

Perspectives from the Ireland/Northern Ireland Border

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COE Conference, 25th May 2018

Dubrovnik, Croatia

Introduction

- Place is important to CBC- determines the ‘what’, the ‘why’ and the ‘who’;
- Overview of CBC context in Ireland/Northern Ireland
- Benefits and challenges
- Evolving models and concepts for future challenges
- Key learning points

A Practitioner Perspective

- Working on cross-border/north south issues since early 1990s;
- 1994-1999- Research & Public Policy Analysis- Deeply Divided Societies
- 1999- 2013- Practical delivery of ESF & ERDF programmes in local government/regional /economic development- including Ireland/Northern Ireland Border
- 2010-13- *Delivery of healthcare co-operation – Irish Border
- 2014-18- Chair, International Centre for Local & Regional Development (ICLRD)
- Currently working with ICLR D on North West Strategic Growth Partnership, Ireland/Northern Ireland Border.
- Lived Experience: North South and East West

Cross Border Co-operation Ireland/Northern Ireland

- Pre-dates the Peace Process (Foyle Fisheries Commission, 1952);
- Local Authority Led Structures pre-date national/central administration 'North South' sectoral collaboration Structures;
- North South intergovernmental co-operation Structures- Peace Agreement of 1998 – 6 + NSMC
- 1/6 NS bodies = Special EU Programmes Body (predated but assumed functions of EGTC for IR/NI).

Cross Border Co-operation Ireland/Northern Ireland

- Decentralised approach to INTERREG implementation (I, II and IIIa via border-based co-operation structures) gradually replaced by more centralised (Government-co-ordinated approach);
- Other enablers exist for decentralised approaches involving Local Government- other ERDF supports;
- Peace Process and subsequent agreements recognised and implemented role of formalised North-South (macro) CBC in building an island-based economy and enhancing collaboration potential in key sectors (Trade, Tourism, Waterways, Irish (Gaelic) language, Agri-Food Safety, Cross Border Sea Loughs, Health & Social Care);
- Governments realising significance of working arrangements between central and local Government- devolved functions at local government level are essential to delivery of national priorities;
- Latest model of this is North West Strategic Growth Partnership and associated working arrangements (Derry City & Strabane District Council and Donegal County Council; ICLRD).

Benefits of CBC: Central Government Led:

- Sectoral alignment;
- Shared management of key natural and environmental resources including river/lake systems;
- Smooth transport of food products and cross border production processes- agri-food;
- Health service collaboration- emergency care, elective care, community health and learning;
- BUT- for impact, strong place-based arrangements are also needed to weave the cloth of prosperity.



Benefits of Place-Based CBC

- Tailored to needs of a place/functional economic territory;
- Creates working arrangements for collaboration across boundaries- administrative and jurisdictional;
- Opportunity for central governments to align priorities with delivery and specific impact;
- Potential for shared services/economy of scale responses to shared challenges/collaborative data;
- Regions act as anchors, meeting points, creative spaces, adding value.



The North West City Region of Ireland/Northern Ireland

- Fourth largest city region on island
- Split by a border;
- Historically prosperous Textiles/Maritime Port/Walled City of Derry/Londonderry
- Strategic port on NW Atlantic
- 2nd half of C20th: industrial decline, conflict, legacy of conflict; economic inequalities;
- Workforce mobile, family connections, business pathways all strong and stronger since 1998 Peace Agreement and CBC
- CBC working arrangements updated to release full potential of the region as contributor to UK/IR economies.

Place-Based Leadership:

- Place-based leadership model as developed by ICLRD in a cross border context; Hambleton;

2 dimensions to the Model:

- a) Within the Region: Working arrangements between 2 two Local Authorities (municipalities) of Derry City & Strabane District and Donegal;
- b) Between the Region and Central Administration: working arrangements with government administrations in both jurisdictions; involvement of civic partners in themes.



Legal Instruments

- Debate: Collaborative working: additional to or integral to normal business?
- Where possible do within existing competencies (e.g. Local Government Act (Ireland) 2001; NI Councils' Power of Wellbeing); agree practicalities e.g. admin/finance lead; agree standards of practice*

The Future

- Legacy of EU investment (ERDF and ESF PEACE) = intellectual and cultural capital for co-operation;
- Legal enablement in the future: where beyond existing corporate legal competencies, useful to consider Protocol No. 3 to the Madrid Outline Convention of Transfrontier Cooperation
- IR/NI have pre-existing international treaty which explicitly recognises, governs and protects CBC
- Where territories do not have this macro-enabling framework then Madrid is highly relevant

Essentials:

- Understand the border place- who are the stakeholders?
What does the place need- economic, physical, environmental, community? What are its assets?
- Cross-system local political support from elected representatives;
- Legal enablers (where they do not already exist);
- Technical know-how; use of data*
- Political and Policy literacy- grow together
- Culture of commitment and logic
- No Silos!
- Every step is progress.



Thank You For Listening

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