

Centre for International Borders Research



Institute for British-Irish Studies

Papers produced as part of the project

Mapping frontiers, plotting pathways: routes to North-South cooperation in a divided island





Project supported by the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation and administered by the Higher Education Authority, 2004-06

IRISH CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION: THE CASE OF THE NORTHWEST REGION

Alessia Cividin

IRISH CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION: THE CASE OF THE NORTHWEST REGION

Alessia Cividin

Mapping Frontiers, Plotting Pathways Working Paper No. 14, 2006

(also printed as IBIS working paper no. 64)

MFPP Working Papers No. 14, 2006

(also printed as IBIS working paper no. 64)

© the author, 2006

ABSTRACT

IRISH CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION: THE CASE OF THE NORTHWEST REGION

Traditionally grasped as a division, the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland is increasingly understood as forming an individual unit made up of multiple connections. This paper analyses this border as assumed, and tries to develop its meaning within a European setting. The academic focus is on regional studies, political geography, spatial planning and border literature, and the paper puts forward an approach to national and regional borders as whole entities to be planned for and managed. The paper analyses variation in the impact of crossborder cooperation in the Northwest region on regional development and the spatial perception of it. The role of stakeholders and of local institutional relationships is considered, and the importance of government and institutional policies, and cultural factors, for the growth and success of cross-border activity is examined. The paper focuses, in particular, on recent cross-border projects in the Northwest region.

Publication information

Revised version of a paper presented at a study group meeting on "Planning for and working in Border areas", Derry, 13 October 2005, as part of the programme *Mapping frontiers*, plotting pathways: routes to North-South cooperation in a divided island.

The programme is funded by the Special EU Programmes Body through the Higher Education Authority over the period 2004-06.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Alessia Cividin is a PhD candidate at the Planning Department, IUAV, University of Venice. She holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Venice, and was a visiting research associate at Queen's University of Belfast in 2005 working on cross-border cooperation. Her research addresses the issues of cross-border cooperation, regional governance and territorial planning, and links these to reasoning under intercultural communication.

IRISH CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION: THE CASE OF THE NORTHWEST REGION

Alessia Cividin

INTRODUCTION

Cross-border cooperation in Ireland's Northwest Region is mainly concerned with economic and social development. This cross-border region includes Co. Donegal in the Republic of Ireland and the district council areas of Derry and Strabane in Northern Ireland. Letterkenny is the main centre in Donegal, but the city of Derry/Londonderry is the major urban centre in the region as a whole, and historically, before partition, Co. Donegal was part of its hinterland, as in some ways it still is despite partition. The situation is favourable for cross-border cooperation, which has always existed at some level. As the region has relatively high levels of unemployment and social deprivation, the common need for cross-border cooperation is widely acknowledged, though even here it faces some serious obstacles. This paper is based on a survey carried out using semi-structured interviews (appendix 1) with a range of organisations on both sides of the border (appendix 2). Using material derived from this study, the paper outlines the scope of cross-border cooperation in the region, the role of different levels of government, the main obstacles and the future prospects for cross-border cooperation.

THE CURRENT SCOPE OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The survey investigated the main areas of cross-border cooperation in the Northwest region. The main projects on which it focused fell under the following areas of cooperation:

- Environment: these projects deal with cooperation between authorities in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland in implementing the water framework directive and in a harmonious action (the North-South Share project).
- Tourism: in this sector cooperation has the aim of identifying the Northwest as a destination for visitors by means of a tourism and marketing support programme and a tourism project linking the six northwestern counties of Ireland—three in the Republic of Ireland (Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim) and three in Northern Ireland (Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh).
- Economy: here the main aims are to promote the regional economy of the Northwest, to provide a sustainable and strengthened economy for business and commerce, and to make sure that all the key requirements—road infrastructure, telecommunications, and so on—are in place so that business can function more effectively. Also in the economic area are such aims as to create economic regeneration, to provide opportunities for local organizations to work together, to provide

human resource training, and to enhance the quality of life for people living in this area (including a project for a business park in Lifford, the restoration of the Strabane Canal, and the Northwest Business Project).

• Culture: in this area, cross-border cooperation works to promote a major arts and cultural development program for local people and for incoming visitors ("Peace building in the border counties, Strabane and Donegal").

The survey underlines a clear recognition of the fact that regardless of the border there is a very natural economic hinterland, and that activities on either side of the border can have a direct impact on any and all of the council areas within the Northwest region. There is general agreement that everybody can benefit from cross-border cooperation.

The Northwest region has thus been recognised as a distinct economic entity both in the North's regional development structure and in the South's national spatial strategy. The character of the hinterland of this region has ensured that cross-border cooperation is seen as natural. All of the projects considered here have socio-economic development as their aim, with a particular focus on increased tourist numbers and the attraction of inward investment.

The local authority councils and the North-West Cross-Border Group (NWCBG) have been especially active in these areas, and in the development of the country-side product and of the heritage trade. They have also promoted projects for infrastructural studies in transportation (in particular in conjunction with the central region), and waste management (a difficult issue because of the prohibition of transfrontier shipments of waste across the border, except for such purposes as recycling). On both side of the border, efforts have been made to maximise opportunities for cooperation and synergy where legislation so permits.

In respect of the tourism sector—a major growth industry for the area—there is a major problem of fragmentation, with responsibility spread over too many bodies. Both the local authorities and the local chambers of commerce recognise this difficulty, and aim to have the Northwest region as a whole, from the Giant's Causeway through Londonderry to Donegal, promoted as a single tourism product. The chambers of commerce believe that tourism interests in the Republic and Northern Ireland should join forces to promote the region as a whole: "tourists don't see the border, they come to a region, they don't come just to visit here and then stop at the border and go away, they want to cross and come back".

The physical border appears to have become steadily weaker, and this is underlined by a project promoted by Interreg IIIA that aims to mark the six northwestern counties, three on the northern side of the border (Derry, Fermanagh and Tyrone) and three in the Republic (Donegal, Sligo, and Leitrim), as a single region for tourism purposes.

As Derry is the major centre of population in the Northwest, Donegal is seen as part of its hinterland, encouraging the relevant local authorities to work very closely with each other. At a microeconomic level, the British and Irish governments are lobbied

with a view to promoting consistent development policies especially in the areas of transportation and health.

In urban areas, the chambers of commerce are working to help the NWCBG in developing a spatial plan for the region. Northern Ireland has a spatial plan through its regional development strategy, and the Republic of Ireland has its own development plan. There is a common attempt to merge both of these in respect of the Northwest region, so that roads, communications and the energy infrastructure are developed on a cross-border basis. Thus, there is substantial agreement on how to tackle common problems on a cross-border basis: Derry and Donegal have common interests.

MOTIVES AND ADVANTAGES

The case for cross-border cooperation in the Northwest is reinforced by its status as a natural, homogenous region with a wide range of resources. This is further strenthened by the existence of cross-border institutions (such as the NWCBG) with their lobbying function, which amplify the efforts of the local authorities in defending the interests of the region. The chambers of commerce are able to build on important economies of scale. For example, it is possible, in the area of tourism, to market Derry's capacity to provide hotel accommodation, Donegal to supply golf courses, and Fermanagh to offer its lakes in an integrated tourism package.

Cross-border cooperation also helps to promote economic regeneration, to provide opportunities for local organizations to work together, to provide human resource training, and in general terms to enhance the quality of life for people living in this area. Economies of scale are important: the population of the region is in excess of 300,000, and possibly reaches 320,000:

If you are going to lobby government about an issue and you're representing over 300,000 that's significant!...where if you are going as an individual council, if you are going to one of the smallest council it's 30,000. It's not so significant. 1

In reality, decisions that are made centrally and imposed locally do not always work. This enhances the case for a strong voice for local people and elected representatives in promoting the interests of their region. The main advantage of cross-border cooperation is that it provides critical mass. But the experience picked up along the way provides an important understanding of how an issue may have an impact in a wider geographical sense. Because of the geographical positioning of Londonderry and Letterkenny and the other various towns along the border, every local authority and chamber of commerce recognizes as essential for their economic prosperity that cross-border networks are sustained and promoted.

One of the benefits associated with some of the projects considered here is that for the first time the tourism authorities in the western counties of Northern Ireland and the northwest counties in the Republic of Ireland have sat down and articulated the problems they share, and they have begun to communicate and negotiate with each other. As regards environmental projects for the implementation of the water framework, cooperation means basically that the whole process and methodology of describing water and territories and ultimately achieving good water quality must be based on a harmonized approach rather than being restricted by an artificial political border:

Well, two towns that actually are 300 meters apart...it would be a very strange world if they didn't work together and identify theories of mutual interest. There is no logical reason for a project that is not to work.²

From the point of view of economics, cross-border cooperation opens up new markets, promoting business exchange between centres on either side of the border.

FUNDING AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The existence of a cross-border institution such as the NWCBG facilitates the process by which the whole region may put its case to governments both in Dublin and in Belfast on particular issues that have regional relevance and impact. It also helps to unify the local authorities and other organisations, encouraging them to work together within the region.

The dynamics of the process typically begin with the local authorities, who identify needs that imply cross-border cooperation for their success. In the case of the project "Peace building in the border counties", for instance, the initiative lay with Strabane District Council and Donegal County Council. If, however, the central government does not cooperate, there are obvious limits to the extent to which initiatives of this kind may develop.

In some areas, such as Strabane and Lifford (twin towns only 300 meters apart), there has been a long history of collaboration between the two sides; but even here there have been concerns about the level of central government funding to support employment and educational opportunities. In such cases, organizations such as the Strabane-Lifford Development Commission have emerged to provide a framework to address such issues. A similar logic promotes collaboration between Derry and Letterkenny, with their chambers of commerce leading funding applications in respect of the EU Peace and Interreg IIIA programmes.

The NWCBG, together with allies along the border corridor, lobbied government ministers and officials for over two years to make the case for decentralization. The outcome was that Interreg IIIA has been implemented on a decentralized basis. When central government issues its proposals, the local authorities respond as a region, taking account of their probable impact on the entire region. They try to

¹ Interview with Eamon Molloy, development officer, NWCBG.

² Interview with Alan Moneypenny, Chief Executive Strabane-Lifford Development Commission.

MFPP WORKING PAPERS

shape, change and influence the direction in which central government proposes to spend its funding within the region, identifying local needs and priorities.

Funding for the greater part of the ongoing projects comes mainly from Interreg IIIA, which, like its predecessor Interreg II, provides 75% of the funding, with 25% cofinancing coming directly from the local authorities. There may also be additional activities that receive no external funding, but which councils pay for because of a clear regional need. The central governments are not usually involved in contributing to cross-border projects. The crucial role of the EU is connected to the fact that the size of resource required is usually too big for the local authorities to cope with on their own, and there is no alternative to the EU.

PROBLEMS AND OBSTACLES TO CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The Northwest region displays considerable diversity in terms of population density, economic characteristic and stage of development; consequently there is a range of differing issues and obstacles to cooperation between the two sides of the border. Briefly, the major obstacles which characterize the region are related to implementation and institutional aspects. These problems include the lack of a development strategy based on an assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the cross-border region, the lack of regional resources for co-financing action (resulting in high dependence on EU financing), and institutional and legal discrepancies and differences between the states on either side of the border.

Many problems arise from the fact that people operate in two different administrative systems, and proposals may encounter a different legislative framework on either side of the border. The fact that a sense of equity is also required in any project also matters. This does not necessarily mean that there has to be a 50-50 contribution from the two sides; the funding combination will depend on the nature of the issue. Currency differences are an added complication, though this can be overcome given sufficient commitment on the two sides. A well-structured organizational support base is also important. Generally, it is important that cooperation begins with a few small projects that can be delivered and that are tangible; once people see the evidence of cooperation they can move forward to the next stage.

The absence of communication over so many years, and the lack of information and awareness of what was happening on the other side have been highlighted as the main difficulties by most people employed in the local authorities both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic. Most interviewees identified the difference in currency as an important problem. This makes things more complex for smaller, local businesses. These difficulties continued even after 1992, when the border was opened to free trade, with a single market; nevertheless, the changes at this time made matters a lot easier for business in general. Other day-to-day obstacles include mobile phone roaming charges, cross-border postage, and bank charges. In addition, many people from Derry City have recently started buying properties just over the border. So they live in the Republic of Ireland, but they actually work in Northern Ireland. This may also give rise to taxation problems; but the true nature of many such prob-

The history of the civil conflict in Northern Ireland constitute a barrier between the two sides in the 1970s and the 1980s, when Northern Ireland was considered a "no go" area by many people in the South. But following the ceasefires, business expanded across the border, in effect into new markets.³ The chambers of commerce on the two sides of the border also tackled the issue of persuading people of the benefits of cooperation, and of breaking down negative perceptions about places on the other side of the border.

Different working cultures may also cause problems. For example, Strabane District Council is quite different to Donegal County Council in its culture and working structure. Interviewees outlined a sort of institutional mismatch: in Donegal there would be more autonomy, more easy-going people disposed to collaborate, and a more outward-looking perspective. In Strabane the outlook appeared to be more limited, with the result that while both sides were interested in their own agenda, Donegal would be more open to working more creatively. In some ways, in terms of money and outputs, the motivation for joint funding applications was not to make a cross-border link but to enhance a council's own service provision.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE CEASE-FIRES AND THE AGREEMENT

Cooperation has been ongoing for over 30 years, but at different levels between the various local authorities. The formalisation of NWRCBG and the establishment of its secretariat took place around 1993, and it has been in receipt of Interreg funding for its secretariat and development activities since then.

The survey reported on here suggests a high level the cooperation in the Northwest compared to other European border areas such as, for example, the border between Italy and Slovenia. The Northwest region has traditionally had a very high level of cross-border cooperation, so the increase has not appeared as striking as it otherwise would. The ceasefires have probably made cooperation easier, and to some degree also fashionable. A lot of the cooperation is sector dependent: for example, working with local government, community and voluntaries is relatively unproblematic, and has been further encouraged by the Peace and Interreg IIIA programmes. Although those interviewed were mainly employed by local authorities, it emerged that a great deal of the cross-border cooperation depended on informal personal links between individuals.

The ceasefires and political stability had a particular impact on the business sector. Businesses in the South have started to look to the North for partners and for mar-

³ Interview with Joanne Sweeney, Chief Executive Officer, Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

kets to expand into. Matters improved further with the introduction of the single market in 1992, with the dismantling of what remained of the economic significance of the border. Political stability in Northern Ireland has permitted the issues to be presented in a more European and regional perspective, rather than taking the shape of British-Irish competition.

Since cross-border cooperation is now a definite requirement in EU programmes like Interreg IIIA, there has to be a steering group with partners from both sides of the border. This, together with the long tradition of cross-border cooperation in the past, seems to facilitate a much greater spirit of cooperation between organizations and individuals on either side of the border—ones who normally did not work together previously. The general impression is that the border is not fixed: it does exist, but it is not as relevant as it was 15 years ago.

After the Good Friday Agreement cross-border cooperation seems to have deepened at all levels. According to interviewees, there is a new confidence in the economy in Northern Ireland—and also in Letterkenny and Donegal. The Belfast Agreement has dramatically assisted a process that was already working. Until the Belfast Agreement, cross-border cooperation had amounted to little more than cross-border activities such as people shopping or going to university in the other jurisdiction; after than, it became more formalized, its importance acknowledged by all the local institutions.

The impact of the European dimension on planning has, then, been considerable, encouraging the development of a national spatial strategy in the Republic and a regional spatial strategy in Northern Ireland. This is of particular importance in the Republic, where this policy document has not just been adopted by the government but also acts as a framework for the local authorityies; each county has a development plan subject to the guidelines provided by the national spatial strategy. The regional development strategy in Northern Ireland comprises guidelines rather than a fixed policy. Nevertheless, it is very widely canvassed and consulted, and it is widely accepted within all sectors. The pattern on the two sides of the border is thus uneven, with local authorities in the Republic creating their own county plans based on a national template, while their counterparts in Northern Ireland are less constrained. This causes certain difficulties in the Northwest region, since local leaders may be looking in different directions.

Nevertheless, pressure from the EU compels the adoption of a common perspective. The corridor between Letterkenny and Derry, for instance, is identified in both planning documents, though what is policy on the southern side is not more than a recommendation in the North. As to territorial cohesion, cross-border planning is particularly important. How does one ensure joined-up development to ensure that two roads from opposite sides of the border meet and are the same standard—not coming a motorway on one side and a B-road on the other, for example? This is particularly striking given the seamless character of the border environment. Similarly, growth around urban centres (such as villages on the Donegal border in the greater Derry area) needs to be planned: increasingly, these villages are merging with the suburbs of the city. This raises issues of planning for development as regards water, sewage, road infrastructure, and schools-challenges that have yet to be fully tackled. While Interreg has helped to encourage central planning, the process is far from complete.

CONCLUSION

Originally, the Republic's national spatial strategy and the regional development strategy for Northern Ireland were smaller documents. Inadequate weight was given to the cross-border environment. But a more substantial agreement was later negotiated, recognising North-South cooperation and wider East-West cooperation, and very distinctly identifying the Northwest as a discrete entity and economic unit. Since the Good Friday Agreement, as we have seen, there has been significant growth of integrated, regional and cross-border approaches to development. The role and impact of EU funding packages and EU policies for the development of the border region needs to be emphasised.

The research in this paper has focused on one region, and examples of crossborder actions and strategies in the Northwest have highlighted the active involvement of local authorities in the promotion and implementation of cross-border cooperation. We have seen that the practices of cross-border cooperation within the region are dependent upon which level is considered. At national government level it was found that there was indeed much promotion of the idea of cross-border cooperation as an ideal, not least as a real mechanism to promote economic development within the border region. The recognition of the mutual benefits to the border region obtainable from cross-border cooperation may also be seen in the preparation of a transnational plan, but this is not a reality yet because of the different jurisdictions with different types of strategic plan.

Thus, there is currently a high level of recognition of the mutual benefits of crossborder activity, in line with the provisions of the Belfast Agreement for the establishment of joint cross-border bodies. Notwithstanding commitment at national government level, however, policies have not necessarily been translated into effective practices. Implementation continues to be clouded as a consequence of difficulties in the political process, and is likely to proceed fully only when these difficulties have been resolved.

However, the local authorities in the NWCBG network have all recognised that their mutual working together represents an excellent mechanism for promoting the economic development of the border area and overcoming their mutual problems. Many examples are available to demonstrate how this joint working and promotion of projects and strategies has been contributing to enhanced economic development opportunities in many of the border areas. In this region, the existence of cross-border bodies such as the NWCBG has pushed up a new cross-border process, involving the formulation of a common vision for the area, the identification of common objectives and the coordination of actions between counties Derry and Donegal. The two national plans tried to offer a vision for the development of the region as a unit, providing mechanisms for local involvement in decision-making and the use of EU funds. In these plans it is suggested that cross-border cooperation is the mechanism offering optimum opportunities for social, economic and organizational development in the Northwest region. With cooperation, the region could become more competitive, sustainable and integrated.

In this paper we have drawn attention to the particular difficulties faced by border regions, a striking issue since many problems are common to both sides of the border. Such problems have tended to make development more difficult in border areas than in central areas because of their being peripheral. It has also been noted that developmental difficulties are faced by the regions because of the trend to develop in isolation from one other. The EU has given high priority to addressing the particular problems of border regions, particularly through border region policies and funding programmes such as Interreg.

To conclude, it is clear that interest in, and motivation for, cross-border and interregional cooperation is increasing. But it must be accepted that the scale of such opportunity within the Irish border must include an appreciation of the present limits to cross-border integration.

APPENDIX 1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW: CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN IRELAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND

1. Identity of office/institution interviewed

Name: Address: Contact: Tel.: Fmail:

2. Projects

What are the main cross-border cooperation projects your institution is involved?

Could you name them?

When did they start?

What are the main aims and objectives?

What are the other institutions involved in the project?

Could you name them?

3. Sector

How would you categorise your cross-border contacts by sector-list? Interviewer, please tick (more than one sector may be ticked if required).

- Health
- Tourism
- Environment
- Transport
- Economy culture
- Security
- Governmental

Administrative

- Local authority
- · Community sector

4. History of cross-border cooperation module

Question here should be related:

- 1) To major current cross-border project
- 2) To past experience of the organization in CBC

5. Currently, what is the most substantial cross-border project?

(if there is none, ask what was your last substantial cross-border project)

- financially
- people or organizations involved
- decision to focus on a single project, based on the sector of activity

6. When your organization got involved in the project?

7. In what circumstances did this come about?

Probe: as part of internal organizational strategy?

In response to grass roots demand?

In response to top down demands from governmental agencies, etc?

8. How would you describe the project and the activities involved?

9. Thus far, how successful has the project been in achieving projected outcomes?

10. How would you describe your cross-border links in this project?

- Periodic contact between separate organizations
- Membership of a common organization with a cross-border remit
- Joint financing
- Joint planning
- Joint management
- Other

11. For your main current CBC project (name it)

The stage of the project might affect the outcome

Frequency.

How often would you meet partners from I/NI? (Daily, weekly, monthly, etc)

How often would you contact them by phone (), email (), letter ()?

How much time would you spend on the other side of the border in promoting CBC project?

12. Did the project originate from within the work environment? Or did it originate in relationship outside work? If so, how?

13. How would you describe the territorial focus of your main project?

- Confined to the towns involved in the project
- Confined to local border region
- Intra-island links between NI and I
- Extra-island (other European countries)

14. Turning now to your organization's experience of CBC generally:

How would you describe the territorial focus of your organization?

- Confined to the towns involved in the project
- Confined to local border region
- Intra-island links between NI and I
- Extra-island (other European countries)

15. Advantages? Why?

- 16. Problems? Obstacles?
- 17. Funding: role of EU—Peace—Central government/Local government
- 18. Future funding

19. How CBC changed in the last 10 years?

1994-5 ceasefires - 1998 Good Friday Agreement

- 20. What projects?
- 21. What advantages/problems?

APPENDIX 2 LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED

Name: Ms Harriet Purkis Position: Project coordinator

Affiliation: Strabane District Council offices

Address: Address: 47 Derry road, Strabane, BT 82 8DY

Name: Mr Eamon Molloy Position: Development Officer

Affiliation: North West Region Cross-border Group

Address: Exchange Horse, Queen's Quay, Derry BT48 7AS

Name: Mr Richard McKean Position: Project coordinator

Organization: North West Chamber of Commerce Initiatives

Address: 1.St. Columbs Court, Bishop Street, Londonderry, BT48 6PT

Name: Mr Dermot Harrigan,

Position: Economic Development Officer (Mr Mark Lusby's deputy)

Affiliation: Economic Development Office, Derry City Council

Address: Derry City Council, 98 Strand Road, Derry, N Ireland, BT48 7NN

Name: Mr Kieran Houston
Position: Chief Executive Officer

Affiliation: Strabane Chamber of Commerce

Address: Unit 7, Dublin road, Industrial Estate, Strabane, Northern Ireland

Name: Ms Joanne Sweeney
Position: Chief Executive Officer

Affiliation: Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce & Industry Address: 40, Port Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Name: Dr Tony McNally

Affiliation: NS-SHARE Project Coordinator

Address: Enterprise Fund Business Centre, Ballyraine, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Name: Mr Alan Moneypenny Position: Chief Executive

Affiliation: Strabane-Lifford Development Commission

Address: Foyleview, Lifford, Co. Donegal

Name: Dr Maria Angela Ferrario

Position: Project leader Affiliation: ERNACT

Address: Lifford, Lifford County, Donegal

Name: Mr Paddy Doherty

Position: Assistant Chef Executive Officer Affiliation: Letterkenny Town Council

Address: Neal T. Blaney road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Name: Ms Maria Ferguson

Position: Strategic Policy Manager, Community, Culture and Enterprise Unit

Affiliation: Donegal County Council

Address: Donegal County Council, Station Island, Lifford County, Donegal

Name: Mr Paul McLoone Position: Project coordinator Affiliation: North West Tourism

Address: Temple Street, Sligo, Co. Sligo

Name: Dr Robbie McDonald Position: Centre Manager

Affiliation: Quercus, Queen's University Belfast Address: 97 Lisburn road, Belfast BT9 7BL

Name: Dr Shirley-Ann Hazlett Position: Centre Manager

Affiliation: School of management, Queen's University Belfast Address: Room M112, Mews, 25 University Square, Belfast BT9 7BL

Name: Mr Liam Milligan Position: Programme Manager

Affiliation: North West Rural Development Ltd.

Address: Strabane
Name: Dr Tony McNally

Position: NS-SHARE Project Co-coordinator Affiliation: Enterprise Fund Business Centre Address: Ballyraine, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Name: Mr Martin Gormley Position: Project Co-coordinator

Affiliation: Education and Training centre Address: Drumcliff, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal