the Department of Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund. Funding for the October 2002 to January 2005 period (including provision to May 2006) came from the following sources:

<u>Core funding, covering salaries, rent overheads</u>	<u>UK£</u>
Atlantic Philanthropies	300,000
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust	51,000
Dept. Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund	<u>49,700</u>
<u>Consultancy/sponsorship</u>	
EU Peace II programme	455,000
www.borderireland.ie (Peace II)	196,500
Dept. Education & Science (conferences)	75,600
OFMDFM research (ethnic minorities)	70,000
North - south public sector training programme	32,850
Dept. Foreign Affairs	19,400
Evaluations (<i>Education for reconciliation, Upstate</i>)	12,000
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust research	10,000
SafeFood	10,000
Europe for Patients research	9,900
Bank of England <i>Impact of the euro</i> research	5,000
Bank of Ireland <i>Impact of the euro</i> research	3,150
Grand total	1,300,100

An important development to notice is that core funding, which was 76.4% of the 1999-2002 total, comprised only 30.8% of the 2002-5 total. Conversely, project funding rose from 23.6% of the total in the first triennial period to 69.2% in the second. The contribution made by the government in Dublin to core funding actually fell from £93,600 in the first triennial period to £49,700 in the second, only 3.8% of its total funding. There has been no core funding from any department or agency in Belfast.

The staff of the centre in general and its director in particular spent a considerable amount of time exploring options for funding and filing subsequent applications. The attempt to obtain more secure funding was, apart from carrying out the operations with which it had been entrusted, the principal pre-occupation of the centre, its director and board. The present core funding from Atlantic Philanthropies expires at the end of 2005 and the centre will cease to be self-sustaining in 2006. In 2005, following the taking of extensive advice and a meeting with the Higher Education Authority, the centre applied to the Department of Education and Science for core funding of £126,000 (€180,000) a year, which would provide support for two staff and some administration for April 2006 to April 2009. A decision is expected by end 2005. The centre emphasized, in its application to the Department of Education and Science, that it would, with such a secure core, then be in a position to expand its work in the area of training, administration, research and consultancy. Both the Minister for Finance, Brian Cowen and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern were approached informally and asked to support the application and it is understood that they will. Representatives of the centre also met informally with the Minister for Education & Science, Mary Hanafin. A meeting is planned with the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Hain.

2.16 Conclusions

There was a shift of emphasis in the work of the centre from research to a secretarial, administrative and training role. Research work commenced in 1999 was completed and some new research undertaken, but it was a less prominent aspect of the centre's work. Key developments over 2002-5 were:

Conclusion of research reports on mental health and the environment; participation in *Mapping pathways, plotting frontiers*. Commencing of the *Border Ireland* project.

Start of the north-south training programme.

Organization of conferences for the departments of Education & Science and Employment & Learning.

Secretarial role for Universities Ireland, SCoTENS, ICLRD.

Four action-research educational projects: *CaSE, Pride of our place, Early years and diversity*, student teacher exchanges.

A limited consultancy programme.

Expansion of staff from 3 to 6. The triennial budget rose to £1.3m. Core funding fell as a proportion, while project funding rose from 24% of the total to 69%.

Annual reports were published in yearbook form.

The board of the centre continued to function and meet regularly.

The centre operated a mailing list, or Contact Management System, with about 2,500 entries and this is kept up to date.

Chapter 3: Performance and impact

Chapter 3 reviews the performance and impact of the centre under a number of headings (3.1 to 3.10). Comments and conclusion are drawn (3.11). The chapter begins by examining use of the centre's website (3.1), its publications and other products (3.2), attendance at event (3.3), before going on to look at its conference work (3.4), publicity (3.5), yearbooks (3.6), financial performance (3.7) and endorsements (3.8). External opinion on the performance of the centre is surveyed (3.10) and its internal performance examined (3.10).

3.1 Website

The numbers of persons coming to the centre's website has risen, as follows. There are some surges at particular points, so the figures should be treated carefully, but the overall picture is as follows. Details are given of the first and last months for which figures are available (October 2003 and April 2005). In the middle part of the table, monthly averages are provided for 2003 (three months), 2004 (all twelve months) and 2005 (four months).

<u>Monthly average</u>	<u>Unique Visits</u>		<u>Pageviews</u>	<u>Hits</u>	<u>Av. duration in secs</u>
<i>Start: October 2003</i>	1619	2161	4,802	14,373	175
2003 [Oct- Dec]	1501	2034	4,288	12,208	163
2004	1452	2083	9,177	18,981	227
2005 [Jan-Apr]	2564	3580	8,480	22,859	205
<i>End: Apr 2005</i>	2684	3887	9,947	26,621	244

The level of visits was relatively depressed in 2004, but began to rise notably in 2005. The figures for monthly unique visits at the end of the period are up 65% on the beginning, while the numbers of visits are up 80% on the figure at the start. The number of hits rise from 14,373 at the start of the period to 26,621 at the end, up 85%. The duration of visits has also lengthened, from 175sec to 244sec, up 39%. The number of page views doubled, from 4,802 at the start to 9,947 at the end (up 107%).

Visitors come predominantly from the United States (83%), followed by Republic of Ireland (3.7%), the United Kingdom (2.9%) and the rest of the European Union (1.9%) (proportion of hits, April 2005). The most visited pages are those concerned with research, followed by publications and then events. The most popular report visited is the local history study.

The centre's website, www.crossborder.ie was nominated by the *Public Sector Times* for an Irish government award.

3.2 Publications, materials and products

The following were the principal products of the centre during this period:

Research reports

Dr Margaret Barry, Sharon Friel, Colette Dempsey, Gloria Avalos, Patricia Clarke: *Promoting mental health and social well-being: cross-border opportunities and challenges* (160 pages, references, appendices, 2002).

Geraint Ellis, Brian Motherway, William JV Neill, Una Hand: *Toward a green isle - local sustainable development on the island of Ireland* (191 pages, tables, graphs, references, appendices, 2004).

Mairin Kenny & Helen McLaughlin: *Diversity in early years education north and south* (81 pages, tables, references, appendices, 2004).

Higher education conferences

Ireland as a centre of excellence in third level education, conference programme, colour, illustrated brochure.

Andy Pollak: *Briefing paper on Irish third level education systems, north and south* (20 pages).

Conference report - Ireland as a centre of excellence in third level education (108 pages).

Don Thornhill: *International education - a capacity builder for the island of Ireland* (25 pages, with graphs, charts, tables, with slides).

Lindy Hyam: *Economic development through international education - the Australian story* (16 pages, with slides).

Slide presentations by Dr Neil Kemp, British Council; Peter Coyle, Enterprise Ireland John Dupree, Global Education Solutions.

Widening access to the third level education on the island of Ireland, conference programme (4 pages, colour, illustrated).

Prof Pat Clancy & Prof Bob Osborne: *Widening access to higher education in Ireland, north and south* (15 pages).

Dr Arnold Mitchem: *Reflection on higher educational opportunity in the United States* (10 pages).

Samuel BA Isaacs: *The South African experience of access for disadvantaged persons into higher education - a national qualifications framework perspective* (18 pages).

Dr Mary-Liz Trant: *From periphery to centre stage - access to higher education in the Republic of Ireland* (20 pages).

Cross-border higher education cooperation in Ireland and Europe, conference programme (4 pages, colour, illustrated, 2004).

Andy Pollak & Prof Bob Osborne: *Conference briefing paper* (13 pages, 2004).

Prof Linda Nielsen: *Oresund university - an engine for creating a new region* (2 page abstract, 2004).

Dr Beat Munch: *Friends and partners - EUCOR cross-border cooperation in the upper Rhine valley* (12 pages, 2004).

Dr James Cunningham: *An Irish perspective on the Lambert review of university - business collaboration* (13 pages, 2005).

Higher education and business: beyond mutual incomprehension (6 pages, colour, illustrated, 2005); *Higher education and business - beyond mutual incomprehension*, keynote address by Richard Lambert (Bank of England) (16 pages, 2005).

Universities Ireland

Conference briefing *E-learning as a strategic imperative for universities in Ireland* (20 pages, colour, 2004).

Study on harmonizing regulations, awarding joint degrees and developing credit transfer arrangements between universities in Ireland - discussion document (3 pages, 2004).

Universities UK and Universities Ireland: agenda and briefing on discussion themes (33 pages, 2004).

Paud Murphy: *Recent trends in development cooperation and on the contribution of higher education institutions and some suggestions for a role for Universities Ireland and Africa* (21 pages, 2005).

Lewis Purser: *Study on harmonizing regulations, awarding joint degrees and developing credit transfer arrangements between universities in Ireland* (75 pages, 2005) (draft).

CaSE

Charlotte Holland & Peter McKenna: *Citizenship and science exchange CaSE project - a resource pack to enable students to critically investigate the inter-related roles of science and citizenship* (64 pages, colour, illustrated, 2004).

Charlotte Holland & Peter McKenna: *An environmental perspectives resource pack: air, water and waste* (123 pages, colour, 2003).

Charlotte Holland & Peter McKenna: *A resource pack to enable students to critically investigate the inter-related roles of science and citizenship - energy and good nutrition* (64 pages, colour, illustrated, 2005).

Charlotte Holland & Peter McKenna: *Interim report* (39 pages, 2004).

CD-ROM training tutorial for teachers.

SCoTENS

Conference programme: *Challenges to teacher education* (4 pages, illustrated).

Positioning the teaching career for the knowledge society, speech by Prof John Coolahan (9 pages, 2003).

Annual report, 2003 (including conference report) (94 pages, colour).

Andy Burke (Ed): *Teacher education in the Republic of Ireland - retrospect and prospect* (conference papers, 64 pages, colour, 2004).

2004 annual conference: *Conference programme* (4 pages, illustrated).

Annual report, 2004 (including conference report) (128 pages, colour).

Study day ageing

Tom Cairns: *Older people in Northern Ireland* (9 pages, 2004).

Paul Murray: *No country for old men? Older people in the Republic* (9 pages, 2004).

North-South Student Teacher Exchange Project

Orientation day - information booklet (10 pages, 2004).

My reflective journal (workbook, 14 pages, 2004).

Pride of our place

CD-ROM.

Newsletter, paper (8 pages) and CD-ROM.

1st year report (20 pages, colour).

Mapping frontiers, plotting pathways

Partition and the creation of an Irish border region (summary report, 3 pages, 2004).

John Coakley & Liam O'Dowd: *Studying border change in Ireland - a briefing paper* (8 pages, 2004).

Regeneration and identities on the Irish border, report (8 pages, 2005).

The early impact of partition on co Armagh (3 pages, 2005).

Andy Pollak: *Education cooperation in the island of Ireland - a thousand flowers or a hundred heartaches?* (2005).

Public service provision for ethnic and immigrant groups

Anna Visser and Philip Watt: *Public sector provision for ethnic and immigrant groups in three jurisdictions - Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland, context chapter*. (25 pages, 2005).

North South Ministerial Council Obstacles to cross-border mobility

Review of existing cross-border mobility information provision, physical and virtual, in the south of Ireland (140 pages, 2004).

Border Ireland

Discussion paper (11 pages, 2004).

Summary health report (15 pages, 2004).

This is a substantial body of product, ranging from 'hard' reports to grey literature, educational material, formally published to circulated conference papers, using a range of formats.

3.3 Attendance at events

The following records the numbers attending Centre for Cross Border Studies events over the period (1,297). Numbers tell us nothing of the quality of the event concerned, while some events are designed for smaller, rather than larger numbers. Nevertheless, they are an indicator of the ability of the centre to mobilize people around the broad range of its activities.

<u>Programme</u>	<u>Place and date</u>	<u>Number</u>
North - South consultative forum	Armagh, June 2002	40
Higher education conference 1 <i>Excellence</i>	Armagh, 10-11 October 2002	126
Higher education conference 2 <i>Challenges</i>	Cavan, 15-16 May 2003	110
SCoTENS conference 2003	Malahide, 9-10 October 2003	103
CaSE schools curriculum planning	Armagh, 13 October 2003	38
Universities Ireland <i>E-learning imperative</i>	Dublin City University, 4 Nov 2003	46
Higher education conference 3 <i>Widening</i>	Belfast, 6-7 November 2003	90
CaSE training module 1	Monaghan, 27-8 Nov 2003	42
Student teacher exchange orientation	Armagh, 4 Feb 2004	43
Higher education conference 4 <i>Higher ed.</i>	Cavan, 20-1 May 2004	75
<i>Pride of our place</i>	Monaghan, 22-3 Jan 2004	32
Ageing study day	Armagh, 2 June 2004	34
<i>Toward a green isle</i> launch	Craigavon, 21 June 2004	40
<i>Border Ireland</i> information seminar	Armagh, 6 Sep 2004	22
Universities Ireland seminar	Dublin City University, 17 Sep 2004	18
CaSE training module	Omagh, 22 Oct 2004	41
SCoTENS conference 2004 <i>Contexts</i>	Armagh, 11-2 Nov 200	111
<i>Partition and Irish border region</i>	Armagh, 9 Dec 2004	30
<i>Pride of our place</i>	Monaghan, 20-1 Jan 2005	32
<i>Year 6</i> yearbook launch	Drumcondra, 7 Feb 2005	34
University links with Africa	Dublin, 31st March 2005	51
<i>Identities & regeneration</i>	Clones, 19th April 2005	36
Waste management	Armagh, 1st June 2005	24
Higher education conference 5 Business	Belfast, 16-17 June 2005	79
		1,297

3.4 Conferences

Related to this, the ability of the centre to attract well-known, authoritative and reputable speakers is a measure of the performance of the centre and this is reviewed here.

Educational conferences: north south

The first educational conference, *Ireland as a centre of excellence in third level education* was addressed by the OECD former Deputy Director for Education, Malcolm Skilbeck; the former United States Secretary for Education, Richard Riley; the European Commission Director General for Education & Culture, Nikolaus van der Pas; and the the Chief Executive of the Higher Education Funding Council in England, Howard Newby. It was opened by the two ministers responsible for education, Carmel Hanna and Noel Dempsey TD and attended by seven of the nine university presidents (2002).

The second conference *International education - a capacity builder for the island of Ireland* was addressed by the Director of the British Council education division Neil Kemp; Lindy Hyam, Chief Executive of Education Australia; and was chaired by Sir George Quigley (2003).

The third conference *Widening access to third level education on the island of Ireland - toward better policy and practice* was addressed by the President of the United States Council for Opportunity in Education, Arnold Mitchem and the Executive Officer of the South African Qualifications Authority (2003).

The fourth conference *Cross-border higher education cooperation in Ireland and Europe* attracted speakers from Oresund (Sweden/Denmark) (Prof. Linda Nielsen, rector of the University of Copenhagen), the Upper Rhineland; the Dutch - Belgian - German border and was chaired by Sir Kenneth Bloomfield and Noel Dorr. It was addressed by the Joint Secretary of the North South Ministerial Council Tim O'Connor and by the representative of the Upper Rhine EUCOR university network Dr Beat Munch (2004).

The fifth conference, called *Higher education and business - beyond mutual incomprehension*, is to be addressed by Richard Lambert, author of the Lambert review of business - university collaboration for the UK government and former editor of the *Financial Times*; Chris Horn (founder, Iona Technologies), Hugh Cormican (co-founder, Ardor Technology), Prof Peter Gregson (Vice-Chancellor, Queen's University Belfast); and opened by Mary Hanafin, Minister for Education & Science and Angela Smith, Northern Ireland Minister responsible for Employment and Learning.

Educational conferences: Universities Ireland and SCoTENS

The conference *eLearning as a strategic imperative for universities in Ireland* was addressed by two leading elearning authorities: Stanford University's Dr Andy DiPaolo and the Department of Education & Skills Prof Diana Laurillard, with sessions chaired by the vice-chancellor of Queen's University Prof Peter Gregson and by the provost of Dublin University, John Hegarty.

The first and second SCoTENS conferences *Challenges to teacher education, north and south* and *Changing contexts of teacher education, north and south*, attracted keynote addresses from the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, David Istance and the EU expert group on teacher education (Sean Feerick) respectively.

Mapping frontiers, plotting pathways

The conference *Partition and the creation of a border region* (Armagh, 2004) was addressed by National University of Ireland Maynooth historian, Dr Terence Dooley, former Community Relations Council director Will Glendinning, director of the Institute of British - Irish Studies at University College Dublin Prof John Coakley and former Ulster Unionist mayor of Armagh Sylvia McRoberts. The conference *Identities and regeneration on the Irish border* (Clones, 2005) was addressed by two professors from Queen's University (James Anderson and Hastings Donnan).

Annual report/yearbook

The *Year 6* yearbook was launched by the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern and attended by the British ambassador Stewart Eldon, the joint secretaries of the North South Ministerial Council Tim O'Connor and Dr Peter Smyth, the chief executive officer of Waterways Ireland John Martin, the assistant secretary of the Department of Education & Science Paddy McDonagh, two university presidents, Iggy O Muircheartaigh (National University of Ireland Galway) and Ferdinand von Prondzynski (Dublin City University) and one former president (Art Cosgrove of University College Dublin).

Research reports

The research report *Mental health and social well being - cross-border challenges and opportunities* was launched by the Minister of State at the Department of Health & Children, Tim O'Malley TD and the launch was financially assisted by the Institute of Public Health by £5,000. The research report *Toward a green isle* was launched by the Northern Ireland representative on the Sustainable Development Commission, Brian Hanna and was reviewed in the *Irish News* and the *Sunday Times*.

Educational action research

The launch of the report on the first year of the *Pride of our place* project was launched by the deputy chief inspector of education, Geraroid O Conlain and the chairperson of the Southern Education and Library Board. The *Openings* project was launched by the president, Mary McAleese.

Training

The north - south and cross - border public sector training programme attracted a series of authoritative speakers such as Sir George Quigley, Tim O'Connor and Dr Peter Smyth of the North South Ministerial Council, the head of the Northern Ireland review of public administration Greg

McConnell, former GAA president Peter Quinn, director of the Community Relations Council Dr Duncan Morrow; InterTrade Ireland chief executive Liam Nellis, SEUPB chief executive Pat Colgan and Enterprise Northern Ireland chairperson Conor Patterson. Later speakers scheduled for the training programme are the director of the Community Foundation Northern Ireland Avila Kilmurray, Economic and Social Research Institute professor John Bradley, Martin Higgins of the Food Safety Promotion Board/SafeFood and Derrick Anderson, chief executive of the Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission. Forty civil servants attended the first two four day-long courses in spring and summer 2005. End-of-course certificates were presented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Consultancy/projects

40 attended the round table on the north-south civic forum. It was chaired by Hugh Frazer of the European Commission and the opening paper was by Robin Wilson of Democratic Dialogue. The conference *Ageing* was addressed by former Taoiseach Dr Garret FitzGerald and attended by voluntary and statutory organizations and the medical profession, with speakers from Age Concern (Irene Kingston) and Age Action (Paul Murray). The list of speakers above illustrates the ability of the centre to attract a wide range of prestigious speakers from both jurisdictions and further afield.

3.5 Publicity

The centre attracted considerable print media coverage (below). In addition, the Citizenship and Science Exchange project, CaSE) was broadcast on *Future Tense* on RTE radio, while the report *Diversity and early years education* was broadcast on BBC Radio Ulster.

Ulster seminar told UK must join euro	<i>Belfast Telegraph</i>	23rd April 2002
Kinnock calls for UK to join the euro	<i>Belfast Newsletter</i>	24th April 2002
Queen's agreement	<i>Ulster Gazette</i>	10th October 2002
Leading expert on education favours fees plan	<i>Irish Times</i>	11th October 2002
Bring back third level fees call	<i>Irish Independent</i>	11th October 2002
University cooperation must be top priority	<i>Irish News</i>	14th October 2002
Academics called on to foster unity	<i>Times HES</i>	5th Nov. 2002
Be clear on Irish collaboration	<i>Times HES</i>	5th Nov. 2002
Overseas students to spend €300m this year	<i>Irish Independent</i>	16th May 2003
Irish universities form an alliance	<i>Irish News</i>	3rd July 2003
Universities unite	<i>Belfast Telegraph</i>	3rd July 2003
Universities to enhance cross-border cooperation	<i>Irish Independent</i>	3rd July 2003
Body to promote ties between universities	<i>Irish Times</i>	3rd July 2003
City seminar hears Kinnock euro call	<i>Ulster Gazette</i>	25th April 2004
Belfast students arrive on cultural exchange	<i>Limerick Post</i>	27th March 2004
Unfair tariff for cross-border calls	<i>Belfast Telegraph</i>	24th May 2004
Centre hosted study day (photo)	<i>Armagh Observer</i>	10th June 2004
Ireland needs logo for sustainable development	<i>Irish News</i>	24th June 2004
Orange of a different colour	<i>Irish Times</i>	21st August 2004
Breaking the mould	<i>Sunday Tribune</i>	26th Sept. 2004
Irish UK universities agree to cooperate	<i>Irish Times</i>	27th Sept. 2004
Some Irish news	<i>Times HES</i>	15th Oct. 2004
Irish universities cannot ignore global e-learning	<i>Siliconrepublic.com</i>	9th Nov. 2004
The interview: Andy diPaolo	<i>Irish Independent</i>	11th Nov. 2004
Latvian men badly beaten in Armagh attack	<i>Irish Times</i>	11th Nov. 2004
Parents say no trouble in class	<i>Irish News</i>	12th Nov. 2004
Training high ranking officials to tackle	<i>Newry Reporter</i>	2nd Dec. 2004
Cross border training courses for public servants	<i>Public Sector Times</i>	December 2004
Universities must collaborate north and south	<i>Irish Times</i>	11th January 2005
Internet connects along the border	<i>Irish Times</i>	28th October 2004
No move expected on NI process until autumn	<i>Irish Times</i>	8th February 2005
Minister praises north-south cooperation	<i>Irish News</i>	5th April 2005
Education for all	<i>Irish Independent</i>	11th May 2005
Pride of our place concert	<i>Armagh Observer</i>	27th May 2005
North-south training initiative	<i>Irish Times</i>	4th July 2005

This is extensive, from national to local papers.

3.6 Yearbooks

Annual reports were published in a yearbook format, as follows:

- Year 3 (8 pages, brochure, colour, illustrated, 2002).
- Year 4 (8 pages, brochure, colour, illustrated, 2003).
- Year 5 (40 pages, A5, colour, illustrated, 2004).
- Year 6 (40 pages, A5, colour, illustrated) .

The centre's yearbooks included a number of essays by leading social, political and economic commentators on current north - south cross-border relationships. In Year 5:

Sir George Quigley: *The unfolding agenda of north - south cooperation*

Tony Kennedy & Catherine Lynch: *Toward an island at peace with itself - an NGO view of north - south cooperation*

William Poole: *Where now for the Belfast - Dublin economic corridor?*

Ian McCracken: *A Donegal protestant's view of cross-border cooperation*

The Year 6 yearbook included the following articles:

David McKittrick: *A problem solved and turned into an opportunity*

Conor Bady: *North - south cooperation: back to the future?*

Edna Longley: *North and south - toward an intellectual infrastructure*

Mervyn Storey MLA: *Building cross-border relations on mutual benefit and respect*

Steven King: *We all learned (slowly) from Sunningdale*

3.7 Financial performance

The ability of the centre to attract funding rose from £839,000 in the first three year period to £1.3m in the second three-year period, up 55%. Finances are addressed in more detail in the next chapter.

3.8 Endorsements

The Centre for Cross Border Studies received numerous endorsements from public figures during the period. The Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern expressed the view that the centre had 'carved out a very useful role in complementing the work of the north-south institutions' and served as an interface between the public sector and the non-governmental practitioners. He described its work as 'important and valuable' and 'very useful'.

The joint secretaries of the North South Ministerial Council praised the work of the centre for having 'played an invaluable role in the development of north/south cooperation' and had greatly enhanced the level and quality of cooperation between the two parts of the island through the activities of its dedicated team. They applauded the centre's 'innovative spirit' and considered that it had made 'a real contribution to normalizing relationships on the island of Ireland'. President Mary McAleese took the view that its work was 'mould-breaking' 'always fresh and innovative' and it was also endorsed by former President Mary Robinson, the Times *Higher Education Supplement*, the permanent secretary to the Department for Employment and Learning Will Haire and the Minister for Finance, Brian Cowen TD.

One of the CaSE schools was awarded a UNESCO *Young environmentalist* award, 2004 for its work in the CaSE project.

3.9 External opinion

This evaluation surveyed external opinion on the centre's performance in five ways:

- First, by asking a cross-section of persons known to the centre as to their impressions of its work (3.9.1);
- Second, by surveying participants on the 2005 public sector training course (3.9.2);
- Third, by interviews with some of the key clients of the centre (3.9.3);
- Fourth, by looking at evaluation reports (3.9.4); and
- Fifth, by asking for comments from a number of experts on north-south cooperation (3.9.5).

Details are given in the methodological note at the end.

3.9.1 Cross section of opinion

Here, external opinion was asked to adjudge the centre for relevance, effectiveness and impact and to rate it on a 10-point scale. The questions asked were similar to the 2002 evaluation, enabling a direct comparison to be made over time. One difference is that the 2002 survey was conducted with three quite different groups, so the 2002 responses are shown in a band.

How relevant do you consider the centre's work to be to cross-border cooperation and development?

	2005	2002
Very relevant	38%	23% to 45%
Relevant	53%	48% to 60%
Largely irrelevant	3%	4% to 14%
Completely irrelevant	1%	Up to 3%

Compared to other cross-border bodies, do you consider the centre to be:

	2005	2002
More effective	27%	10% to 31%
As effective as the others	65%	52% to 55%
Less effective	8%	17% to 30%

What impact do you think the centre has made on policy-makers?

	2005	2002
A lot	8%	0% to 14%
Some	68%	60% to 67%
Very little	20%	21% to 37%
None	4%	0% to 3%

From what you know about the centre, how do you rate the quality of its work? (1 = very poor, 10 = excellent)

	2005
2002	From 6.34 to 7.29
2005	7.02

Many volunteered comments under *Any other comments?* Here, very many commented that they did not know the work of the centre as well as they would have liked. Several expressed the desire to be kept up to date and involved by the centre in its work.

Comments were: 'its projects are always very thorough'; 'doing valuable work'; 'doing a great job in challenging circumstances'; 'the director has an excellent grasp of what is necessary to move things along'; 'undertakes very worthwhile work'; 'nothing more

important than north-south reconciliation; 'good at publicizing events and sending out invitations to people interested in education'; 'keep up the good work'; 'contributes a significant amount of information to the wider policy arena'; 'teacher cooperation is particularly important. The conferences are the highlight of my year'. The seminar on Africa was 'well-organized, stimulating and useful'; 'Does important work and deserves more exposure' combining a think tank role and finding practical solutions to problems. One wrote at length of the value of the *Pride of our place* project and how much it had done, in a natural way, to produce lasting benefits in attitudes among schoolchildren and adults in a way that could not otherwise be possible. The administrative staff of the centre were complimented for their efficiency, support and energy.

Several volunteered views as to how the centre should develop in the future. Examples were: 'Link the Institutes of Technology in the Republic with the Institutes for Further and Higher Education in Northern Ireland'; and 'Involve the institutes of Technology'. One statutory body spoke of the importance of the centre being able to provide accurate national, regional and local comparisons for government. One of its main functions was to bring people together for networking. One correspondent stressed the need for the centre to expose public bodies which continued to operate on a back-to-back basis: it should 'point out the continued folly and costs of such policies'. 'Make findings available to the ordinary Joe Soap in concise form'. 'Excellent work but widen focus'. 'The centre is in a good position to bring together the accumulated experience of the last five years of cross-border governance on the island of Ireland. This could assist not only with future developments but offer advice and consultancy within Europe'.

There was a small number of critical comments. 'Work is not articulated very well'; 'Not heard much about their outcomes' were two. One correspondent was very negative: 'currently attending a course organized by them and it is very poor. No focus, little relevance and the three day-long sessions could have been squeezed into one morning'. Another said that conference agendas were too crowded and there should be more space for networking.

The survey shows that:

- 38% believe the work of the centre to be 'very relevant', a further 53% 'relevant', with only 4% not finding it relevant;
- 27% believe the centre to be more effective than other cross border bodies, 65% 'as effective', 8% believing it to be less effective;
- As for impact, 8% believed it had made a lot of impact, 68% some impact, 20% very little and 4% none.
- The quality of its work was estimated at 7.02 on a 10-point scale.
- Qualitative comments were overwhelmingly positive, glowing and many enthusiastic.

Several correspondents made helpful suggestions as to where work should be developed in the future.

These figures are broadly comparable to those over 2002. There are distinct gains under 'effectiveness' with fewer people finding the centre to be 'less effective' and more people adjudging the centre to be 'as effective' as other bodies. Impact figures are also improved, the proportions adjudging its impact to be 'low' being down.

3.9.2 Training

Second, participants in the north-south public sector training programme were invited to comment on the quality of the course provided. Due to the recent advent of the programme, the numbers are small, but the patterns of outcome clear.

How relevant was the content of the training course to you?

Very relevant	75%
Moderately relevant	25%
Not at all relevant	0

How suitable were the methods used in the training course?

Very suitable	37.5%
Moderately suitable	62.5%
Not at all suitable	0

How efficiently was the course organized and administered?

Very efficient	100%
Moderately efficient	0
Inefficient	0

Would you go on another course run by the Centre for Cross Border Studies?

Yes	75%
Possibly	25%
No	0

From what you know of it, how do you value the rest of the work of the Centre for Cross Border Studies?

Highly	87.5%
Moderately	12.5%
Of no value	0

Several participants volunteered remarks under *Any other comments?* These were positive, participants describing the course as 'very useful', 'would recommend it to anyone', 'very interesting - especially for someone not involved in cross-border studies to date', with 'high quality' speakers, 'very valuable', 'very worthwhile'. Other comments were that it was 'enlightening to see the amount and scale of work undertaken in the area'.

Several suggested improvements in methods: 'different formats, not just lectures. More interaction'; 'more participatory format and teaching methods with more time for discussion'; 'too many presentations - workshops would have been better'; 'allow participants more time to get to know each other, to let new initiatives emerge from among busy people'. Courses should be held in other venues, e.g. Enniskillen. Additional comments were offered on the centre: participants said that they held it 'in high regard'; it had played 'a major contribution in pushing out barriers'; and would welcome future courses.

Here, it is evident that:

- The course was rated highly for relevance (75% very relevant, 25% moderately so, none as irrelevant);
- The course was less well rated for suitability of methods: 62.% as moderately suitable, 37.5% very suitable, none as unsuitable. The supplementary comments probably explain that this was due to the over-emphasis on formal teaching methods. There is scope for improvement here.
- Organization and administration were rated at 100%;
- Three quarters said that they would go on another course, while a quarter might. None said they would not.
- The work of the centre was rated highly by 87.5%, moderately by 12.5%, none as of no value.
- There were a number of comments and suggestions, mainly suggesting improvements in working methods.

3.9.3 Clients of the centre

The researcher contacted the key clients of the centre - bodies and agencies that had commissioned its work in the past number of years - to ascertain whether the centre had discharged its responsibilities to them professionally. The views were clear:

- The centre had carried out its responsibilities properly and thoroughly. Typical comments were 'very good, competent, a good experience', 'ran to a high standard', 'bringing insights and skills beyond what we would have got from a commercial company'.
- The centre was considered to be professional, reliable and worked hard. Its staff were 'a pleasure to deal with'. They did a 'tremendous job', provided 'good support and service', they 'do what they have to do - and more'. All the staff were good - 'but that comes from the values set down from the director at the top'. They were 'efficient, focussed, interested and believed in what they were doing'.
- Feedback from their members was also positive about the centre's work and the outcomes of the projects undertaken by the centre.
- Clients were asked to identify problems that had arisen during the projects carried out by the centre and none could. Its staff were unfailingly courteous and respectful at all times.

Several commented that the centre went beyond what was expected, 'treating the project proactively, bringing fresh energy and commitment, finding imaginative ways to work around problems'. The outcomes here were absolutely clear and require no elaboration.

3.9.4 Evaluation reports

A report is available covering the North - South Student Exchange Project. This was evaluated in two stages by Dr Maeve Martin of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (*Interim evaluation report*, 2003 and *Phase 2 evaluation report*, 2004). These were critical qualitative evaluations. She concluded that the overall objectives of the programme had been accomplished and recorded high - she used the term 'transformational' - levels of personal gain for the participants. Her concluding remarks described the project as a 'courageous, inclusive and groundbreaking exchange'.

3.9.5 Expert opinion

Several experts on north-south issues were interviewed in the course of the research. Their assessment of the centre's performance may be grouped as follows:

- The centre was admired and respected for its commitment, energy, political even-handedness and ability to open doors to people who might not otherwise be in contact with each other. It has oiled the wheels of cooperation better than anyone else could, bringing an ever wider range of people into cooperation. 'Not just border people, but as far south as Cork'.
- Its work was of high quality, substantial in nature, significant in quantity and relevant. What it did was valuable, useful and impactful.
- All had a sense that the centre had performed well on minimal staffing and resources. 'It is transparent, managing an extensive programme, working within tight timeframes and with a small number of staff'. Many expressed puzzlement and disappointment that neither government was prepared to give it stable, core funding.

Several commented on how Armagh was a well-chosen location for the centre, one with which both communities in the north could feel comfortable, especially unionists.

One organization, whose work had been facilitated by the centre, spoke enthusiastically of the centre's commitment to arranging cross-border contacts and promoting relationships between groups that had hitherto little contact, making the comment that 'Once the relationship was established and got going, the centre walked quietly away. It didn't try to hog the limelight or build an empire but let them get on with it'.

Expert opinion and other interviewees were asked to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the centre. Their main comments were as follows.

Its strengths were seen as its lightness, smallness, flexibility, adaptability, links to government, strong leadership, the profile and credibility of the director, multi-disciplinary nature, policy-relevance, strong information base, reputation, low overheads, efficiency, value-for-money, ability to get a lot done, 'punches above its weight', 'a lot of expertise in a small place', being 'lean and mean', the fast pace it set, the diplomacy and tact of the director and 'his ability to conceal his probably high levels of exasperation over funding problems'. The centre was visionary, had good personnel and a high level of commitment. 'They work hard to inform us and keep us in the loop'.

The weaknesses of the centre were seen as the manner in which its work is dominated by the struggle for money (at times, periodic funding crises) and, possibly connected to this, being too small, too thinly spread and over-stretched. It is handicapped by its narrow funding base. The centre had not connected enough with the NGO community. Some felt it had much lower media coverage than it merited, but also felt that the media were probably difficult to work with in this subject area.

The tone of these comments was, overall, very positive. One interviewee commented that he had never heard the centre's performance or personnel bad-mouthed privately or off the record 'unlike many other bodies of its kind'. A couple had heard, in the distance, some negative comments from some unionists, who felt it was 'too green', 'too southern - focussed' and were suspicious of it being funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin.

3.10 Internal performance

The internal performance of the centre is reviewed briefly here. This concerns the effective functioning of the staff and the board.

First, staff. Feedback from the staff about the internal operation of the centre was positive. It is regarded as a busy workplace 'no one ever idles here' - and the director is perceived to be greatly overworked. The centre is regarded as a good place in which to work. Staff meetings, held every three weeks, are considered a good way in which reports are shared and issues raised. There is a sense that all work should be done to a high standard and that this is indeed the case. Staff are flexible between the work they do, helping out colleagues on their tasks when asked. Responsibilities are allocated correctly.

Second, the board. The board is regarded as an effective body. It provides a system of accountability, gives support and advice for the director and discharges its functions of 'due diligence'. Discussions are regarded as informative, reflective and considered. The director's reports to the board are thorough, while at the same time inviting further discussion. There is considered to be a high level of commitment to keep the centre going. 'The chairperson ensures that things run smoothly, opinions are drawn out into the open and that clear decisions are taken'. There was some muted criticism that some board members were not asked to do enough and that responsibilities should be more broadly shared. There is some discussion on the composition of the board and this is addressed in chapter 4, next.

3.11 Conclusions

The analysis of the centre's performance is a positive one. The centre has maintained, even accelerated, its performance over the previous triennial period. This is evident if we look at:

- Growth in website traffic, up in all categories by which it is measured, from 39% in duration of visits to a 107% increase in pageviews;
- Volume of research reports, publications, papers, educational material and grey literature;
- Numbers attending events, 1,279;
- Quality of national and international speakers addressing the centre's conferences and events;
- Publicity achieved in the media;
- Financial performance, with income up 55%;
- Endorsement from political leaders, including two presidents and the Taoiseach.

External opinion is an important reality check. Here, opinion was sought from a cross-section of people known to the centre, training course participants, clients, evaluators and experts. The general survey showed that:

- 38% believed the work of the centre to be 'very relevant', a further 53% 'relevant', with only 4% not finding it relevant;
- 27% believed the centre to be more effective than other cross border bodies, 65% 'as effective', 8% believing it to be less effective;
- As for impact, 8% believed it had made a lot of impact, 68% some impact, 20% very little and 4% none.
- The quality of its work was estimated at 7.02 on a 10-point scale.
- Qualitative comments were enthusiastic. Several correspondents made helpful suggestions as to where work should be developed in the future.

These figures are broadly comparable to those over 2002. There are gains under 'effectiveness' with fewer people finding the centre to be 'less effective' and more people adjudging the centre to be 'as effective' as other bodies. Its impact is perceived to have grown.

Training course participants rated their course highly for relevance (75% very, 25% moderately), quality of organization and administration (100%) and 75% would definitely go again. Improvements were suggested in working methods. Clients of the centre appraised its work as more than competent, demonstrating the highest levels of professionalism, coupled with commitment and invariable courtesy. Evaluation reports have likewise been positive. Expert opinion gave a high assessment of the centre's performance, admiring its quality, output, impact, value, relevance, value-for-money, working methods, expertise, vision, tact and diplomacy. The practical value of the centre's work in breaking down ignorance and misunderstanding and, conversely in building positive relationships between groups such as government officials (national and local), educationalists, schoolchildren and students, seems to be especially valued. Many seemed aware of the centre's struggle for resources. There was a handful of negative comments, but they were small in the overall context and can be interpreted constructively. The board has performed its role effectively and the centre is regarded by staff as a good place in which to work.

Chapter 4: Issues arising

Several key issues arise from the foregoing and from the interviews with experts on the centre. These were the evolution of the role of the centre over the past three years (4.1); its future role, development and activities (4.2); funding (4.3); and matters of organization (4.4). Some conclusions are then drawn (4.5). This is a long chapter, one designed to reflect the breadth, depth and flavour of the issues and arguments involved. Before doing so, it is worth emphasizing that the centre's *performance* in the 2002-5 period was *not* an issue, for it is universally regarded as outstanding, as the chapter 3 conclusions show.

4.1 Role and impact of the centre 2002-5

Issues of role and funding are often difficult to separate and this is especially true in this case. However, in order to achieve some clarity about the centre's past, present and future role, some separation will be made between role and funding in what follows.

It is evident, mainly from chapter 2, that the nature of the centre's work changed significantly over the past three years. The first three years of the centre's work, 1999-2002, centred on research reports, scoping studies and mapping exercises. In the past three years, 2002-5, the thrust of the centre's work moved to administration, networking, conferencing and servicing north-south bodies, education being the most prominent area. Research work and action research by no means ceased, but they were a less important dossier in the centre's portfolio.

The shift in emphasis has been attributed to two main forces: a shift in the funding environment and political change in the area of north - south cooperation. First, the funding environment. The centre had hoped, at the beginning of the period under review, to continue in a broadly similar form with funding from the Peace II programme. In an unexpected and arguably perverse interpretation of the criteria of the programme, the Special European Union Programmes Body rejected the centre's application. The SEUPB made it clear that the centre must instead work on an on-going, practical manner with public sector bodies. Engagement on policy issues alone was insufficient: 'it was not enough that it carried out studies' (*19th Progress report*). The SEUPB invited funding applications for a number of individual cooperation projects in the educational area and these were successful.

Second, the political environment. The centre came into existence a year after the Good Friday Agreement. There was a high expectation that the agreement would of itself generate a much higher level of cross-border activity and, associated with that, an expanding role for the centre itself. The three subsequent suspensions of the Northern Ireland institutions established by the agreement, the present third being much the longest, are considered to have had a strong negative impact on the work of the centre. Typical comments were:

The suspension messed things up very badly.

It became ever more difficult and ever slower to get decisions on north-south issues.

Northern Ireland has become more relaxed about direct rule again, without the expected increase in cross-border activities.

The momentum for cross-border work, research and activity was lost. The drive went out of the process. If the Assembly and all the rest were running, we'd be flying.

The suspension also had a regressive effective on the the Northern Ireland civil service. Without political legitimization for cross-border work provided when the institutions were operating, several departments became extremely risk averse and were slow or reluctant to engage in or fund cross-border activities. Some 'old guard' resistance to cross-border cooperation may have been reinforced.

As a result of the two changes in the environment, the linear development of the work undertaken in 1999-2002 was closed off. The centre had to change its emphasis. There was a feeling, most strongly felt among board members, that the mission of the centre had shifted over the past three years - but, equally, that this was forced on the centre. Some used the term 'mission drift', which has somewhat negative connotations of an unconscious process or one out of control, so the more neutral term 'mission shift' will be used here. Typical comments were:

We've done little under our own name during this period. We should be able to drive our own research agenda. We should still be able to find the time to comment on the nature and state of cross-border cooperation. We should not lose the aspiration to do research and to inform policy. The support role is good in bringing people together, but the centre itself can be invisible. The centre can do programme delivery well, but can do more strategic things too. We're not doing fresh research, above all we're not contributing fresh thinking. Research should never disappear entirely from our work. We should still be the internationally recognized experts in cross-border policy issues for Ireland. Has doing a service job - and doing it well - blunted our appetite for policy work? The centre could lobby with other groups to help the two governments develop more rational, efficient, planned strategies of cooperation between north and south. Add its brain to other people's muscle. We had to change course - or wind up. But this is not the same as having a strategic direction, or a considered alternate mission. It's not enough just to keep something going for the sake of some good coming out of it and something better turning up.

An example of a thematic area was broadcasting, still seems a cause of inter-governmental friction. There was still no system for relaying television across borders to areas shut off from RTE and TV3 (not all of these were in Northern Ireland either). This is the kind of the thing the centre should have addressed, even if it was controversial - or particularly if it was.

Some took a more sanguine view:

As for the education programmes, we weren't set up to do this, but someone's got to and if we are short of money, it may as well be us. Even if they are market-led, funding-led, opportunist, they do meet a real need, they are tangible, concrete and useful and do build the peace process. Even if the research role was compromised, the cross-border role was not and that is more important. The early research work had run its course and reached its limits. The present situation, as a facilitating service agency, is a good place to be. The new work with educational bodies is positive, rewarding, energizing. With the Bologna process under way in Europe, education is a particularly desirable area in which to be active now. What's happening now is learning, with outcomes - much better than stuffing a building with people doing research. The end of the research series was regrettable. But no one was queueing up asking us to do more. Research was only one way of making an impact. What we are doing now can be at least as effective. Bringing people together can do more good. Whatever about finance or economics, we do at least know something about education. Even if the administrative work is not what we should really be doing, we are doing it properly and professionally and it is being delivered. Nobody else could have done this and certainly not the universities.

Several commentators made the point that all think tank type bodies operate in an environment of political change and they must continually adapt, change and improvise. For bodies operating in the rapidly changing environment of politics in Ireland, uncertainty was one of the few certainties. Critically, there was a feeling that, funding or not, the centre's research and policy output had fallen below an acceptable level and that this must be rebuilt.

Part of the centre still had to be a think tank on cross-border issues.

The centre has the credibility and standing to draw in a really good mixture of people - public servants, politicians, academics - on border issues and ideas. We should always do an annual conference on cross-border hot topics. Showcase our work. Involve people. Remind them we're still here.

The centre is the best placed to inform policy makers: [they] have demonstrated their capacity to write effectively and that is their main strength.

Reflecting this change in emphasis, opinions were divided about the mission statement of the centre. A majority was broadly happy, arguing that it gave the centre the opportunity to cover a broad canvas of work. A minority was discontented, feeling that it was 'old and tired' at this stage.

*We can't go on calling ourselves the Centre for Cross Border 'Studies' indefinitely if we are no longer doing 'studies'. And if we are doing cooperation, we need a way to distinguish ourselves from people like Cooperation Ireland. We do need to be clear as to what is our 'unique selling point'. Our title and our mission statement should reflect where the weight of our work falls.
We can't go on presenting ourselves as a research body indefinitely if we never do any research.*

The discussion on the centre's role was most intense among board members but was also reflected in discussions with staff. For those working outside the centre, there was a general perception that the centre's role had shifted over the past three years, though this was regarded as a natural development, not one attracting negative comment.

The changing emphasis of the centre's activities was also reflected in its differential impact. The centre was perceived to be most impactful on:

- Government, especially the North South Ministerial Council;
- Public servants working on cross-border issues, north and south;
- Local government and the local authority cross-border networks ;
- Education, especially third level.

Education would not have featured strongly as an impact area in the 2002 evaluation. Most felt that the centre had improved its profile or impact over the past three years.

*It's now seen as an integral part of the north-south landscape. The Taoiseach launched the yearbook - that wouldn't have happened before.
There is great recognition of the centre in the public service, though more so in the south than in the north. The director is very well known at senior level, especially for such a small organization.*

Many felt that the question of impact must be put in proportion:

It would never have recognition in a house-to-house survey. It's probably better known to the people 'up above' than 'down below'. Does this matter? Probably not.

There were several areas where the centre was perceived to be less impactful than others. The following were cited:

- NGOs and civil society, where links were felt to be poor;
- Political parties, which had not yet been successfully engaged;
- Other geographical regions along the border distant from Armagh, especially the north west.
- Public representatives, where the level of contact between MLAs and members of the Oireachtas was still limited.
- That part of the unionist community not yet engaged with the Peace programme (especially those further from the border). A generation of the unionist community had little contact with the south for the thirty years of the troubles.

In summary, the centre's role shifted. All recognize that the shift was enforced by circumstances and defined its necessity. There is significant concern though that the centre's critical policy role has fallen below an acceptable level and should be rebuilt.

4.2 Future role

Board, staff and external opinion had many ideas as to the future thrust, direction, focus and emphasis of the centre's work. Essentially, their views came down to this.

First, there was a general view that the current types of activities should continue, be consolidated and further developed. The servicing, networking, training, conference and administrative work was highly valued and there was a universal view that such work had considerable potential to grow. Many commented that the centre was ideally placed, had the track record and the appropriate skills to carry out this work. Many said that 'if the centre did not exist, we would have to invent it'. For government, the centre was perceived to be a neutral agency, without political baggage, an ideal interlocutor between north and south, 'enabling conversations to happen'. Training courses could be extended to other parts of the public sector and maybe draw in expertise from the rest of Europe. The existing servicing, training and networking activities in education could be extended into such areas as environment, energy, waste, water, housing, regulatory environments, joining up EU - deregulated services (e.g. post, telecoms, electricity, transport). The centre had already broached some of these areas through the earlier mapping and scoping studies. It was important though to be careful about work that bordered on the fields and territory of other north south bodies, such as InterTrade Ireland and Cooperation and Working Together - not that such work should not be done, but that liaison with them was important. There was still abundant scope to develop the educational area (e.g. institutes of Technology, Further & Higher Education). Universities Ireland was seen as an area of potential future growth. The educational area was far from exhausted and there was potential in such areas as the humanities, sociology, social sciences and medicine.

Second, those who knew the centre more intimately and were aware of existing activities already underway looked forward to the development of *Border Ireland* which, it was felt, would be widely used and raise the centre's profile and impact. It had the potential to grow eventually into a www.bordereurope.eu project. The existing work in public sector training, networking and contacts had the potential to grow into new publication formats, such as a north-south yearbook, bringing together the type of information published in the *Northern Ireland Yearbook* and the *Institute of Public Administration* annual *Yearbook*. Sub-directories could be developed in the education area. Many external experts emphasized the continued importance of the centre's information gathering and dissemination role: even if unspectacular, bringing all this together in one place was of immense benefit to government and its agencies.

Third, relating to the issue of 'mission shift', there was a view that the centre should re-build more of its policy-making role. Some argued for a resumption of the old research agenda, for example, revisiting the mapping studies and developing north-south research in new areas such as ageing and social welfare. Most, though, articulated the need for a critical commentary and voice on cross-border cooperation, one said 'along the lines of the devolution monitor'. The centre should publish a systematic commentary in its yearbook (some articles already fulfill this function) and convene an annual conference to review the state of cross-border cooperation. Among the possible subject areas for research, comment and analysis were: broadcasting, comparisons of the systems of police ombudsman, the development of a system of road pricing for both parts of the island, waste disposal and comparative approaches to crime.

4.3 Funding

Obtaining and maintaining secure funding has been the principal pre-occupation of the board, its director and staff over the past three years. The absence of secure long-term core funding has been a constant shadow over the work of the centre. In practical terms, funding has taken up more continuous time at board meetings than any other item; and has taken up a substantial part of the director's time. This has gone to the devising of funding strategies; the identification of potential funders; many meetings with governmental officials and political leaders; meetings with individual potential private donors (for example in the United States); and the filing of application forms. In the course of the autumn 2002 alone, the director met with the Minister for Education in Northern Ireland, the president of Dublin City University, the vice-chancellor of Queen's University Belfast, senior officials of the Department of Education in Belfast and the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin. This activity is quite time-consuming, an example being the 50-page application for Peace II. Some was also extraordinarily frustrating. Although the Special European Union Programmes Body accepted an application from the centre, the proposal was rejected five months later on unconvincing technical arguments (e.g. that it was not a 'public body' and was too all-island). The suspension of the Good Friday Agreement institutions dimmed the chances of the centre attracting funding from Northern Ireland government departments, compounded by the continued freeze on budget expansion there. While many people are puzzled at the failure of governments to support the centre, long-standing commentators on north-south issues point to a historic vacuum in strategies for north-south cooperation, of which the lack of defined funding streams is only a symptom. Funding is reviewed under several headings: background; strategy; revenue streams; consultancy; diversification; and options in the event of failure (4.3.1 to 4.3.7).

4.3.1 Background

The centre's original core funding (1999-2002) came from the Peace I programme. The centre attempted to obtain core funding from Peace II, but despite reasonable hopes that this would succeed, this application was rejected (2002). Ultimately, the centre obtained core funding from Atlantic Philanthropies (2002-5), but Atlantic later made it clear that although this was a substantial grant for several years, a change in its focus would preclude further grants. The centre also obtained short-term funding for core purposes from the Reconciliation Fund of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. Although welcome, neither was in a position to provide either substantial, medium or long-term commitment. The centre was therefore obliged to search for opportunities for funding in a wide range of areas. In effect, the centre would carry out activities for public, private and other agencies, making a sufficient margin to sustain the work undertaken and some of the costs of the centre. The progress reports for the centre from 2002 convey the impression of a vigorous - and largely successful - search for alternatives. The north - south higher education conferences, for example, enabled the centre to benefit from a 'significant' management fee (22nd progress report). The centre has calculated an effective margin of between 20% and 36% for a number of these projects (26th progress report).

Not all these proposals were successful. For example, a study of policing, carefully put together over 2003-4, was vetoed by Northern Ireland Office officials at the last stage of the approval process. A number of smaller proposals to the Higher Education Authority north - south research programme were also unsuccessful (*Storytelling in schools using digital technologies*, *Attracting northern students to southern* and *Schoolchildren studying Mars*). A further frustration, though one arising from funding rather than the lack of it, was that the filing of claims to the SEUPB was problematical, characterized by long delays and the demand for an extreme and unusual level of detail.

The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, in providing emergency funding for the centre in 2002, expressed its inability to understand how the centre, with its exemplary track record, found it impossible to obtain funding either from its founder universities or either of the two government departments. The Department of Education (NI) takes the view, both at departmental and ministerial level, that since the centre is neither a higher education institution nor providing services for higher education, to provide it with funding would be to act outside the law (*21st progress report*). Both Dublin City University and Queen's University Belfast take the view that they do not have scope or authority to fund the centre from within their existing, tight budgets.

4.3.2 Strategy

The strategy for the Centre for Cross Border Studies has been to secure core funding and around this to build a portfolio of other projects and activities funded by other sources. The original core funding from Peace I (1999-2002) and Atlantic Philanthropies (2002-5) has already been noted. For the next phase of the centre's work (2006-9), core funding has been requested from the Republic's Department of Education & Science (2006-9+). Matching funding was not requested from the equivalent departments in Northern Ireland on the basis that it was unlikely to be successful. This could still be reconsidered.

Several people commented on the fact that the centre never obtained funding from the INTERREG IIIA cross-border programme. The centre attempted to hold discussions with INTERREG staff as to the measure heading under which the centre might best apply. The part of INTERREG most likely to be of assistance to the centre was the €9.58m people-to-people measure 3.1 *Social and community infrastructure*. In the event, several measure deadlines have now passed and it is unclear as to whether any possibilities exist to apply before the programme closes in 2006. In retrospect, it might have been preferable had the centre applied, without waiting for the outcome of discussions with programme officials. For the future, there will be possibilities in the Peace II extension; signed in June 2005 for the years 2005-6 (with spending to end 2008); if there is one, a Peace III programme (2007-2013); and the cooperation objective under the new round of the structural funds (2007-2013). The centre's strategy of seeking core funding from the Department of Education & Science is reckoned to be a sound, well-judged one with a reasonable prospect of success. The second track of that strategy, to build around that a mixture of projects, is well founded. Chapter 2 illustrated the range of projects built up over the present period due to the entrepreneurial activities of the director. It should be possible, over the next three-year period, for the centre to continue to expand the existing conference, networking, servicing, administration and training activities with the existing range of clients, new partners (e.g. institutes of Technology, Further and Higher Education) and to find new ones in new thematic areas (e.g. environment, science). As one interviewee put it:

[The centre] should promote itself publicly and say 'Cross-border? Yes, we could do that job for you'.

This would mean the centre promoting itself more aggressively than it has done hitherto, accompanied by competitive, profitable pricing strategies.

4.3.3 Development of existing revenue streams

The search for such projects can be developed through existing contacts and networks and through the making of opportunistic approaches to public agencies. It can also be done by advertising the centre's capacity, interest and skills through brochure material and using the centre's website. This can be done by outlining areas where north-south cooperation can be further developed within the two public administrations, both by departments and themes; looking at the types of services that the centre can provide (training, conferences, servicing of networks); and then making a pro-active approach to the appropriate departments, agencies

and non-departmental bodies concerned. A generic information, policy and analysis services could be provided for all the existing Good Friday Agreement cooperation bodies.

Such opportunities exist not only at national level but also at the European. Here, assuming eventual approval of the new financial perspective and structural funds for 2007-2013, technical assistance will be available at Commission level for support activities to underpin activities for the cooperation objective, including areas of conflict where Irish example may most readily apply (e.g. Cyprus and the south eastern mediterranean, Balkans).

4.3.4 Consultancy

The more difficult area of funding for the centre is consultancy. There can be a grey area between prompting projects from public bodies, as described above and consultancy. Consultancy is understood here to mean tendering for public (or private) contracted work in competitive public competition. As is the case with prompted public sector tasks, the centre would aim to generate sufficient income to cover the costs involved for the staff who provide the service and contribute meaningfully to the overheads of the centre.

There are mixed views within the board and staff of the centre about pursuing consultancy. So far, the centre has carried out some limited consultancy work, where the project has been sufficiently large and where there is a clear cross-border brief. Although there is and will be consultancy work available in the future, the concern remains that the centre will be able to charge sufficiently for the work involved; that the benefits do not outweigh the supervision costs; and that there will be further mission shift as a result. Nevertheless, there was a broad view that this is a legitimate direction of work.

If the various think tanks like the IPPR can survive through contracts and consultancy, then this centre should too. There's no shame in having to operate like that. Like all the other various Atlantic Philanthropies charities, we have to learn to slim down and diversify to survive.

To avoid mission shift, the centre might be advised to set down certain conditions on the type of consultancy it would pursue. These could be that the project:

- Be large enough, with a sufficient margin to be profitable;
- Require a low level of supervision;
- Have a broad policy relevance;
- Relate directly to cross-border, north-south or peace building issues;
- Contribute to new thinking and fresh ideas;
- Have its outcomes put in the public domain.

Not only can the centre respond to existing unsolicited tenders (which it has already done, to a limited extent), but seek tenders actively. Government departments and agencies already have procedures whereby prospective tenderers can be placed on a list for subsequent announcements of tender. The centre could also draw up a panel of pre-approved consultants or associates with whom it could work on individual projects.

4.3.5 Diversification

The example of think tanks, cited above, suggests that the centre could use similar methods to diversify funding sources. British, Irish and European think tanks, especially the most recent generation, routinely generate a significant level of revenue - 15% to 25% - from such diversification to supplement their revenue from public sector contracts and consultancy. Examples are:

- A system of subscribers, who are members of the centre, for which they receive publications, merchandizing at discount and participation at an annual subscribers meeting;
- Generation of website income through advertising on site, pay-to-view for some or all of the site, newsletter subscription or alert service;
- Revenue - generating publishing programme;
- Merchandizing.

Diversification has a number of advantages, principally that it can offer a modest but relatively steady stream of income. The disadvantages are that it requires a high level of human resources to start up; needs a critical mass to cover on-going maintenance costs; and could create a commercial image uncomfortable for some state agencies. A system of subscribers would be perhaps the least costly, soonest and most effective. Ultimately, diversification can only contribute a small part of the centre's costs and will not solve the problem of and is no substitute for the lack of either core funding or other substantial funding streams.

4.3.6 Funding: summary

In summary, the ideal funding combination is one combining the following elements:

<u>Core</u>	<u>Public sector (Ireland)</u>	<u>Public sector (Europe)</u>	<u>Consultancy</u>	<u>Diversification</u>
Depts. Education	Depts and agencies	INTERREG Peace IIe/Peace III Cooperation objective Technical assistance	See 4.3.4	Subscribers Others

Despite the funding problems in the background, or even in the foreground, there is much confidence in the present line of development of the centre's work. Current work is being undertaken professionally and more than competently. Programmes and activities are expected to grow: educational conferences, SCoTENS, Universities Ireland, training programmes for public servants. It is expected that the opening of *Border Ireland* will provide a major impetus to the development of the centre. Ideally, one could project staffing levels in the centre to rise from the present 6 to 8 or 9 by 2009.

4.3.7 Options in the event of failure of the current strategy

It would also be responsible to look at options should the present strategy of seeking core funding from the Department of Education & Science fail. There is a good level of confidence that the application to the Department of Education & Science for core funding will be successful.

Having said that, there is also agreement that a failure to obtain core funding in the 2006 estimates would place the centre in a difficult situation. There is no prospect of further resources from Atlantic Philanthropies; or of any financial support from either of the two parent universities. The board would be faced with two options (with a variation on the first):

- Decide to close the centre in an orderly way. A variation on this is to make a final, visible and high-profile appeal to the government of the Republic to change its mind, setting a time limit, probably 6-8 weeks, to such a strategy;
- Decide to transform the centre into the form of a consultancy - driven organization. This would involve reducing the staff complement probably to one, two or three, with a view to rebuilding it later. The centre would retain its current broad brief, but would be entirely market driven. A different kind of board and structure would also be required, probably along the lines of current European think tanks. In the event of

a negative decision by the Department of Education & Science, such an option should be given early and thorough consideration by board and staff. Whilst such an option would be viable, it could not support the present staffing numbers and some board members might not be inclined to participate in such a new form.

Opinions among board members were unsure as to the best course of action to follow. Many took the view that if the government decided not to provide the support, then there was no point in continuing the uneven struggle to maintain an unwanted centre. One should accept the logic of there being no core funder prepared to support such an enterprise on the island. Several board members were clearly weary of the endless search for funding. 'If the universities say no, philanthropy says no and government says no, then we are truly out of road. No crate is going to fall out of the sky and help us this time'. Furthermore, the centre could not survive on consultancy alone, so that such an option was not a viable alternative. A contrary view was that the centre could survive quite well in a commercial environment and that there was a duty to at least facilitate the director and some of the staff to make the transition into this different kind of organization.

4.4 Organization

Several issues of organization arose in the course of the evaluation and these are reviewed here. They are not prominent in the public perception of the role of the centre and less urgent in priority than decisions on the centre's role and funding. The topics covered are the composition of the board, the website, the physical resource, evaluation and accounts. Each is reviewed in turn (4.4.1 to 4.4.5).

4.4.1 Board

The first concerns the board. As noted in 3.10 above, the board does function efficiently and provides suitable direction and accountability for the centre. Two issues arose: its nomination system and, related to that, its composition. At present, three members are nominated each by Queen's University Belfast; Dublin City University; and the Workers Educational Association; with the possibility of two cooptions. Different views were expressed here.

A minority took the view that the nomination of board members by the three original parents had outlived its usefulness. The present composition was sentimental, especially in the light of the fact that none of the parent bodies had ever provided or would ever provide financial support and had shown only limited interest hitherto. 'These parents made their child an orphan. We would never start from here now'. A further potential complication was the centre's identification with the two universities might come to present a difficulty in its ability to attract work from the other universities (e.g. through Universities Ireland). This had not been the case so far, but if it reached such a stage, then it should definitely then be spun away from the two parent universities.

The majority view was that the three bodies concerned provided a level of credibility for the centre, especially with government. Even if the three parents could not provide financial resources, they had contributed generously with the time of the persons they had nominated. If the system was a little archaic, it did no harm. There was no obvious alternative: changing the system would require an alteration of the articles and memorandum of association, which was hardly a priority for the centre at the present time. 'The universities didn't give us money, but they did give us competent, intelligent, committed, hard-working people: political capital and resources instead'.

There is a general view that it should be renewed with a broader range of people. *If the centre is less academic, it should have fewer academics* was one comment. Board members should be

sought out who could take on specific responsibilities at board level, though it was recognized that these were not easy to identify or persuade. Candidates were:

Younger people, with a fresh perspective on cross-border issues;
Women, as the board remains imbalanced in terms of gender;
Business, private sector people, with fund-raising ideas, skills and connections;
People working in the north-south area or its institutions. Cooperation Ireland was specifically named by several;
People familiar with technology.
An expert on cross-border, conflict or reconciliation issues from outside the island, preferably from continental Europe;
If there is room for more academics, they should be drawn from other bodies pursuing similar areas of interest (e.g. Institute for British Irish Studies at University College Dublin; the Cross-Border Centre in Dundalk Institute of Technology).

There were mixed views about inviting civil servants to join the board - the majority view was that the centre might then be seen as 'too close to government'.

An extension of board membership, enabling more persons to be coopted, may require a minor change to the article and memorandum of association.

4.4.2 Website

Several took the view that there was potential to further develop the website, to make it more lively, raise the visibility of the centre and generate traffic. Several have already been mentioned in the discussion on diversification above and will not be repeated. Suggested proposals were:

- Development of a moderated forum.
- Newsletter, news alerts.
- A hot topics section e.g. waste.
- E-consultation, e.g. the Ulster canal.
- E-mail a friend.
- Re-design with arrangements for an improved design every two years.
- Member's section for board notices, documents and minutes.

A cross-border newsletter (e-mail and paper) could be a project in its own right, one that might attract governmental funding. This could cover not only the centre's work, but the broader evolution of cross-border cooperation, activities, events, conferences, research and publications.

4.4.3 Physical resource

The previous evaluation recommended (6.3) the physical development of the centre and a library has since been built up and catalogued. There remain mixed views about the role of a physical centre. Opinion was divided between those who favoured a physical resource being available (like the current library) and other opinion:

You can't expect people to come to Armagh for books. The days of the library are over and the future is electronic. The centre must be a virtual resource.

Whilst it is the case that the resources of the centre will primarily be distributed electronically in the future, there probably remains a case for retaining, maintaining and developing some form of physical resource so long as hard copies continue to be printed, circulated or relevant.

4.4.4 Evaluation

Although the projects run by the centre are evaluated and although the north-south training programme is evaluated, it is not routine practice to evaluate each event and activity in real time. The circulation of evaluation sheets at conferences, training and similar events, using a standardized form, is a low-cost means of obtaining feedback in real time and alerting the centre to any problem areas of organization.

4.4.5 Accounts

While accounts may be filed with the appropriate authorities, they are not included in the centre's annual report or *Yearbook*. This is a gap in the transparency of the organization. Indeed, inclusion of an layperson's accounts summary could be persuasive in illustrating how much has been achieved by the centre with quite limited resources.

4.5 Conclusions

This chapter examined and discussed the key issues arising from the evaluation. These were:

- The evolution of the centre over 2002-5;
- Its future role;
- The funding strategy and mixture required to sustain the future role, revolving around such issues as core funding, public sector projects, consultancy and diversification;
- A range of less prominent and generally more internal issues, such as the composition of the board, website development, the physical resource, evaluation and accounts.

The next chapter, 5, will bring these issues to conclusion and make recommendations.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

Here, conclusions and recommendations are presented. They cover performance (5.1) before moving on to recommendations. Proposals are made in order of priority: role (5.2), funding (5.3) and organization (5.4). These conclusions and recommendations build on the discussion in chapter 4.

5.1 Performance

The following are the conclusions of this evaluation in respect of the centre's performance. The centre has achieved a high level of performance over 2002-5, matching and if anything surpassing the levels achieved in the previous three-year period. The balance of work shifted from research into servicing, administration, conferences, networking and training. Research continued at a lower level, with several projects brought to conclusion and four action research education projects commenced and making progress. The centre has been highly productive in the number of events and activities carried out, publications and the number of persons attending events. The centre has attracted renowned national and international speakers and won endorsement from political and governmental leaders. External opinion rated the centre highly for relevance, while its effectiveness and impact are adjudged to have increased. Its work with government officials, educationalists, school children and students fits well the practical agenda of government and society in both parts of the island. Course participants commended programmes for relevance, efficiency and organization. Clients of the centre praised its professionalism, energy, enthusiasm and courtesy. Several projects already in train hold out the promise of improved visibility of the centre in the short and medium term future (*Mapping frontiers, Border Ireland*).

5.2 Role

Whilst some people are concerned about the mission shift in the work of the centre over 2002-5, all recognize that this was forced on the centre out of necessity. The new areas of work developed by the centre are considered to be positive and to open doors to future areas of work. The centre showed considerable agility in adapting to the changing financial and political climate and will continue to find itself operating in an environment that will be unstable and unpredictable. Indeed, the uncertain political climate makes its work all the more important. One interviewee said, eloquently, that 'You need the centre when the Good Friday Agreement is operating. You need it even more if it is not'. It is quite possible that the centre will look as different in 2009 as the 2005 centre looks now compared to 2002.

Here, two general recommendations are presented: one which acknowledges the outcomes of the new work, another which responds to the concerns mentioned earlier:

1. The centre should consolidate, expand and develop its existing activities in servicing, networking, training, conferences and administration, not only in the existing priority area of education but also into a wider range of common north-south issues such as the environment, waste, health, energy, transport, spatial planning and public administration. Further spin-off products should be developed from this work (e.g. an all-island public administration *Yearbook*). Educational cooperation can be extended into new thematic areas and involve new partners, especially institutes of Technology and Further and Higher Education. Existing projects in the pipeline already offer developmental possibilities, notably *Border Ireland* and *Mapping frontiers*. These practical activities will do much, in a tangible way, to advance the agenda of reconciliation and the building of positive relationships in the island. The centre is

well placed, if suitably resourced, to deepen, broaden and enrich the quality of this process.

2. The centre should rebuild its role as a critical space, independent voice and strategic commentator on the state of north-south relations and cross-border cooperation and the policy issues arising, both general and thematic. This role should initially be reinvigorated through an annual conference, run for profit and an expanded *Yearbook* modelled along the lines of continental yearbooks. For the study of generic cross-border cooperation issues, specific funding should be sought and obtained on the lines of the 'devolution monitor' projects in the UK. The centre should also propose cutting edge policy and research projects in frontline thematic areas such as the environment and waste, crime, transport (e.g. road pricing) and broadcasting.

Assuming this were done, the present mission statement could be maintained for at least a further triennial period.

By way out of outreach, it is recommended that the centre give specific attention to:

- Building links to the non-governmental community and civil society and the issues that concern them (e.g. the North South Consultative Forum);
- Extending the geographical range of its events, for example to the north-west;
- Working with the political parties and deepening the dialogue on cross-border and north-south issues with the unionist community;
- Working with elected representatives (MLAs, TDs, senators, councillors) and partnerships.

5.3 Funding

The following are the conclusions in respect of the centre's funding:

- The centre's current strategy of seeking core funding from the Department of Education & Science is correct, with a rider below;
- The centre is right to pursue funding from government departments, agencies and public bodies for the current range of activities. This should be extended, making sure to build in a significant overhead. The centre must be prepared to be dynamic in developing such options in the future. A specific advertising pitch for such work should be made through a brochure and part of the website with the suggested strapline of *Cross-border? Yes, we can do that!*
- Consultancy options can be pursued more aggressively, subject to the conditions set down in 4.3.4 on size, profit margin, supervision, cross-border focus, policy relevance, public domain;
- There should, over time, be further diversification along the lines of the new think tanks, starting with a system of member subscribers. A newsletter is an important part of such a strategy.
- Specific public funding possibilities are suggested, in the European area, for the Peace II extension, Peace III if developed, INTERREG III (where still open), the new cross-border cooperation objective (2007-2013) and technical assistance for the cooperation objective, both in Ireland and at European level. A bordereurope.eu project is suggested.

A core funding application should also be made to the Department of Education in Northern Ireland. Although the chances of such a successful application are small, the centre is still within its rights to make an application; oblige it to be fully considered; and seek political support for the proposal. Positive funding outcomes can sometimes come from unexpected

quarters and to decide not to apply, on the basis that it would save the department the time to examine the application and say no, is to act on a false sense of public spiritedness. In the possible but unlikely event of a rejection by the Department of Education & Science application in Dublin, it is recommended that:

A 6-8 week campaign be considered, depending on the prospects assessed by the board at the time, to force a reconsideration by government;

A short examination be made of the feasibility of downsizing the centre to a smaller, consultancy-led body.

Only if both avenues proved negative should the centre proceed to closure.

5.4 Organization

The following changes are recommended for the centre's organization. These are minor in scale compared to the 'big issues' above, but nonetheless important in their own right.

5.4.1 An extension of board membership by cooption of a number of additional persons with specific expertise in outlined areas. There is no immediate need or purpose to change the current 3-3-3 parent arrangements, so additional cooptions (more than two) may require a minor change to the articles and memorandum of association.

5.4.2 Inclusion of summary annual accounts in the annual report/yearbook.

5.4.3 Development of the website along the lines suggested in 4.4.2, namely:

- Moderated forum.
- Newsletter, news alerts.
- Hot topics.
- E-consultation.
- E-mail a friend.
- Re-design every two years.
- Member's section for board notices, documents and minutes.

The physical resources of the centre (library) should continue to be maintained.

5.4.4 All events, e.g. conferences should be evaluated in real time.

Note on method

Section 3.9 of the report is the survey of external opinion. Five methods were used to assess external opinion.

First, the following survey was sent out to people familiar with the work of the Centre for Cross Border Studies. 10% of the mailing list was selected semi-randomly for survey. 203 forms were sent out. 26 were bad addresses and 13 persons declined (primarily on the basis that they did not feel that they had sufficient knowledge on which to make a response). Of the remainder, 164 persons, 70 returned forms, a return rate of almost 43%, which is above average for an e-survey.

Dear X

I have been asked by the Director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Armagh, Andy Pollak, to carry out an evaluation of the work of the Centre for Cross Border Studies.

As part of the research, I am surveying a broad band of opinion on the work of the centre. I am contacting you to ask you to be so kind as to fill in a short questionnaire, giving me your opinion on the work of the centre. Your view would be very valuable in contributing to an assessment of the centre's work. Your name was supplied from the centre's mailing list and it is possible that you received a mailing or invitation from the centre or attended one of its events. Comments given back will not be attributed to any individual or organization.

Filling in the questions is quite simple and should take no more than a couple of minutes. The easiest way to do this is to 'Reply', marking X at the appropriate point in the returned message.

If you could assist me here, I would very much appreciate it.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Harvey

Brian Harvey, Brian Harvey Social Research, 2 Rathdown crescent, Terenure, Dublin 6W, tel 353.1.4903039, fax 353.1.4903076, e-mail: brharvey@iol.ie

1. How familiar do you consider yourself to be with the Centre for Cross Border Studies?

Very familiar
Familiar
A little familiar
Not at all familiar

2. How relevant do you consider the centre's work to be to cross-border cooperation and development?

Very relevant
Relevant
Largely irrelevant
Completely irrelevant

3. Compared to other cross-border bodies, do you consider the centre to be:

More effective
As effective as the others
Less effective

4. What impact do you think the centre has made on policy-makers?

A lot
Some
Very little
None

5. From what you know about the centre, how do you rate the quality of its work? (1 = very poor, 10 = excellent)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Any other comments?

As for the first question, *How familiar do you consider yourself to be with the Centre for Cross Border Studies?*, the following reply was given:

Very familiar	6%
Familiar	33%
A little familiar	47%
Not at all familiar	13%

Note that in both questionnaires, the percentages for answers were rounded.

Second, questions were asked of the participants in the north-south training programme run by the centre in January - March 2006. This is a course for a small number of participants and eight of the fourteen returned their questionnaires (57%).

1. How relevant was the *content* of the training course to you?

Very relevant
Moderately relevant
Not at all relevant

2. How suitable were the *methods* used in the training course?

Very suitable
Moderately suitable
Not at all suitable

3. How efficiently was the course *organized* and *administered*?

Very efficient
Moderately efficient
Inefficient

4. Would you go on another course run by the Centre for Cross Border Studies?

Yes
Possibly
No

5. From what you know of it, how do you value the rest of the work of the Centre for Cross Border Studies?

Highly
Moderately
Of no value

6. Any other comments?

Third, the evaluations of the centre's north south teacher training programme were examined. This was carried out by Dr Maeve Martin.

Four, questions were asked of clients of the centre, organizations that had commissioned, funded or otherwise supported the centre's work. The names of the key contact persons were nominated by the director.

Fifth, a small number of north-south experts were questioned by the researcher. Some were nominated by the director of the centre, while others were chosen by the researcher. All their names are given in the acknowledgements.

The following is the typical letter sent to experts in advance of the semi-structured interview.

Interviews with experts

What is your impression of the quantity, quality and substance of the work of the Centre for Cross Border Studies?

What do your colleagues say of the work of the centre?

From what you know of its work, what have been its most useful products, projects, activities and programmes and why?

What impact do you think the centre has made over the past three years?

On whom has it impacted most?

Has anyone changed their views/perspectives as a result of its work?

Who has it missed or made least impact?

Which projects or activities have made the most impact (and why)?

How has that impact been affected by the problems in the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement?

What kind of image/profile do you think it has?

What has the centre not done that it could have done? What has it missed?

What do you perceive to be the strengths of the centre? Its weaknesses?

For its future work, in what way could the centre be of use or value to your own field of work or activities?

What activities/programmes/approaches you would like to see the centre undertake in the next three years?

Should the centre move into new fields of work or activities (if so, please identify them)?

What role could you foresee for the centre say by 2009?

Do you have any views as to how the centre should be funded? What is the optimum funding mix? How can the centre achieve greater sustainability?

Those who had commissioned work from or who had funded the centre were specifically asked:

Can you offer me any views on the centre's:

Efficiency

Professionalism

Quality of administration

Courtesy in its dealings with you

Interviews with board members

The following were the questions asked of board members:

1. What do you regard as the main milestones in the evolution of the centre over the past three years?

What have been the most significant achievements? What have been its most important products, projects and programmes and why?

2. How do you feel the centre's role has changed compared to the previous three-year period? If it has

changed, has this been a positive/negative/neutral development? Should the centre's mission statement be restated, renewed, amended, updated or altered?

3. What impact do you think the centre has made over the past three years? On whom has it impacted most? Who has it missed or made least impact? Which projects have made the most impact (and why)?

Which methods/approaches/activities appear to have the most effect (e.g. research, administrative support, conferences)? How has that impact been affected by the problems in the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement?

4. How well does the centre work in terms of:
 - The allocation of staff to appropriate tasks;
 - The allocation of its financial resources;
 - Decision-making;
 - Accountability;
 - Monitoring its own activities.

What are the strengths of the centre? What are its weaknesses?

5. Do you have any particular roles or responsibilities on the board? How well does the board work, take decisions and inform the work of the director? Are there ways in which the board should be modified in the future (working methods, members)?

6. How well do you think the centre has reached out and promoted its work? How effective is the website (content, accessibility)? Are there groups or categories it has missed? Are there methods which it should refine?

7. What has the centre not done that it could have done? What has it missed?

8. What activities/programmes/approaches you would like to see the centre undertake in the next three years? Are there any of its present activities/programmes/projects/methods that should be dropped? Should the centre move into new fields of work (if so, please identify them)? What would you like the centre to look like by 2009?

9. Where do you think the centre should obtain future funding? What is the optimum funding mix? How can the centre achieve greater sustainability?

Interviews with staff members

The following were the questions asked of staff members:

1. Please could you tell me about your own work and responsibilities in the centre.
2. What do you regard as the main milestones in the evolution of the centre over the past three years? What have been the most significant achievements? What have been its most important products, projects and programmes and why?
3. How do you feel the centre's role has changed compared to the previous three-year period? If it has changed, has this been a positive/negative/neutral development? Should the centre's mission statement be restated, renewed, amended, updated or altered?
4. What impact do you think the centre has made over the past three years? On whom has it impacted most? Who has it missed or made least impact? Which projects have made the most impact (and why)? Which methods/approaches/activities appear to have the most effect (e.g. research, administrative support, conferences)? How has that impact been affected by the problems in the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement?
5. How well does the centre work in terms of:
 - The allocation of staff to appropriate tasks;
 - The allocation of its financial resources;
 - Decision-making;
 - Accountability;
 - Monitoring its own activities.
 What are the strengths of the centre? What are its weaknesses?
6. How well do you think the centre has reached out and promoted its work? How effective is the website (content, accessibility)? Are there groups or categories it has missed? Are there methods which it should refine?
7. What has the centre not done that it could have done? What has it missed?
8. What activities/programmes/approaches you would like to see the centre undertake in the next three years? Are there any of its present activities/programmes/projects/methods that should be dropped? Should the centre move into new fields of work (if so, please identify them)? What would you like the centre to look like by 2009?
9. Where do you think the centre should obtain future funding? What is the optimum funding mix? How can the centre achieve greater sustainability?