



# European Territorial Cooperation

## Work Package 11

*Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes  
2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional  
Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund  
(CF)*

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**Pilot case study:**  
**Interreg IVA Northern  
Ireland, Border Region of  
Ireland and Western Scotland**

Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes  
2007-2013, financed by the European Regional  
Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF)  
European Territorial Cooperation (Work Package 11)

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## **Executive Summary**

The present case study provides an assessment of the Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland programmes' main achievements, cooperation mechanisms put in place and their effects in terms of reducing barriers to co-operation. It also aims to identify the added value of such programme in comparison with regional programmes at play in the same area. The Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland programme is one of the cross-border cooperation programmes that places highest priority on "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship": the case study focuses on this theme.

The area covered by the programme includes parts of three regions in two countries: most of the region of Northern Ireland and the Western part of Scotland in the UK, and the border area in the Republic of Ireland. This is mostly a rural and peripheral area, with a population of 2.2 million inhabitants. The cross-border Operational Programme is financially large: it has a total budget of EUR 256 million, to which the European Union contributes with an ERDF amount of EUR 192 million.

### ***What has been delivered through cooperation?***

Amongst the 84 projects supported by the programme, 28 are devoted to "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship". They account for 26% of total EU funding in the programme.

Most of these projects have a clear cross-border dimension and they focus mainly on innovation support for SMEs through fostering business-to-business cooperation, the promotion of clusters and supply chains, and on mentoring activities directed to existing SMEs. There is little activity targeting new business creation or "pure" research cooperation: higher education institutions are quite heavily involved in SMEs-targeted activities, but there are few examples of research-to-research cooperation.

The evolution towards more strategic projects is still incomplete: the programme funds a mix of large region-wide projects and smaller projects with a local dimension. There are examples of strategic projects with demonstrated positive impacts on business development and innovation but these cannot be generalized: programme-level result and impact indicators are not suitable to summarize overall achievements.

### ***What is its impact in terms of R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship?***

While a number of results can be identified; the issue of the impacts is more complicated.

Indicators collected point towards the following results: 295 jobs created in supported companies (difficult to assign to innovation-enhancing projects though); more businesses than expected have taken part in projects; the results in terms of innovation (share of companies developing new products and new processes as a result of the projects) are lower than anticipated since many projects were considering innovation as secondary, not primary goal; 20% of supported businesses entering new markets.

The main achievement relates to building critical mass in knowledge-based resources of various types: joint applied research, courses and business advisory services capitalizing on the resources of research, training and business advisory organizations over the borders are typical results of the programme. The lasting outcomes consist in the partnership and pooling of resources created through such projects.

Given that the innovation content of projects was lower than anticipated, one can reasonably expect the impacts in terms of new knowledge being integrated into new processes, products or services to be limited.

### ***To what extent has co-operation been enhanced?***

The programme devotes important attention to enhancing cross-border cooperation, by applying specific project selection criteria, notably on joint development, implementation, staffing, and joint financing, hence intensified cross-border cooperation occurred thanks to a careful selection of projects incorporating all dimensions of cross-border cooperation.

Project implementing joint solutions to common interests are the most powerful in terms of enhancing cross-border cooperation, but they are less common than projects which are limited to joint interest identification or the creation of shared expertise leading to region-specific solutions. This places a limit on the overall impact of the programme on enhancing cross-border cooperation.

### ***What barriers to co-operations have been removed?***

The programme helped to break inward-looking tendencies of agencies involved in supporting R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship (Invest in Northern Ireland, Enterprise Ireland): through joint activities in Interreg projects they understood the incentives for pooling resources on a wider cross-border scale, reaching critical mass and exploiting complementary expertise to better service the SMEs.

Distance barriers are also partly removed in the case of projects creating virtual environment for cooperation based on, e.g. e-learning tools where the complementarity of expertise of research stakeholders can be fully exploited.

There are two limitations for the success of the programme in addressing cooperation barriers. First, Scottish actors were marginal in the partnerships and their rationale for participating in projects is more difficult to ascertain: distance barriers for some projects "far from the border" missing the proximity rationale (involving e.g., third-level research institutions cooperating at distance) remain. Second, some projects, focusing on exchanges of practices and interactions at design phase, but without subsequent joint investments, display features of two parallel projects at implementation stage.

The distance in administrative culture between Ireland and the UK is a persisting cooperation barrier.

### ***What is the evidence for the contribution of ETC programmes?***

The programme is, as already pointed out by the mid-term evaluation, characterized by lasting "soft" achievements (networking opportunities for organisations south and

north of the border, collaboration among organisations that would otherwise not have worked together), pointing towards good contribution of the programme for cross-border cooperation practices "at the border". A survey of programme participants carried out by the Managing Authorities similarly pointed towards a positive contribution of the programme to the enhancement of cross-border cooperation. The field analysis implemented by the team during this evaluation (in particular through focus group discussions) allows it to support such a positive assessment of the contribution of the ETC programme to cross-border cooperation.

***What learning has been generated during the implementation of the CBC programme?***

Fostering learning and capacity building for cross-border cooperation is an important overall focus of the programme. Improved understanding of opportunities, contexts and rules for R&D and innovation on the other side of the borders can be considered as the main type of learning generated by the programme.

The programme has built tools to enhance capacity and improve learning for cross-border cooperation thanks to the production of manuals on how to build and evaluate cross-border projects, which are widely diffused.

The programme is also generating learning and building capacity for higher-order external cooperation, on a wider scale than the cross-border area (e.g. through Horizon2020 projects).

***Who has benefited?***

In addition to partners involved in specific projects, there is a range of cross-border organizations that are important beneficiaries from new learning generated by the programme. More than half of the projects falling into the «R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship» theme are led by the five cross-border groups of local authorities: these are major beneficiaries from the learning generated by the programme.

The evolution of the programme towards interventions at a regional level and with higher critical mass means that learning and capacity building is also progressively stimulated with other cross-border operators active at regional level, even if they are not (main) direct beneficiaries of projects, such as InterTradeIreland, supporting cross-border cooperation in business trade and innovation.

***From which stakeholders to which other stakeholders has knowledge and capacity been transferred?***

The cross-border groups of local authorities are main diffusion agents of learning gained through the Interreg projects: they are helping to diffuse lessons learned across the various local authorities.

Cross-projects sharing and diffusion of knowledge gained by project leaders and partners is not sufficiently developed, although opportunities are present.

***What is the likely future for such learning mechanisms and co-operation?***

The programme presents favourable features to ensure sustainability of learning mechanisms and cooperation: 1) demonstration of sustainability potential is one project selection criterion; 2) the long-lasting structures dedicated to the promotion of cross-border cooperation are well placed to ensure continuity in learning and cooperation. The mid-term enquiry on the programme also indicated that an evolution of mindsets which become more favourable to cross-border cooperation are expected to last. However, the continuity in the use of infrastructure on a cross-border basis is only ensured in cases where specific provisions have been incorporated to this purpose, and this is not always the case.

The programme indicators intending to measure persistence of partnerships and activities two years after the end of the programme will provide an evidence-based view on the future of cooperation fostered by projects funded by Interreg.

***Will its sustainability depend on future EU financing?***

The absence of private actors as direct beneficiaries of projects, and the low level of private co-financing of projects makes sustainability in the sense of continuation of action without dependence on public funds a huge challenge.

Mainstreaming activities initially funded by Interreg into the domestic programmes for innovation support or in the activities of cross-border organisations, is the most effective way to ensure sustainability of cross-border cooperation after the end of the Interreg IV funding period. The programme displays some cases of mainstreaming of projects, but this is not a regular practice.

This suggests that without future EU financing some activities currently deployed under the programme would not be maintained.

***If there were no prior CBC programmes, would the projects co-financed through the programme have happened without the existence of EU funding?***

According to participants to a survey and to an evaluation focus group, even in domains where cooperation has a relatively long history, there is a need for Interreg catalytic funds to address high border barriers (due to the history of back-to-back development) before a full mainstreaming can be envisaged. They claim that most projects would not have been implemented without this funding source.

Hence, on this basis, the contribution of the programme is good, but improvements are possible through increasing the share of projects with highest cross-border dimension and value-added.

***Which programmes have the best monitoring systems and which have the worst?***

The monitoring system of the programme provides support to the strategic work of Managing Authorities but it is not yet sufficient and it deserves improvements. Programme authorities have already paid attention towards improvement of the quality of the monitoring system in the course of the period and are evolving towards more strategic management approaches. This is valid for the programme as a whole as well as for the "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship" theme in this programme.

The monitoring system distinguishes adequately between outputs, results and impacts, and indicators listed under each type are broadly adequate to measure some achievements at these three levels, however they do not measure all types of achievements and fall short of measuring quality of some results: quality and relevance of cross-border research activities carried out in some projects is not measured e.g. Depth of cross-border cooperation is not measured either.

In general indicators are measurable and efforts are paid to ensure clear definition and links between project-level and programme-level indicators, but improvements are needed on this front too.

***What has been the added value of the INTERACT programme to the effective functioning of the CBC programme?***

The support from INTERACT is quite highly viewed by the Managing Authority, who are also contributing to INTERACT with new methods. They consider training, manuals and linkage opportunities with other programmes as the most useful support from INTERACT. This is taken as a positive sign for the value-added of INTERACT for good programme implementation.

***To what extent were the programme objectives coordinated with those of national and regional programmes?***

The general case for complementarity with regional and national programmes is well made: the cross-border programme targets similar objectives as regional programmes, but with a particular focus on benefits from cross-border cooperation. The process followed for definition of objectives has taken into account to regional programmes' priorities. However the very broad definition of objectives for the cross-border programme opens a risk of duplication.

Complementarity with Scottish programmes is given much less attention though: the role of Interreg IVA programme from a Scottish perspective is quite marginal and Scottish participation appears to be driven by opportunities identified by actors on a project basis rather than by strategic goals.

The special position of the Managing Authority, active in several ETC programmes, helps to foster synergies between these various programmes. Strand A is seen as acting as a nursery towards openness of actors at a larger scale (European or even international scale).

***Can synergies be objectively evaluated?***

Synergies between programmes should ideally be evaluated on a project-level basis, investigating whether the cross-border value-added is at the core of Interreg IVA funding and complements funding through national or regional programmes which have a domestic focus. This analysis is not systematically made beyond the verification of absence of double funding.

***Comparison with national and regional programmes***

Compared with the regional Competitiveness programme in place in Northern Ireland for the same period, the cross-border programme follows the same wide range of

objectives, but with a lower priority on the R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship and the economic domain, and higher priority on infrastructure and environment.

In the specific field of R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship, the Interreg IVA cross-border programme funds smaller projects at smaller sub-regional level, focusing on improving conditions for first-step innovation and targeting a population of SMEs that have little access to regional programmes so far. The regional programme has a stronger focus on higher-level innovation and on larger projects with a focus on knowledge transfer between research institutes and enterprises. Hence the types of impacts differ in nature, with wider-scale impacts on economy expected from the regional programme (which has also a larger budget).

For those projects with unclear cross-border value-added, like research infrastructures or incubators located on one side of the border, the complementarity with the regional programme is not necessarily ensured though. Synergies between the two types of programmes are most likely to be gained in cases of projects offering joint solutions to common needs or opportunities, with joint funding: this is very difficult to achieve with regional programmes and this is where Interreg's leverage is highest.

The cross-border programme clearly differs from the regional programme in its focus on Cooperation, which is devoted to strategic collaborative approaches for the delivery of public services in the cross-border area as well as exchange of expertise and best practices in cross-border collaboration. This is a distinctive feature of the programme: capacity building for cross-border collaboration is achieved through the cross-border programme, not through the regional programme. There is a division of work between the two programmes based on this cross-border dimension, and double-funding is avoided. However, in practice the two programmes run in parallel and there are few synergies in implementation.

## 1. Introduction

This case study is part of the ex-post evaluation of all programmes in the period 2007-2013 aiming at promoting European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) in view of creating synergies and European value-added by eradicating internal borders and capitalizing on the existing assets of the whole territory of the Union. It is one amongst 9 case studies of programmes aiming at cross-border cooperation (Strand A of ETC).

The purpose of the case study work in the overall evaluation is to deepen the analysis of the contribution of cross-border programmes to co-operation and to economic and social integration between European regions. This Task 2 of the overall evaluation is performed through a field analysis with a variety of programme stakeholders, that complements a first documentary analysis and an interview with Managing Authority previously carried out in Task 1 of the evaluation.

The present case study provides an assessment of the Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland programmes' main achievements, the cooperation mechanisms put in place, their effects in terms of reducing barriers to co-operation and taking advantage of common opportunities. It also aims to identify the added value of such programme in comparison with mainstream programmes at play in the same area.

This case study focuses on the "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship" theme. The Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland programme is one of the programmes in Strand A that places highest priority on that theme (the two other priority themes for this evaluation being on the one hand, capacity building, and on the other hand, environmental protection). This programme is on the 5th rank of all 53 cross-border programmes in terms of budget allocated to this theme.

This report starts in Section 2 with the methodology adopted for the case study. [Annex 1](#) provides an analysis of the main features of the programme, which is helpful to understand the specific situation of the area and of the programme.

Section 3 is the core of the report. It is structured according to the evaluation questions as mentioned in the terms of reference (the order of the first two questions has been switched compared to the terms of reference). Each sub-section responds to each evaluation question in turn.

- Section 3.1 assesses what has been delivered by the programme and its impacts. It also provides an analysis of resources spent and types of activities supported (evaluation question b).
- Section 3.2 deals with impacts of the programme on cooperation practices in the area (evaluation question a).
- Section 3.3 appraises achievements in terms of learning and capacity and knowledge transferred (evaluation question c).
- Section 3.4 discusses sustainability of cooperation and learning and the extent to which these achievements are dependent on EU funding sources (evaluation question d).

- Section 3.5 discusses the issue whether the projects would have happened without existence of EU funding, if there were no prior CBC programmes (evaluation question e).
- Section 3.6 assesses the quality of the programme monitoring system (evaluation question f).
- Section 3.7 investigates the value-added of the INTERACT programme to support implementation of this programme (evaluation question g).
- Section 3.8 appraises the extent to which the objectives of this programme have been coordinated with those other regional and national programmes active on the same territory (evaluation question h).
- Section 3.9 compares this programme with another programme in the mainstream of Cohesion policy – the Northern Ireland Competitiveness programme- and discusses how the two programmes differ in practice (evaluation question i).

## **2. Methodology**

The team has developed a methodology to address the evaluation questions that takes into account the general finding from Task 1 that the quality of indicators and information in the Operational Programmes and Annual Implementation Reports is not sufficient to robustly assess achievements of the programme. The main way to tackle this challenge lies in collecting additional qualitative information from Managing Authorities, stakeholders in the cross-border region, and from people and organisations involved in projects funded by the programme. Deepening the analysis of the allocation of resources spent and of the types of activities supported, and an analysis of projects database with a focus on R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship also contribute to an assessment of the results achieved by the programme. This helps create a qualitative picture on results achieved by programme, in the form of a narrative rather than of verified indicators.

A field visit of 5 days, from 13 to 17 April 2015, has taken place in order to collect additional documents and data and to interview Managing Authorities from the programme and from one ERDF programme, as well as some of the main stakeholders involved in programme implementation or as project beneficiaries. The selection of projects has been done before the visit through an analysis of the projects database and documentation from the programme. The cooperation of the programme Secretariat has been very helpful to organize the schedule of visits and get commitment of stakeholders. The full list of interviewed people as well as the field visit schedule are in [Annex 3](#).

### 3. Answers to the evaluation questions

This section responds to the evaluation questions listed in the introduction<sup>1</sup>. Each subsection starts with the question copied from the terms of reference, provides a box with a summary of the answer to the evaluation question, and then includes the analysis of the issue treated in the evaluation question.

#### 3.1. Achievements and impacts of the programme

##### EVALUATION QUESTION

**b) What has been delivered via co-operation, and what is its impact (e.g. in terms of R&D and innovation, enhanced administrative capacity, or better environmental status ?)**

##### 3.1.1. What has been delivered via co-operation?

In total, the programme funded 84 cross-border projects. Projects belonging to the "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship" theme are mainly found under the "Enterprise" theme, but there are also a few projects aiming at cross-border scientific cooperation under the "Infrastructure" theme. The team has identified the "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship" projects by retaining those projects characterized by the following keywords in the KEEP database<sup>2</sup>: "Innovation capacity and awareness-raising"; "Knowledge and technology transfer"; « SME and entrepreneurship"; "Scientific cooperation"; "Clustering and economic cooperation". According to this database, **28 projects can be classified under the "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship" theme**, taken in a broad sense. In total the programme has allocated EUR 49.8 million to this theme, out of its total budget of EUR 192 million<sup>3</sup>, that is **26% of the total programme budget**. With 33% of projects belonging to the theme, this means that **they have a comparatively smaller size than the other projects**: this is mainly due to higher size for large infrastructure projects. Indeed, the overall programme analysis shows that there are more small-scale, locally-based projects under the "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship" theme than in other parts of the programme.

Annex 2 provides an overview of projects supported under the "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship" theme. The examination of this portfolio of projects generates the following insights:

1. The programme funded a mix of individual projects launched by research institutes, business associations and economic intermediaries (first part of Annex 2), which tend to be larger projects, and of local authority initiatives (second part of Annex 2), which are smaller (with one notable exception, the

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<sup>1</sup> As mentioned in Section 1, the order of questions a) and b) has been switched in order to first provide an analysis of programme' s achievements and impacts, which can be referred to when discussing impacts on cooperation more specifically.

<sup>2</sup> The KEEP database of projects is maintained by the INTERACT programme, which collects the information provided by Managing Authorities of the various ETC programmes.

<sup>3</sup> Those figures are computed based on DG Regio database, using the codes 1, 2, 3, 4 ,5 ,6, 7, 9 , 62, 63, 72, 74, which are used in this evaluation to define the "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship" theme.

North West regional science park). The latter are programmes presented by cross-border groups which get structural and semi-structural (recurring but not systematic) funding for their projects. Thus, **two types of quite different projects are funded under this theme: larger, region-wide projects and smaller projects with a more local scope.**

2. For most projects, **the cross-border dimension is clearly built in the design of projects.** This is by definition the case for all projects presented by the cross-border partnerships.
3. The **majority of projects have a focus on North-Ireland-border region of Ireland and a small minority only involves Scottish partners.**
4. Projects **focus very much on business development, trade and networking targeting SMEs**, and in several cases the **innovation dimension is quite limited** (e.g. Success through Succession, Tradelinks, S4G...). There is a clear **focus on business-to-business cooperation**, notably through the promotion of clusters and supply chains in several projects, and on mentoring activities directed to SMEs.
5. There are **not many joint R&D projects focusing primarily on research institutions cooperating across borders**: the IBIS and Creative Futures projects are the only ones with such a main focus.
6. **Entrepreneurship and new business stimulation is a main priority for two projects only**, HATCH and Vital, while the other projects rather focus on existing enterprises.

The various generations of the programme have evolved from funding a multiplication of small and dispersed projects towards prioritizing more strategic projects, with clearer objectives and higher transformational power. Putting more priority on the latter is indeed a good way to ensure impacts on a wider scale, creating economies of scale and benefiting regional development. Such a change in perspective corresponds to the wish of programme authorities, but this trend has not fully materialized. The long history of the programme is characterized by an **incomplete evolution from targeting ad hoc and locally-based projects towards projects with critical mass and higher spillover effects.** Such a change in perspective goes together with a reduced role for the local cross-border working groups and an enhanced role for larger implementing bodies targeting the regional rather than the local level (such as InterTradeIreland). This evolution is also likely to be conducive to more possibilities for genuine partnerships with the relevant Scottish partners, rather than project-led ad hoc participation as is now the case.

**Programme-level indicators are insufficient to characterize programme's achievements.** Table 1 presents a list of outputs achieved under the "Enterprise" priority (and mentions targeted value for each of them) but it should be stressed that this does not provide a complete view on outputs of the programme. As there are no more detailed figures available at programme level, it is difficult to take those figures as meaningful for the theme under focus. Furthermore the credibility of some targets can be questioned given the high values reached in the end (the higher number of

SMEs assisted can be explained by the fact that part of the activities were aiming at raising awareness rather than developing in-depth support activities).

**Table 1. Outputs of Interreg IVA programme  
Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland  
in R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship**

		<b>Target</b>	<b>Value</b>
<b>Enterprise</b>	No. of businesses assisted	200	1879
	No. of incubation units developed	3	2
	No. of networking projects supported	15	21

### **3.1.2. What is the impact of the programme?**

In line with the above comment on output indicators (see also discussion in Section 3.6 below), programme-level result and impact indicators do not capture the diversity in nature and impacts of projects in the programme portfolio: they are insufficient to measure quality of achievements and of cross-border cooperation. The gaps in linkages between project-level and programme-level indicators make it **very difficult to quantify programme achievements beyond outputs**. Looking at the portfolio of projects in Annex 2, it is clear that a large variety of results are achieved by the projects, which are not amenable to an aggregated picture. This is true for the programme as a whole as well as for the projects under the "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship" theme. Hence programme authorities characterize impacts by using a success story approach rather than by using indicators.

Results mentioned for Priority 1 "Cooperation for a more prosperous cross-border region", to which most of the projects covered in this evaluation belong, are, according to the 2013 Annual Implementation Report (AIR):

- **295 jobs created in companies.** It is however difficult to assign such jobs creation to innovation-enhancing projects alone, and there are also some tourism projects included in this figure. Computing ratio between public funding through the programme and jobs created is not seen as relevant here, as jobs creation is not a purpose of the programme as such. The above-mentioned gap between project- and programme-level indicators also calls for caution in taking this figure as a direct impact of the programme (see e.g. in Box 1 below, one project alone reports more than 295 jobs creation only);
- More businesses than expected have taken part in projects (1879 against 200 expected), but the **results in terms of innovation** (share of companies developing new products - 4% against 40% expected - and new processes - 11% against 40% expected - as a result of the projects) **are lower than anticipated**. This is linked to the nature of the projects, which were not directly targeted at promoting innovation but rather at raising awareness on more basic issues for business development, amongst which innovation came only as one element;

- **Impact in terms of businesses entering new markets meets expectations** (according to monitoring data: 20% of supported businesses, in line with target value).

The AIR provides examples of successful and sustainable projects in the area of engineering training and new technology development and commercialization, or with SME mentoring systems on a cross-border basis, but there is no systematic and comprehensive account of quantified or qualitative results of the “R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship” theme. In this field, the main achievement relates to **building critical mass**: joint applied research, courses and business advisory services capitalizing on the resources of research, training and business advisory organisations over the borders are typical results of the programme, and the critical mass created is likely to be maintained through continuing cooperation between the organisations involved in projects.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the most visible results of the programme, rather than touching on R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship, relate rather to **solving border challenges (in terms of people flows)**. Connecting people over the border to reduce the sense of isolation and normalize socio-economic relationships after decades of segregation is one of the largest achievements of the programme: improved road infrastructure and cross-border health services notably contribute to this type achievement. The provision of **specialised infrastructure is also a** more visible result thanks to large initiatives, such as the creation of fast telecoms connection for the whole area with direct connection to US, and the creation of a joint database with seabed information, which were made possible by the programme.

The programme anticipates collecting quantified impact indicators two years after the end of the projects (they are provided in [Annex 4](#)), which would provide an interesting picture of the legacy of actions funded by the programme. The value taken by those indicators is not available yet, which hampers the assessment of impacts from the programme.

The **fact that the innovation content of projects was lower than anticipated suggests that impacts in terms of new knowledge being integrated into new processes, products or services might be limited**. Boxes 1 and 2 provide examples of more strategic projects which demonstrated positive and lasting impacts on business development and innovation, with an interesting role played by Higher Education and research institutions joining forces on a cross-border basis. The target is primarily set on companies which are at the start at their innovation learning curve.

**Box 1. ICE project: Innovation for Competitive Enterprises: HEIs joining forces on a cross-border basis to broaden benefits of innovation – awareness raising initiative**

The Innovation for Competitive Enterprises (ICE) Programme was developed and is being led by Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) in partnership with the University of Ulster, the University of Glasgow and Glasgow Caledonian University. The project is supported by the regional development agencies Enterprise Ireland, IntertradeIreland and Invest Northern Ireland.

ICE's aim is to promote economic growth and development through the establishment of a Tri-Regional Innovation Network aimed at building innovation capacity and capability of existing SMEs in the Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland. This EUR 2.5 million initiative aims to undertake intensive innovation strategies, working with 90 companies with a view to increasing their turnover by at least 10%. It uses novel ways to reach small businesses with the potential to grow but without an existing knowledge of how to innovate: a combination of modular based workshops learning with peer companies and in-company specific action based learning (on a mentoring model). The cross-border dimension adds value through interaction with companies and institutions, broadening peer learning scope. However, the small eligible population of SMEs in Western Scotland limited the benefits reached in this region, as compared to Ireland and Northern Ireland.

An independent evaluation of the ICE Programme shows that it is on course to increase its participant company turnover by over EUR 56 million, generate 300 new jobs and take nearly 40 companies into new export sales when it is completed. ICE has largely exceeded the targets set for it: the targets for the number of new products and processes introduced, the number of companies increasing turnover and the number increasing export sales have all been exceeded by a factor of 4 or more already prior to programme completion. The direct cost per job created or safeguarded is EUR 4500. The longer term legacy of the programme is that companies have developed better capability to manage innovation and access mainstream government innovation programmes, ICE acting as a first step towards more established innovation practices.

Source : documentation from ICE project

**Box 2. VITAL project: successfully promoting business innovation on a cross-border basis**

The VITAL project is led by a partnership made up of three leading academic institutes in Ireland and Northern Ireland: Dundalk Institute of Technology; Queen's University Belfast and Dublin City University.

The aim of the VITAL project is to identify the best knowledge based ideas in the cross-border region, connect them to new and existing businesses and create a positive economic impact in Northern Ireland and border counties in the Republic of Ireland. Ideas validated by VITAL are matched to prospective entrepreneurs or SME implementers. This matching of evaluated idea to implementer is facilitated through an Implementer Application Review. The latter involves analysis of the prospective implementer's current resources - human, financial, sales, technical etc, as well as market presence. The process may be repeated to ensure an optimal match occurs between ideas and entrepreneurs/SMEs. The final decision is taken by a panel made up of academic and agency representatives.

A VITAL intervention takes place in several steps:

- It identifies and validates a pool of ideas for commercialisation
- It identifies SMEs, seasoned entrepreneurs and senior managers with the skills and knowledge to bring the ideas onto a commercial platform
- It offers access to Technology Transfer and Licensing opportunities
- It matches the right idea to an appropriate partner
- It can assist with fast tracking the route to market through one to one mentoring, consultancy, access to market knowledge and priming capital if required.

The project finished in 2015 having successfully licensed over 30 products and technologies into existing and newly created businesses. The impact of VITAL is expected to be wide with a dynamic longer term perspective than immediate sales impact as participating companies are expected to gain a knowledge and understanding of the innovation process. Beyond these individual impacts, a further impact of the VITAL Project is that its cross-border implementation is anticipated to develop a new form of enterprise support; with networks, relationships and experience all in place and strategically more equipped for future business and enterprise growth.

Source : [www.vitalforideas.com](http://www.vitalforideas.com)

## 3.2. Impacts of the programme on cooperation

### EVALUATION QUESTION

**a) To what extent has co-operation been enhanced? What barriers to co-operation have been removed? What is the evidence for the contribution of ETC programmes?**

#### 3.2.1 To what extent has co-operation been enhanced?

Fostering cross-border cooperation practices and removing barriers to cooperation is the ultimate goal of the programme. The intensity of cross-border cooperation is given important attention at project selection stage. To reach this goal, project selection criteria include the 4 items of "joint development", "joint implementation", "joint staffing" and "joint financing", at least two of which should be present in any selected project. The mid-term evaluation of Interreg III already concluded that this "joint" character was present at all levels (in contrast with previous programmes I and II which tended to fund "parallel" projects, namely projects that were carried out simultaneously on two sides of the border but with little interaction in design or implementation). In the latest AIR of the Interreg IV programme, the vast majority of projects are expected to meet the 4 criteria, and the rest should meet no less than three criteria, but data are incomplete as many projects were not finished when completing the report. Hence, **intensified cross-border cooperation is very likely to have occurred thanks to a careful selection of projects incorporating all dimensions of cross-border cooperation.**

Viewed from an implementation perspective, three different types of projects can be distinguished in the project portfolio of the programme: the last type of project – targeting **"Joint solutions to common interests"** - **is the most powerful in terms of enhancing cross-border cooperation. This type is less common than the other types** of projects in the Interreg IVA Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland programme, thus limiting the overall impact of the programme on cross-border cooperation.

1. **"Joint interest identification"**: projects starting from identification of common problem or opportunity, and undertaking analyses or mapping to better understand this need or opportunity.

Examples: the Creative Futures Project aims to encourage innovation and competitiveness in enterprise and business development within the creative industries sector in Northern Ireland and Ireland, through promoting innovation and growth in new and existing businesses. The project has undertaken studies, benchmarking analyses and awareness raising events to map the sector and identify opportunities for business development and cooperation. The Multi-Annual Plans prepared by the cross-border working groups also aim to identify areas for future collaboration, based on stakeholders' consultations.

2. **"Shared expertise for region-specific solutions to common needs"**: projects where partners on the various sides of the border have developed solutions, skills and expertise and share these in order to improve each other's practices. The solutions implemented remain different in each region.

Example: The ANSWER project addresses the common difficulties in the three regions with the environmentally sustainable disposal of sewage effluents. The project has carried out applied research and established pilot installations, based on a new technique: the use of willows as a biofilter for the tertiary polishing of wastewater streams from water treatment works / septic tanks, farm wastewater and possibly effluents from a range of other sources e.g. food processors, landfill sites. Solutions are implemented in each region using the new technique, but remain region-specific.

- 3. “Joint solutions to common interests”:** projects where resources are jointly devoted to bring a common solution to a joint need or opportunity, thus creating critical masses and synergies to better respond to the identified challenge.

Example: the KITE project (Box 3) where further education and training courses are delivered using new combinations of expertise and specialised equipment by organisations in the various parts of the cross-border region and are successfully deployed in courses to serve the joint interest of the industries in the regions, is an example of this type.

**The extent of enhanced cross-border cooperation in some cases of projects “far from the border” is more difficult to ascertain.** Given the political drive and the active role of cross-border partnerships favoring cooperation between Ireland and Northern Ireland, the contribution of the programme in alleviating barriers to cooperation is clearly understood by many actors in that part of the cross-border area. These barriers refer to: lack of knowledge about partner’s and resources on the other side of the border; lack of trust; prejudices against cooperation coming from decades of tensions and violence; different working practices, insufficient physical connections, etc. Most projects “at the border” tend to be founded on this rationale. For projects that do not have such a focus on the border area and the border problems, the proximity element is missing to justify the value-added of cross-border cooperation: enhancement of cooperation is not achieved so clearly in such cases. A good example of a project succeeding in removing geographical barriers for cooperation in the wider region by using distance-learning e-tools is that of the KITE project (Box 3). However, in other cases such as the IBIS project (Box 7), removing barriers to cooperation caused by distance is more difficult once the project has finished.

**Box 3. KITE Knowledge and Innovation Transfer in Engineering project: removing physical barriers to cooperation through distance learning**

A partnership of three high level research and education institutions, IT Sligo in Ireland, Northern Regional College (NRC) in Northern Ireland and Ayr College in Scotland, has launched the EUR 3.2 million KITE (Knowledge and Innovation Transfer in Engineering) project, co-funded by the EU’s INTERREG IVA Programme.

The three year project aims to secure the long term sustainability of the key engineering and manufacturing sectors within Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland, by increasing productivity and reducing costs for employers and through linking academia and industry. The goal is to increase the pool of highly trained technicians available and active in the job market, in order to enhance the vitality of the industry in the region.

The project aims at creating a 'virtual centre of excellence' and enabling businesses to improve their competitiveness and up skill their staff, with minimal interruption and cost. Each college is equipped with machinery to facilitate training in areas including robotics, computer numerical control, mechatronics and electronics; Ayr College also provides new expertise in the aerospace and composite materials sectors and IT Sligo specialises in on-line technologies for Engineering. This enables businesses to train employees on expert equipment without interrupting production at their site and therefore reducing costs. The three colleges have the experience of working with local manufacturing and engineering industries.

The major benefits of the project includes full access to e-learning available for each of the colleges, a reduction of the number of software licenses required and immediately available and access to up to live demonstrations of new technologies on a cross-border basis.

The recorded achievements of the project are as follows:

- Number of businesses assisted: 76
- Number of businesses developing new processes: 38
- Number of new jobs created: 30
- Company employees trained on industry specific training courses: 681
- Participants accessing online teaching methodologies: 1163
- Participants receiving accreditation: 312

Cross-border collaboration is being maintained as NRC continues to work with IT Sligo and Ayr College in online material demo testing and online machine demonstrations.

Source : <http://itsligo.ie>; www.nrc.ac.uk and programme AIR 2013

The quality of cross-border cooperation also depends on the fact that it persists after project funding period. This crucial issue is dealt with in Section 3.4, "Sustainability of achievements".

### 3.2.2 What barriers to co-operation have been removed ?

The main obstacle to cross-border cooperation is often the **lack of openness to and knowledge of suitable cooperation partners and opportunities on the other side of the border**. In the R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship field, the focus of many projects has been to support intermediary bodies and agencies to act beyond the borders, share practices and pool expertise for the benefit of SMEs in the whole area. Many projects not only addressed cooperation barriers in terms of lack of knowledge of partners and issues on the other side of the border, but also helped to develop trust and experience in working with partners engaged in similar activities in two different countries and regions.

A good example of a project where the contribution of the programme was essential to spur cooperation between business promotion and innovation support agencies on both sides of the border on the island of Ireland is the iFactory project (Box 4). Such a project successfully **breaks cooperation barriers taking the form of inward-looking practices of agencies** on both sides of the border, demonstrating the benefits of wider-scale and complementary expertise to be shared between them, benefitting supported companies.

**Box 4. iFactory project: positive impacts on cooperation between business support agencies**

The overall aim of the iFactory project is to increase the innovation capability and capacity in small and micro businesses across the INTERREG IVA region. This was achieved through the trial and development of a comprehensive approach to small business mentoring support based around the concept of the Innovation Agent – an in-house mentor who worked with and guided the client business through the support defined by their Action Plan and ensured that the learning from that support was embedded in the business for greater impact.

The project was delivered through a variety of cross-border partners: NORIBIC (Northern Ireland) and WestBIC (Ireland) were the client facing organisations who provided the Innovation Agents and undertook the recruitment, audit, action planning and support for the businesses and provided them with mentors and external support outside of iFactory as necessary. Mentoring support was provided by the six Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland and two Institutes of Technology in the border region of Ireland –Letterkenny and Sligo. Potential business referrals to the programme were made by the six County Enterprise Boards in the border region of Ireland. Both Invest NI and Enterprise Ireland provided referrals and client vetting.

A number of quantifiable achievements have been reported as follows:

- Number of businesses assisted: 133
- Number of businesses developing new processes:15
- Number of innovation action plans developed through the intervention of innovation agents: 133
- Number of businesses attending iLearning seminars: 223

The engagement and interaction between mentors, Innovation Agents and participant businesses from both sides of the border has been a feature of this project. It was designed to bring together providers of expertise to within the reach of participants in a way that had not happened before. This would not have happened without the structure provided by iFactory, following EU funding support.

In the experience of the Project team, this interchange of expertise had not happened before on any meaningful scale, hence the decision to employ the deliberate strategy of deploying Innovation Agents and mentors on cross-border assignments. The results of this strategy has been witnessed not only on the positive achievements of the receiving businesses, but also in the enhanced level of networking that has taken place on a spin-off basis, both in the workplace and at iFactory events.

Source: programme AIR 2013

There are two limitations in the success of the programme in addressing cooperation barriers.

The first relates to the **marginality of Scotland in the partnerships**: the project-based participation of Scottish partners is in general less conducive to lasting cooperation practices. Several cases of successful joint research projects involving Scottish partners exist in the programme, but the exact nature of their cross-border dimension is not always clear and in consequence, there is a risk that partnerships do

not last after such projects. Cooperation barriers will only be successfully addressed in cases where there is a genuine mutual interest and where all partners identify the need to cooperate to address a joint opportunity.

The other limitation concerns projects with a focus on exchanges of experiences and practices but without joint investments. **Some projects run the risk to operate as parallel projects, without genuine cooperation, despite exchanges of practices at design stage.** This is notably a risk for projects with simultaneous infrastructure development in two locations across the border. It is however not possible in the framework of this evaluation to quantify the share of such projects, as this would demand in-depth analysis of each project.

Finally, **some cooperation barriers proved difficult to address** and persist despite the long history of cooperation and a number of successful projects in the area: distinctive administrative cultures (regarding the depth and level of detail in reporting imposed on projects, the frequency and depth of audits, etc.) within the UK and Ireland are frequently reported as pervasive and hard-to-address barriers.

### **3.2.3 What is the evidence for the contribution of ETC programmes ?**

**The programme is characterized by lasting “soft” achievement in terms of cross-border engagement and collaboration.** The mid-term evaluation of the programme carried out an enquiry of project beneficiaries, from which it appears that: *“the majority of respondents noted that the programme has encouraged cooperation and collaboration among organisations that would not have otherwise worked together”* and *“the cross-border element of the programme was described as being a key benefit of the programme as it developed networking opportunities for organisations north and south of the border.”*

The programme authorities (SEUPB) commissioned an independent survey targeted both at general public and 50 approved stakeholders of the programme. For the latter target, the telephone survey asked respondents whether they consider that EU funding delivered through the programme made a positive difference to communities: the answer was positive for 90% of respondents in Border region of Ireland, 78% of respondents in Northern Ireland and 75% in Western Scotland. From this it can be concluded that **the programme made a difference to cooperation practices, especially in border communities.**

### 3.3. Impacts on learning, knowledge transfer and capacity building

#### EVALUATION QUESTION

c) What learning has been generated during the implementation of the CBC programme? Who has benefited? From which stakeholders to which other stakeholders has knowledge and capacity been transferred?

#### 3.3.1 What learning has been generated during the implementation of the CBC programme ?

Fostering learning and building capacity for cross-border cooperation is an important overall focus of the programme. In addition capacity building for cross-border cooperation is also a “hidden” theme within projects. Many projects have initiated or further developed cooperation practices between research or innovation actors on either sides of the borders, and their **improved understanding of opportunities, contexts and rules on the other side of these borders** is a legacy of the project, difficult to measure though. This can be considered as the main type of learning generated by the programme.

The programme has also **built tools to enhance capacity and improve learning for cross-border cooperation**, thanks to the development of tools and manuals specifically devoted to this theme, building on the experience of past projects and diffusing this to stakeholders in the area. The Ireland Northern Ireland Cross-Border Cooperation Observatory is instrumental in this work of gathering and diffusing knowledge gained in cross-border cooperation (Box 5).

#### **Box 5. Tools for improving learning and building capacity for cross-border cooperation**

The Toolkit for Budgeting of Cross-Border Projects and its companion publication, the Toolkit for Evaluation of Cross-Border Projects are both part of a strategic package of linked training, animation, mentoring and research activities to support public service deliverers, particularly local authorities. These toolkits developed in the Irish Cross-Border Territory aim to equip those involved in the management of cross-border or transnational projects with the skills and knowledge needed for the successful implementation of cross-border interventions. They are both products of the INNICO-2 project (the Ireland Northern Ireland Cross-Border Cooperation Observatory), which was funded under the EU INTERREG IVA Programme. This project is implemented by the Centre for Cross Border Studies, which mission is to empower citizens and build capacity and capability for cooperation across sectors and jurisdictional boundaries on the island of Ireland and further afield. This mission is achieved through research, expertise, partnership and experience in a wide range of cross-border practices and concerns.

The Aims and Objectives of the INICCO-2 project coincide with the overall objective of the INTERREG Programme to support strategic cooperation for a more prosperous and sustainable region, contributing to the development of a dynamic economy and improving access to services and the quality of life for those living in the Irish cross-border region. The aims of INICCO-2 are:

- To increase and strengthen cross-border cooperation for a more prosperous and sustainable border region and more efficient delivery of public services through addressing information and skills gaps among

actors in the region.

- To contribute to the increased social, economic and territorial cohesion of the Irish Cross-Border region through:
- Promoting and improving the quality of Cross-Border Cooperation between public bodies, and between public bodies, business and civil society; and
- Improving the capacity of people involved in social and economic development of the Irish Cross-Border region to better align their objectives and outcomes with the priorities of EU Cohesion Policy and Europe 2020.

Source: <http://crossborder.ie>

Cross-border cooperation projects funded by Interreg IVA are also **building capacity for higher-order external cooperation**: "*cross-border cooperation is a stepping stone to Horizon2020, because otherwise we are too small*". This also applies to linkages with Strand B of ETC. An example is the "Recruit and Retain" project, funded by the Northern Periphery programme (Strand B) which aims to find solutions to the persistent problem of difficulties in recruiting and retaining high quality people to work in the public sector in the remote rural areas of Northern Europe.

### 3.3.2 Who has benefited ?

The large variety of stakeholders involved in projects benefitted from specific learning attached to their particular projects. Beyond these beneficiaries from ad hoc learning, the programme also helped generate learning within **several organizations with an exclusive cross-border mandate**. These organizations **are main beneficiaries of the learning generated by the programme**:

- Some **cross-border organizations funded by the programme** are coordinating a range of projects within their area of cross-border work. A good example of such organization is the Joint Business Council gathering Northern Ireland and Ireland Businesses Councils IBEC and CBI. The programme funds activity of this cross-border council in the form of 40 Strategic Initiatives focused in 3 main areas of People / skills; Infrastructure; and Innovation, R&D. This council is interacting with multiple public and private sector actors such as the North South Round Table Group, Intertrade Ireland, Universities Ireland and other relevant State Agencies, which is a way to diffuse the learning and build capacity for cross-border cooperation in business development and innovation in a systematic way.
- Other agencies, such as InterTradeIreland active in business promotion with SMEs (Box 6) are not beneficiary of Interreg IVA but **are active in providing advice on project selection** (checking for complementarity with their own work) or as Member of the Steering groups for some projects. As such they also benefit from lessons learned in funded projects and are able to incorporate those in their own action. The Loughs Agency is another cross-border body established under the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, with a mission to foster cross-border cooperation in matters related to marine, fishery and aquaculture in a cross-border area (Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough). This Agency is lead partner of the IBIS project (see Box 7): here direct beneficiaries of the new knowledge are the scientific partners, but the agency is also well placed to **use and diffuse the knowledge gained in this project**.

**Box 6. Capacity Building for improvement of Cross-border trade and business**

InterTradeIreland is a Cross-Border Trade and Business Development Body funded by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI) and the Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation in Ireland (DJEI). Since 1999, InterTradeIreland supports businesses, through innovation and trade initiatives to take advantage of North/South co-operative opportunities to improve capability, drive competitiveness, growth and jobs. This includes access to research institutions and other organisations on a cross-border basis as well as sources of finance to fund on-going innovation activity in companies. A key objective set to and monitored by this body is to increase the number of businesses involved in cross-border Trade and Innovation activity.

Source: [www.intertradeireland.com](http://www.intertradeireland.com)

- And last but not least, the **cross-border groups of local authorities**, an original feature of the programme, have played an important role in terms of building capacity for cooperation across borders and diffusing lessons learned since the start of Interreg in the area. These partnerships of local authorities had two roles in the 2007-2013 programme. First, they prepared “Multi Annual Plans” for their respective area to address the present and future development needs of their sub-region. Second, each group acted as lead partners for a number of projects located in their jurisdiction, totaling EU contributions of EUR 30 million. **More than half of the projects falling into the « R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship » theme** under the focus of this evaluation (see Table 2 above) **are led by the five cross-border groups of local authorities** covering the whole border area on the island of Ireland, which are :
  - EBR - East Border Region Ltd
  - ICBAN - Irish Central Border Area Network
  - NWRCBG - North West Region Cross Border Group
  - COMET - Interreg Partnership
  - NEP - North East Partnership.

**3.3.3. From which stakeholders to which other stakeholders has knowledge and capacity been transferred?**

**The cross-border groups of local authorities are main diffusion agents of learning gained through the Interreg projects: they are helping to diffuse lessons learned across the various local authorities.** They used to play an important role in project development and implementation on a local basis, including but not only for the promotion of innovation. They have lost their status of delivery agents with dedicated envelopes for projects when moving from Interreg III to IV. The evolution of the programme towards interventions at a regional level and with higher critical mass means that their role in the future will be less prominent. Hence it is likely that the programme will evolve towards stimulating diffusion capacity with other regional-level operators that will become key players in the future.

The evaluation team found that the exploitation of opportunities for inter-project learning is underdeveloped to date in the programme: cross-project lessons will help

further consolidate appetite and capacities for cross-border cooperation. **Collecting and diffusing project results more widely beyond project partners would also contribute to build capacities amongst a wider range of stakeholders.** The large number of projects addressing innovation support for SMEs calls for capitalisation and exchanges of methods across projects in order to avoid reinventing the wheel, drawing lessons from experience, and sharing actions on a wider scale when relevant (e.g. between the territories of the cross-border groups of local authorities).

### 3.4. Sustainability of learning and cooperation

#### EVALUATION QUESTION

**d) What is the likely future for such learning mechanisms and co-operation? Will its sustainability depend on future EU financing?**

#### 3.4.1. What is the likely future for such learning mechanisms and co-operation?

The **setup and context of the Interreg IVA programme provide a favorable situation for ensuring projects sustainability:**

- Demonstration of sustainability potential is one project selection criterion;
- Persistence of actions/partnerships 2 years after the end of the programme funding is a typical "impact" indicator for the programme;
- Several long-lasting structures dedicated to the promotion of cross-border cooperation are at work in the region and are well placed to ensure continuity of achievements after the end of Interreg-funded projects (see section 3.3 above).

The enquiry conducted for the mid-term evaluation collected opinions on this issue, which were that two types of benefits are likely to be maintained in the future: 1) capital projects are likely to be more sustainable because physical investments are there to last; and 2) the change of mindsets facilitated by projects, which helped to overcome prejudices against cross-border cooperation. However, as mentioned above, the first argument can be questioned: while it is true that capital investments are by definition long-lasting, the sustainability of such investments in the context of a cross-border programme depends on two conditions:

1. The continuity of funding sources for maintaining and using the infrastructure after it has been co-funded by Interreg (this is a classical condition for ensuring sustainability);
2. The **continuity in the use of infrastructure on a cross-border basis** (this condition is specific to the case of programmes aiming at cross-border cooperation).

Two contrasting examples can be given to illustrate the above issue:

- A good example of continuity in the use of infrastructure on a cross-border basis is given by the KITE project (Knowledge and Innovation Transfer in Engineering) (Box 3). The project aims at increasing the skills, capacity, knowledge and levels of technology adoption of engineering and manufacturing industries in the cross-border region, through development and rollout of industry specific training materials and equipping training and development laboratories for use by industry and third level students. The equipment funded by the programme is still used on a cross-border basis through an agreement between the lead partner, Northern Regional College and its Irish and Scottish partner, respectively IT Sligo and Ayr College, to work together on online material demo testing and online machine demonstrations.

- The IBIS project is an example of a project funding large infrastructure where sustainability is unlikely, as not all conditions are fulfilled yet (Box 7). The first condition is met through a commitment by the University of Glasgow to further support the infrastructure after the Interreg funding, while the second condition is not guaranteed. The marginal situation of Scotland in the cross-border area, the location of the infrastructure with a partner that is not a lead partner nor has a mission targeted to cross-border activities, is not conducive to a continuation of this cross-border cooperation. Without further Interreg A funding, there will be few incentives for new research or training projects to focus on the cross-border areas' issues. Continuous training activities for professionals, carried out during the project, will also be hard to sustain in view of continuing public sector budget pressures. On the other hand, the good feature of the project, namely the shift towards a more user-driven approach for the definition of research and training topics thanks to the establishment of an advisory board of users from the three regions, will be a legacy from the project.

**Box 7. IBIS Project: the issue of sustainability**

The IBIS - Integrated Aquatic Resources Management Between Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland – project is led by the Loughs Agency (Loughs Agency for protection of aquatic resources, a cross-border partnership between Ireland and Northern Ireland) and gathers partners in Scotland (Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment, University of Glasgow), in Northern Ireland (Queen University of Belfast). This partnership associates a practitioner, helping to define priority research areas and academic partners, active in research and training activities. The two academic partners have complementary expertise and the project aims at exploiting this complementarity.

With EU funding of EUR 5.2 million, it is a large project under Priority 2-Infrastructure of the programme.

The aim of the project is to meet a range of environmental priorities for delivering high quality policy and sustainable management of freshwater and marine natural resources and the biodiversity they support across the programme area. Specific activities of this project are

- To conduct a research programme to address applied aquatic resource management questions common to the cross-border programme area
- To deliver high quality training in field of freshwater and marine resource management
- To promote public and stakeholder understanding and awareness and aquatic resource management issues through knowledge transfer
- To enable skills transfer and development for practitioners of freshwater and marine resource management and biodiversity of biodiversity
- To develop cross border partnerships and collaborations between agencies, institutions and NGOs with aquatic resources management interests that will persist beyond completion of the project
- To provide world class facilities supporting training, research and skills sharing in aquatic ecosystems and their management into the future.

The project supported the delivery of applied research through master and doctoral training programmes, knowledge transfer workshops, continuous professional development courses and the building of a state-of-the-art training

facility in Scotland. One key benefit of the project is that research and training activities have been framed in a user-driven perspective thanks to the action of the Loughs Agency, which is also active in diffusion of new solutions to particular policy problems.

Source: KEEP database of projects by INTERACT and visit to SCENE

### 3.4.2. Will its sustainability depend on future EU financing?

Generally speaking, the **absence of private actors as direct beneficiaries of projects, and the low level of private co-financing of projects** (this is a general feature of all Interreg programmes) **challenge sustainability** in the sense of continuation of action without dependence on public funds.

**Mainstreaming activities initially funded by Interreg into the domestic programmes or in the activities of cross-border organisations, is the most effective way to ensure sustainability** of cross-border cooperation after the end of the Interreg IV funding period. A phenomenon of repeated applications to successive generations of the same programme (also found typically in other Interreg programmes) is visible: this is an indication of the difficulty for organizations and project partnerships to secure funding through other sources. The ICE project has developed several options for ensuring sustainability, including that of mainstreaming its action into the regular work of regional development agencies (Box 8).

#### **Box 8. Mainstreaming of an innovation promotion project (ICE)**

The ICE project (see Box 1) has developed an Exit Strategy to explore a series of options for sustaining the ICE Initiative and in particular the Tri-Regional Innovation Network. Options investigated include:

- Mainstreaming activities by linking with regional economic development agencies in each of the eligible regions.
- Formulating a subsequent Programme of activity to support innovation among SMEs that is funded by the companies themselves, either wholly or in part.
- Transferring the model of activity at a wider EU level into other territories with similar economic challenges in the context of encouraging and supporting innovation, e.g. through an extension into the North West Europe or Atlantic Area programmes for trans-national cooperation.
- Exploring a wider transnational network for innovation for SMEs through Horizon 2020.
- Disseminating the best practice transferable model of innovation in SMEs based upon: -
  - Embedding skills
  - Changing culture
  - Learning by doing method of approach
- Establishing the economic benefit of the project with a view to informing policy and practice.
- Mainstreaming learning from the programme into research and teaching in each institution.

Source: Source: programme AIR 2013 and project documentation

The programme displays a **number of interesting cases of mainstreaming of projects** in other fields<sup>4</sup>. An example in the field of R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship is that of InterTradeIreland (Box 5), in charge of promoting cross-border cooperation between SMEs. This organization has incorporated a former Interreg project into the core of its programmes: the sales development programme ('Acumen' designed to stimulate cross-border business for SMEs). The programme initiated a total of 81 new projects in 2013 and reported business value of EUR 15.9 million, a jobs impact of 203 and a further 18 graduate jobs were created through new projects. The indicators of the monitoring system measuring persistence of partnerships and activities two years after the end of the programme (see Section 3.6), if computed appropriately, should provide an evidence-based view on the question of sustainability of projects funded by Interreg IVC.

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<sup>4</sup> Those are found in particular in the health sector where agencies in each jurisdiction have incorporated the support of cross-border centres in their activities.

### 3.5. Significance of ETC programme

#### EVALUATION QUESTION

**e) If there were no prior CBC programmes, would the projects co-financed through the programme have happened without the existence of EU funding?**

The majority of respondents to a recent survey as well as participants of a focus group for this evaluation considered that projects would not have been implemented without the Interreg funding. The mid-term evaluation enquiry of the programme noted: *“Respondents were asked to comment on whether they felt their projects would have happened without financial assistance from the programme. The majority of respondents reported that their projects would not have been implemented without funding, whilst a few respondents noted that their projects would have taken place but not to the same extent.”* These responses come from 27 stakeholders only and their level of representativeness is not known. Participants in the focus group held for this evaluation (see [Annex 3](#)) had the same opinion: even in domains where cooperation has a relatively long history, **there is a need for these catalytic funds before a full incorporation in regional or national programmes can be envisaged.**

In addition, the long-lasting legacy of ‘The Troubles’ at the border area between Northern Ireland and Ireland explain that for many projects located at the border, *“if Interreg money wouldn’t have been there, we would have stayed back-to-back”* (focus group participant).

Contribution of ETC is highest for those projects that display a genuine cross-border character and depend on public funds: it is not possible to fund such projects, e.g. the development of broadband infrastructure on a cross-border basis, either with national funds, as such funds cannot be spent outside own jurisdiction, or with private funds.

On the basis of this partial evidence, and keeping in mind the above caveat about the risk of duplication with domestic funds in the case of some projects, we conclude that **the contribution of the Interreg IVA programme is good, but that improvements are possible through increasing the share of projects with highest cross-border dimension and value-added.**

### 3.6. Quality of monitoring system

#### EVALUATION QUESTION

**f) Which programmes have the best monitoring systems and which have the worst?**

Overall, **the quality of the monitoring system of the Interreg IVA programme Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland is open to improvements.** Although the SEUPB acknowledges that setting and using indicators "is not an exact science" and that "indicators are not central to the programme", the monitoring system set up for the programme contributes to the understanding of achievements and provides support to the strategic work of Managing Authorities. There is no specific difference between the monitoring practices for the projects in the field of "R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship" and those in the rest of the programme.

The programme includes 45 monitoring indicators, which partly reflect the aims of the priorities and sub-priorities (see [Annex 4](#)). Not all indicators visibly incorporate the cross-border dimension (e.g. "number of businesses assisted") but this is rather an issue of formulation than of substance, since it is clear from the programme rules that all projects need to include a clear cross-border dimension. However, **it would be useful to measure explicitly the depth of cross-border cooperation**, e.g. by checking the ex post reality of the four criteria "joint development", "joint implementation", "joint staffing" and "joint funding". The check of the quality of value-added of projects - assessing the "Interregness" of projects - is so far done mostly on an ex ante basis, through a good project selection procedure. However project selection process should not act as a substitute for sound programme monitoring: ex ante verification needs to be matched with equally sound processes during and after project completion, through the use of appropriate indicators. The monitoring system is not yet adequate to fully meet this challenge.

The programme distinguishes adequately in principle between outputs ("products of the activities funded"), results ("immediate advantages of carrying out these activities") and impacts ("sustainable long term benefits of any activity"). The indicators listed under each type are broadly adequate to measure some types of achievements at these three levels, although **they do not measure all types of achievements and fall short of measuring quality of some results.** For example, there is no indicator measuring quality and relevance of cross-border research activities carried out in some projects. Some projects have commissioned their own external evaluation, a good move at project level but these findings do not find their way at programme level.

All indicators are associated with 2015 target values, and the successive Annual Implementation Reports monitor progress towards these targets. All indicators are also associated with baseline values, but the latter are often set at zero. The quantification of targets has proven difficult as some target values are clearly underestimated (e.g. number of businesses assisted), while some others are over-estimated (percent businesses developing new products or services) (see [Annex 3](#)).

The programme has produced a document containing clear definitions for all indicators, as well as ways to measure them. In general indicators are measurable,

either as an extraction of project reports, or through other sources (national statistical office, tourist board, etc.).

It is not possible to rely on programme-level indicators to characterize programme results. Project promoters are asked to link their indicators to programme indicators, but the records in the AIR shows some discrepancies in this link. Notably, some project indicators are not reflected in programme indicators: there are 512 unique project specific indicators, which are not used at programme level. Hard work had been devoted by the Technical Secretariat to correct these mismatches retrospectively, but the work has not been fully completed. Improving the link between project-level and programme-level indicators is an obvious path for improvement.

Attention towards improvement of the quality of the monitoring system is present: a review was conducted in 2013 to fine-tune and revise indicators and targets. Some targets have been over-estimated (e.g. results in terms of innovation) and some others under-estimated (e.g. outputs in terms of number of supported businesses). One main reason for the lack of suitability of some targets lies in the fact that the programme funded fewer large, strategic projects than anticipated in favour of rather smaller projects. As a result, the Managing Authority decided to revise some targets in 2013.

Efforts are devoted by Managing Authority to support their strategic work, beyond the pure managerial and financial issues. In addition to the two previously mentioned manuals for promoters of cross-border projects (Box 6), an Impact Assessment Tool was notably developed by the Ireland/Northern Ireland Cross Border Co-operation Observatory (INICCO), a project funded by the programme (project leader is the Centre for Cross-Border studies in Northern Ireland). This tool was applied by the SEUPB and the Centre supported applicants for the last round of the programme with the use of the tool. The tool will be used by all projects in the new INTERREG V programme 2014-2020. As a result of using the Impact Assessment tool, a 2 phases process was introduced by SEUPB, meaning that only those projects which passed the first phase (13 out of 91) progressed to the second and to the development of a comprehensive business plan.

The above points suggest that **strategic management capacities are quite well developed at programme level**. This well-developed strategic management capacity, and continuity in the role of SEUPB as Managing Authority of the programme, has helped to **steer a strategic evolution of the programme**, towards objectives that target regional development and critical masses.

### 3.7. Value-added of INTERACT

#### EVALUATION QUESTION

**g) What has been the added value of the INTERACT programme to the effective functioning of the CBC programme?**

**The support from INTERACT, a programme that is well-known by SEUPB, is quite highly viewed.** The most useful types of support for them are the training sessions and the users' manuals, which SEUPB has used rather intensively.

Actually, **SEUPB is also a contributor to INTERACT:** tools and methods used in the programme are known to, and some even taken up by INTERACT. This is notably the case of an impact assessment toolkit developed during a project funded by Interreg IVA (see Section 3.6). This two-way cooperation is seen as very valuable by the Managing Authority, as these also help to feed INTERACT with inputs from the programmes and bring them close to practice.

The Managing Authority also states that a main value-added of INTERACT is the creation of linkages with other cross-border areas, which provides a lot of valuable opportunities for networking.

This good opinion of the MAs on the contribution of INTERACT for improving programme management is taken by evaluators as a good signal for the positive value-added of INTERACT, however, much more detailed knowledge on managerial issues and solutions where INTERACT contributed could not be gathered in the limited time frame of the evaluation field analysis (in which managerial issues were not a main focus).

### 3.8. Coordination with national and regional programmes

#### EVALUATION QUESTION

**h) To what extent were the programme objectives coordinated with those of national and regional programmes? Can synergies be objectively evaluated?**

#### 3.8.1. To what extent were the programme objectives coordinated with those of national and regional programmes?

**The general case for complementarity between this cross-border programme and other programmes at play in the area is well made** in the Interreg IVA OP: the OP targets similar objectives than mainstream programmes, but with a particular focus on benefits from cross-border cooperation: thus the complementarity is ensured by the fact that Interreg funds projects that cannot be funded by national or regional programme because their scope extends beyond the administrative borders; while the similarity in objectives ensures that specific capacity useful for those objectives (like supporting business networks for innovation) can be raised on both sides of the border by the domestic programmes, which in turn makes it possible for the structures to work on a cross-border basis on similar issues. The consultation process for the preparation of the OP has been wide-ranging and was informed by the regional priorities in the three regions, hence the definition of objectives has been done taking into account domestic programmes' priorities (Box 9). The OP includes an exhaustive list of relevant regional, national and EU programmes which interact with this programme. It also mentions that members of the Managing Authority attend other programme's meetings to ensure this complementarity.

#### **Box 9. Definition of objectives for the Interreg IVA programme Northern Ireland – Border region of Ireland – Western Scotland**

The process followed for setting objectives for cross-border cooperation is sound:

- objectives are based on stakeholder consensus: the preparation of the OP involved a wide consultation process (also including a specific environmental impact assessment) including proactive and reactive means in two main rounds, and the OP has been revised taking the lessons from the consultation on board. The cross-border committees with local authorities and other actors facilitated stakeholders involvement, and this is true both for programme preparation and for project development. Partnership agreements between various stakeholders at local level are seen by the mid-term evaluation as an effective way to mobilize stakeholders. For each (sub-) priority, a relevant and detailed list of beneficiaries is drawn up in the OP.
- The OP provides evidence of a continuous policy learning process. It discusses lessons from Interreg I, II and III, and interestingly, also from the four B programmes in which the area was involved. The key lessons learned from the latest programme are very relevant as they concern strategic, rather than purely administrative or managerial issues: e.g. one issue relates to the need for more concentration of action, more critical mass, more impact and more strategic direction for the programme (as opposed to "project-led" actions too thinly spread across the region). These strategic directions are adequate to reach the goals set to cross-border cooperation.

The overall goal of this cross-border cooperation programme is stated as follows:  
**"supporting strategic cross-border cooperation for a more prosperous and**

**sustainable region".** The key driving force for the programme is to address typical problems of peripheral and rural economies, further exacerbated by the border. Cross-border cooperation is seen as beneficial for economic development of marginalized and peripheral areas. This is expected to happen through creating economies of scales over the border, improvement of communication and infrastructure networks which are disrupted by the border, and through the provision of better public service delivery across borders.

The OP adequately identifies potential benefits from cross-border cooperation, both by solving identified border problems and by exploiting untapped opportunities due to the existence of the border. The OP provides good justification of benefits expected from cross-border cooperation, in terms of curing the diseases from decades of "back-to-back" development. An important study on the potential brought by an "all-island" economy provides the basis for the identification of benefits from cross-border cooperation (British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, 2007). This study identified the economic rationale and substantive means for cooperation in a wide range of fields. Gaps in infrastructure provision and different policy approaches are seen as responsible for low performance achievements in education, waste treatment, use of new energy, etc. in regions cut off from their natural hinterlands. Fragmented labour markets are also seen as detrimental for economic growth and employment. Reasons for and variations in cross-border flows of people and barriers to cooperation are analysed. The need for aligned policy approaches to reap benefits of cooperation is explained.

The identification of cross-border value-added is supported by evidence: the SWOT rests on a corpus of relevant information. In addition to the above major study, multiple references to relevant studies, to the ex ante analysis, to ESPON studies, and to evaluations of earlier generations of this programme, are present in the OP. Organisations such as InterTradeIreland, tasked with promoting cross-border links in trade and innovation, provide relevant expertise. The particular political situation has also generated a number of studies on the "border issues", which are exploited in the OP. The ex ante evaluation has been used in an iterative process along with the consultation and resulted in numerous changes in the OP: extending lessons from past programmes on strategic rather than administrative issues; emphasizing complementarity with broader policy frameworks, and improving indicators and the programme's monitoring and evaluation framework.

It has however been contested in drawing up the programme, that borders negatively impact on structural economic problems faced by the area, such as dependence on agriculture and public jobs, little presence of knowledge-based sectors, high unemployment and low productivity, etc. Nevertheless, the argument that wider business cooperation and knowledge sharing across borders, both among companies and knowledge institutions, can benefit economic development, is a valuable one.

Source: programme OP, ex ante analysis and interviews with MAs

The objectives set for cross-border cooperation are presented in a clear way, are backed up by evidence and informed by lessons from previous cooperation: however these objectives remain quite generic, in particular for the "cooperation" theme which is all-encompassing. The OP has a focus on EU priorities, but the vague character of some objectives opens doors to projects that do not contribute directly to these priorities. The wide coverage of topics in the cross-border programme made it easy to satisfy stakeholders in the three regions: all types of priorities can be accommodated in the programme with such an openness to a variety of types of actions. Since the obligation of concentration of action of funds was not present at the start of 2007-2013 (contrary to the situation for the 2014-2020 period), achieving an alignment of priorities between mainstream and cross-border programmes was considered as an

easy task. **Such a wide-ranging cross-border programme risks duplication of targets rather than complementarity with mainstream programmes.**

The **recent inclusion of Western Scotland in the cross-border territory is not matched with similarly well-founded arguments for cross-border value-added.** The main argument is that the maritime border provides opportunities for shared exploitation of the sea in between the two parts of the area. This restricts de facto the scope of engagement of Scottish partners to, either the joint exploitation of opportunities linked with sea or to the development of joint actions without clear link to the territorial basis (e.g. joint research projects). This creates an imbalance in the nature of Scottish strategic engagement in the programme and in understanding cross-border value-added, compared to the vision of Irish-Northern Ireland partners. The lack of geographical proximity with Scottish partners means that a number of arguments on which the programme has been founded, considering the situation of the island of Ireland, are not relevant for the Scottish coastal area.

A consequence of the overwhelming focus of the cross-border programme on the Irish-Northern Ireland border is that **complementarity with Scottish programmes is given much less attention.** In contrast with the situation on the island of Ireland, where a special body with appropriate resources and staff cares for complementarities between mainstream and cross-border programmes, capacity issues are present in Scotland, where a very small team is dedicated to ETC programmes in the Structural Funds Division in Scottish Government. The role of Interreg IVA programme from a Scottish perspective is thus quite marginal. Scottish participation appears to be driven by opportunities identified by actors on a project basis rather than by strategic goals.

**The special position of SEUPB helps to foster synergies between the various ETC programmes** that are at play in the same area (2 Interreg IVA, 3 Interreg IVB and Interreg IVC) since the body has responsibilities for all of them. For the A programmes, SEUPB plays the role of Managing Authority, while for the B and C programmes, its role is that of an advisor for the Managing Authorities and contact point and facilitator for the regional stakeholders. The view held is that the A Strand is more easily accessible and supports first steps of external cooperation, which then allows actors to climb a higher step and engage in B programmes: **Strand A acts as a nursery towards openness at a larger scale** (European or even international scale). The case of the ICE project (Box 8) which envisages a continuation of innovation-support activities through an extension to a larger trans-national area is a good illustration of this potential complementarity.

### **3.8.2. Can synergies be objectively evaluated?**

Synergies between programmes should ideally be evaluated on a project-level basis, investigating whether the cross-border value-added is at the core of Interreg IVA funding and complements funding through mainstream (national, regional) programmes which have a domestic focus. A check to avoid duplication of funding for the same expenses is carried out by the programme Managing Authorities; however the verification of the sound articulation of the various funding sources supporting specific actors is not systematically carried out.

An analysis on the Scottish side demonstrated that cases of duplication exist between projects funded under the various A and B programmes operating in the area.

### 3.9. Comparison with regional programme

#### EVALUATION QUESTION

**The contractor will compare for the theme of the case study the selected programmes with a programme financed from the national/regional ERDF budgets to understand the difference between the different programmes as regards their impact on the theme and on cooperation.**

Taking the example of **the regional Competitiveness programme in place in Northern Ireland for the same period** (Box 10), **the overlap in priorities with the cross-border programme is apparent.** The order of priority differs though: the "economic" axis of the Interreg IVA OP has a lower share of funds than the "infrastructure and environment" axis, while the reverse is true for the regional programme for Northern Ireland. An important part of the Interreg IVA OP is not present in regional OP, namely the "cooperation sub-priority", which is devoted to strategic collaborative approaches for the delivery of public services in the cross-border area as well as exchange of expertise and best practices in cross-border collaboration. The cross-border dimension of the programme is what provides the complementarity with the regional programme, notably in the field of R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship. Within the Northern Ireland ERDF programme, a section acknowledges the importance of North/South Co-operation. It recognizes that *"the two economies on the island of Ireland face common external threats and potential opportunities from globalisation, which, by working together, can be exploited to mutual advantage. The British and Irish Governments have placed a renewed focus on increased North South cooperation, which will deliver mutual benefits, particularly around the areas of trade and investment, energy, telecommunications, R&TD and skills. By working together in areas such as innovation, enterprise, infrastructure and the environment, we can further our development by utilizing economies of scale and maximizing trading opportunities"*.

#### **Box 10. Competitiveness Programme Northern Ireland 2007-2013**

The Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland 2007-2013 is worth a total of EUR 614 million, of which half comes from the European Union. It focuses on 3 priorities:

**1. Sustainable Competitiveness and Innovation (41% of budget):** 1) Increasing the level and quality of research and technology development; 2) Exploiting the commercial opportunities of the research and technology development base; and 3) Promoting and mainstreaming of innovation.

**2. Sustainable Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (32% of budget):** 1) To increase business start up and survival rates and to encourage growth of firms by encouraging companies of all types and sizes to become more market-aware, research aware, outward-looking, export orientated and committed to ongoing business development; 2) To promote foreign direct investment; and 3) to facilitate a globally competitive and sustainable tourism industry.

**3. Improving Accessibility and Protecting and Enhancing the Environment (25% of budget):** 1) To improve key elements of NI's infrastructure to support and complement sustainable economic and social development; 2) renewable energy and energy efficiency; and 3) to upgrade NI's existing first generation broadband infrastructure to one of the world's first and most widely accessible

next generation, high speed, telecommunications systems.

The Programme's Priorities are delivered by a number of Intermediate Bodies, each of which has its own focus, all of which receive a share of total programme funding.

Source: [www.eucompni.gov.uk](http://www.eucompni.gov.uk)

RDTI and entrepreneurship is the domain with the largest overlap between regional and cross-border programmes. Due notably to the difference in budget size, and also in view of the fact that the field has a lower priority in Interreg IVA, achievements tend to differ in nature. The Interreg IVA cross-border programme tends to fund smaller projects at smaller sub-regional level, while the regional programme has a stronger focus on innovation and on larger projects with a focus on knowledge transfer between research institutes and enterprises.

**This complementarity does not hold for some infrastructure** investments however. The building of a Science Park in a region is a typical investment of mainstream programme. Beyond the fact that such a Park is located close to the border and hence is likely to bring benefits in terms of improved SMEs competitiveness in the area, the cross-border dimension in the Park's operation or the cross-border problem that a Park addresses are not very clear (Box 11). In a number of cases, projects are identical to projects funded by regional sources, and run back-to-back, in parallel. In these cases no complementarity is at play and the Interreg IVA money is used as topping up for those organizations that happen to be located in the eligible areas.

#### **Box 11. Northern Ireland Science Park**

The North West Regional Science Park project is a Flagship project of the North West region cross-border group. It establishes the Island's first cross border Science Park with sister developments in the Derry City Council and Donegal County Council areas. Interreg IVA supported this project with an amount of EUR 14.5 million.

An impressive enterprise and research centre has been constructed in Derry/Londonderry with 50,000 sq ft of space provided. The sister development at Letterkenny Institute of Technology campus will see 20,000 sq ft provided, which will build on the existing CoLab offer.

The aim of the project is to provide an ecosystem within the centres which will support businesses in the knowledge sector during their "Growth" and "Research & Development" phases. The project will maximise the investment in Project Kelvin and provide critical business infrastructure and support to enable new and growing businesses to capitalise on their development and innovation potential.

The Park already demonstrated good capacity to attract enterprises, occupancy rates are rising quickly and strict entry criteria for companies ensure quality of the Park's activities.

Source: [www.nwrcbq.org/north-west-science-park](http://www.nwrcbq.org/north-west-science-park) and project visit

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has carried out an evaluation to assess whether mechanisms were present to manage possible overlaps between the Competitiveness Programme and other EU funding Programmes in place in Northern Ireland: no cases of double funding were identified. However this analysis did not go as far as to identify if synergies between the regional programme and the cross-border programmes are integrated in priorities.

There is thus, to a certain extent, a division of work between the two programmes based on this cross-border dimension. However, in practice the two programmes run in parallel and there are few synergies in implementation: complementarity between regional ERDF programme for Northern Ireland and Interreg IVA is achieved through division of work rather than explicit search for synergies.

Some programme features help to achieve complementarity with regional programmes: association of «mainstream funders» is one project selection criterion; lack of fit with local/regional/national policies is a reason for project rejection. These rules favour projects that, according to the Managing Authority, display good complementarity with regional programmes. Hence there is a **mixed picture in terms of achievements of Interreg IVA compared to regional programmes**: some cross-border projects appear to be funding similar activities to those typically found in regional programmes, while others have a genuine cross-border dimension and could not be funded by regional programmes. Hence, as stated above, **real synergies between the two types of programmes are most likely to be gained in cases of projects offering joint solutions to common needs or opportunities, with joint funding**: this is very difficult to achieve with regional programmes and this is where Interreg's leverage is highest.

## References

Documents for the Interreg IVA Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland programme 2007-2013

- Operational Programme (2012)
- Annual Implementation Report (2013)
- Programme Manual (2009)
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (2008)
- Mid-term evaluation (2013)
- Implementation Analysis (2009)

Evaluation of the Interreg IIIA Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland 2000-2006

Operational Programme Regional Competitiveness Northern Ireland 2007-2013

British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (2007), Comprehensive study on the All-Island Economy.

Nauwelaers, C., K. Maguire and G. Ajmone Marsan (2013), "The case of Ireland-Northern Ireland – Regions and Innovation: Collaborating Across Borders", *OECD Regional Development Working Papers*, 2013/23.

OECD (2013), *Regions and Innovation: Collaborating Across Borders*, OECD publishing, Paris.

## Annexes

### ANNEX 1. Main features of the programme

The area covered by the “Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland” programme for cross-border cooperation includes **parts of three regions in two countries**: most of the region of Northern Ireland and the Western part of Scotland in the UK, and the border area in the Republic of Ireland (eligible NUTS3 areas are listed on Figure A1). The adjacent areas (which can participate to the programme up to a limit of 20% of funds) include Belfast and Outer Belfast (which means that the whole region of Northern Ireland is in fact eligible) and the Western Isles of Scotland.

This is mostly a **rural and peripheral area**, with a population of 2.2 million inhabitants, of whom 50% live in Northern Ireland, 20% in the Republic of Ireland and 30% in Scotland. The land border between Northern Ireland and Ireland provides different types of cross-border cooperation opportunities to those provided by the maritime border between Scotland and the rest of the area.

This programme belongs to the **Type 1 of cross-border programmes**, namely, programmes including only old internal borders and with more favourable starting conditions (according to the value of the proxy “quality of cooperation”, an indicator computed by evaluators of the 2000-2006 ETC programmes). Compared to other members of this Type 1, this programme places higher priority on Information Society and social infrastructure, and lower priority on culture and tourism (Figure A2).

The **context conditions are favourable, yet not optimal** for cross-border cooperation (Table A1). The area displays a rather balanced level of development and rather low diversity across regions (in terms of language, culture, etc. It also benefits from institutionalization of cross-border cooperation, but this is however restricted to the western part of the area (Northern Ireland-border region of Ireland). The fact that on the Irish side, institutional powers are centralized, contrary to the Northern Ireland and Scotland which benefit from larger degrees of decentralization, creates an imbalance in institutional contexts. And the connectivity, while being good on the island of Ireland, is rather low with the Scottish part, separated by a maritime border. Overall, the programme works in conditions that are similar to programmes in the same category: four have more or equally favourable conditions (South Denmark-Schleswig-KERN, Euregio Meuse-Rhin, Germany-Netherlands, Bayern/Austria) and five less favourable context conditions.

Western Scotland was added to the geographical coverage of the programme in the 2007-2013 period. Previously the programme covered only Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. The programme rules state that the Northern Ireland-Ireland cooperation must always be present in projects (with or without Scottish partners), thus de facto maintaining the earlier focus of programme activities on the land border between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The Operational Programme is **financially large**: it has a total budget of EUR 256 million, to which the European Union contributes with an ERDF amount of EUR 192 million (this compares to an average of EUR 100 million for Strand A programmes).

**Figure A1. Map of the eligible area for Interreg IVA programme  
Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland**

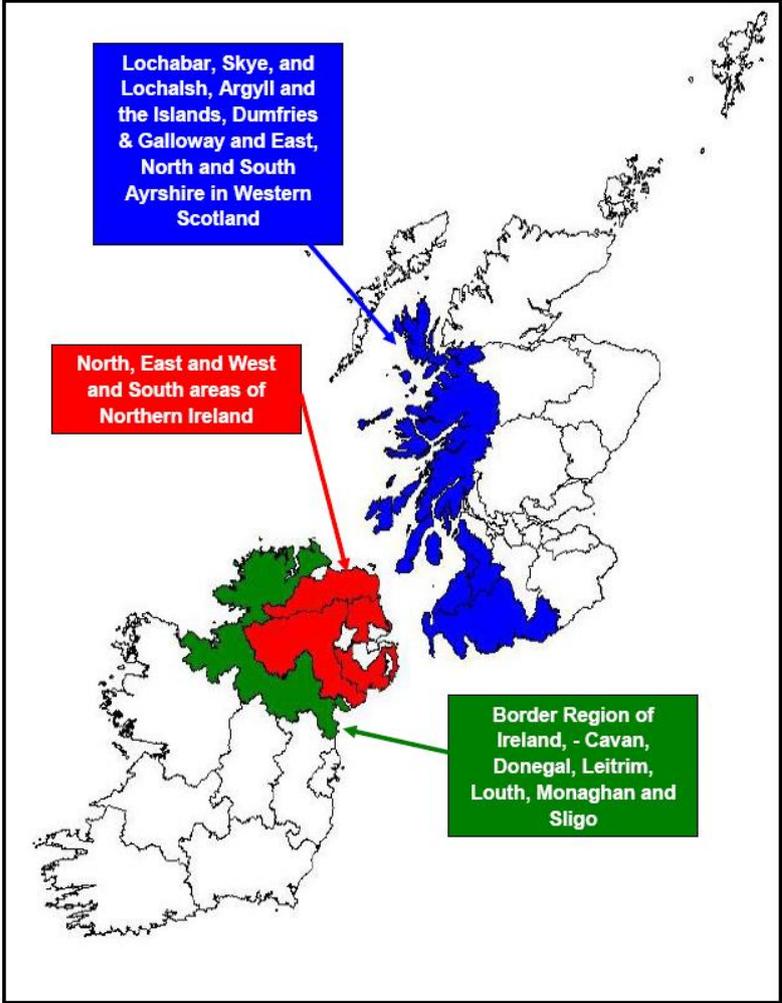


Figure A2. Thematic priorities for Type 1 programmes in Strand A<sup>5</sup>

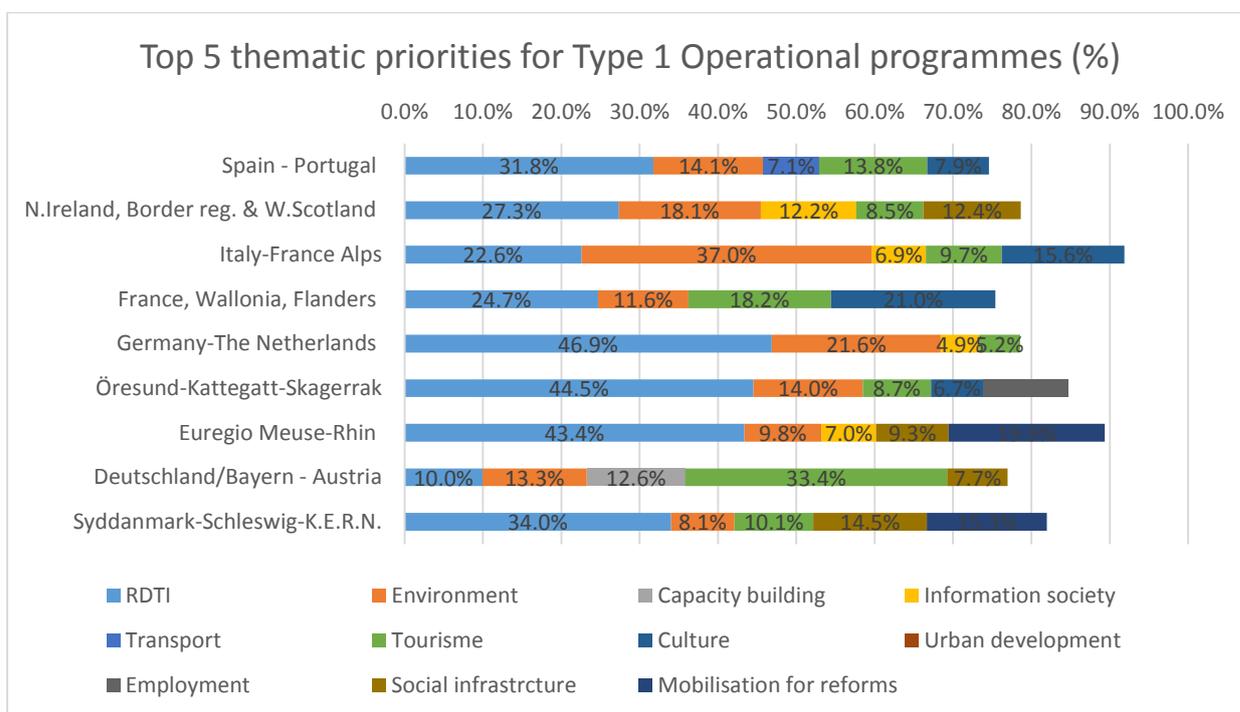


Table A1. Context conditions in Type 1 cross-border cooperation programmes

	Operational programme strand A	Institutionalisation	Development	Institutional power	Density	Connectivity	Diversity
Type 1 Old internal borders High degree of cooperation	Euregio Meuse-Rhin	Institutionalized	Balanced	Mixed	High	High	Average
	Deutschland/Bayern - Austria	Institutionalized	Balanced	Decentralized	Different	Low	Average
	Spain - Portugal	Not institutionalized	Unbalanced	Mixed	Different	Average	Low
	Germany-The Netherlands	Institutionalized	Balanced	Decentralized	Different	High	Average
	Öresund-Kattegatt-Skagerrak	Institutionalized	Balanced	Mixed	Different	Low	Average
	Italy-France Alps	Institutionalized	Unbalanced	Decentralized	Different	Average	Average
	Northern Ireland, Border region Ireland and Western Scotland	Institutionalized	Balanced	Mixed	Low	Low	Low
	PEACE III	Institutionalized	Balanced	Mixed	Low	Average	Low
	Syddanmark-Schleswig-K.E.R.N.	Institutionalized	Balanced	Decentralized	Low	Average	Low
	France, Wallonia, Flanders	Partly institutionalized	Unbalanced	Mixed	Different	High	High

The Programme is structured along the following two main priorities (Table A2):

**Priority 1: Cooperation for a more prosperous cross-border region [39% of total funding]**

This priority focuses on two key areas: enterprise and tourism. The first area aims to diversify and develop the economy of the cross-border region, by encouraging innovation and competitiveness in enterprise and business development. This includes notably investment in business infrastructure for enterprise development and support for clusters and networks. The second area aims to promote tourism products and marketing development.

<sup>5</sup> The PEACE III programme has been excluded from this picture, due to its specific character: it invests only in social infrastructure.

**Priority 2: Cooperation for a sustainable cross-border region [55% of total funding]**

This priority focuses on two key areas: collaboration and infrastructure. Each area aims to provide better access to services to improve the quality of life of those living in the area. The first area promotes strategic collaborative approaches for the delivery of public services in the region as well as exchange of expertise and best practices in cross-border collaboration. The second area targets infrastructure in the region such as ICT, transport, telecommunications, energy, waste, utilities and environmental protection.

The programme places an important priority on the “**R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship**” theme: it allocates the fifth largest absolute amount of EU funds to this theme, namely EUR 49.8 million (compared to an average amount for all cross-border programmes of EUR 19 million)<sup>6</sup>.

**Table A2. Priority Axes in Interreg IVA programme  
Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland**

Priority Axis	EU Investment	National Public Contribution	Total Public Contribution
Cooperation for a more prosperous cross-border region	EUR 75 million	EUR 25 million	EUR 100 million
Cooperation for a sustainable cross-border region	EUR 105 million	EUR 35 million	EUR 140 million
Technical assistance	EUR 12 million	EUR 4 million	EUR 16 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>EUR 192 million</b>	<b>EUR 64 million</b>	<b>EUR 256 million</b>

Source: Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland Operational Programme 2007-2013

The programme is designed and implemented in a unique context. An underlying rationale for this programme is the shared political will to maintain peace between the two communities of Northern Ireland and Ireland and restore connections between the regions on the two sides of the border, which have been hampered by decades of back-to-back development and tensions associated with armed conflict between 1969-1994 (The Troubles). Supporting economic development in Northern Ireland based on cooperation with its Irish neighbor is seen as a mean to that end, and a high-level political agreement between the two national governments supports this cooperation for the benefit of the cross-border region. The North South Ministerial Council (NSMC)

<sup>6</sup> Those figures are ex-ante allocated budgets.

was established under the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (1998), to develop consultation, co-operation and action across the whole island of Ireland, on matters of mutual interest. It comprises Ministers of the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government, working together to take forward co-operation between both parts of the island. This provides a strong basis to conduct activities on a cross-border basis and to secure **lasting political commitment and co-funding from both sides**. This is a strong, distinctive and remarkable feature of the programme.

The Northern Ireland/Ireland programme is managed by the **Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)**. The SEUPB is one of the six cross-border Bodies set up under Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in 1999. This body acts as Managing Authority, Joint Technical Secretariat and Certifying Authority for the INTERREG IVA Programme. It also acts as Managing Authority for PEACE III in Strand A. Coordination with other ETC programmes of Strand B in operation in the area is facilitated by the fact that SEUPB acts as the Regional Contact Point for Northern Ireland in the Northern Periphery Programme, and has an advisory and signposting role for the North West Europe and the Atlantic Area Programmes. Finally, the body is also facilitating North-South participation in the INTERREG IVC Inter-regional programme.

Another feature of the programme, which is directly linked to the above focus on capacity building, is the presence of **Cross-border partnerships of local authorities** designed to stimulate cross-border cooperation between local authorities located at the Irish-Northern Ireland border (Table A3). These Cross-border partnerships of local authorities have been in existence for a long time (several of them having been created in the mid-1970s, at the height of the Troubles in Northern Ireland) and pursue goals that are similar to the programme goals, at local level. The remit of these partnerships is to take advantage of opportunities but also to address common challenges in the border area. For example, the North West Region Cross Border Group *"recognises there is a range of issues that are common to both sides of the border and that by working together the region is more likely to address these issues... By fulfilling the role of a lead organisation in facilitating partnership and co-ordination between the various local authorities in the region the Group aims to improve the quality of life and well-being of all its inhabitants"* (North West Region Cross Border Group web page). Due to their nature and historical presence, these permanent groups of local authorities used to, and continue to play an important role in the design and, more importantly, the implementation and the programme.

**Table A3. Cross-border partnerships of local authorities in Interreg IVA programme  
Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland**

EBR - East Border Region Ltd
ICBAN - Irish Central Border Area Network
NWRCBG - North West Region Cross Border Group
COMET - Interreg Partnership
NEP - North East Partnership

## **ANNEX 2. Projects supported by Interreg IVA programme Northern Ireland, Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland in R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship**

<b>Projects led by diversity of stakeholders</b>	
<b>Project name and EU funding</b>	<b>Project description</b>
<b>IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council Programme</b> <b>EUR 1.274.013</b>	The Joint Business Council Programme 2007 to 2010 proposes to deliver benefits for SME's which will involve over 40 Strategic Initiatives focused in 3 main areas of People / skills; Infrastructure; and Innovation, R&D. It will involve - Connecting with a joint membership base of 8,000 companies - Linking with IBEC and CBI offices in Belfast, Dublin, Donegal, Dundalk, London and Brussels - advocacy and lobbying on issues of relevance to its SME members - networking with public and private sector policy makers Collaborating with SEUPB, North South Round Table Group, Intertrade Ireland, Universities Ireland and other relevant State Agencies - Providing Strategic Leadership aimed at enhancing global competitiveness of SME's
<b>K.I.T.E Knowledge and Innovation Transfer in Engineering</b> <b>EUR 2.398.557</b>	The overall aim of the project is 'to increase the skills, capacity, knowledge and levels of technology adoption of engineering and manufacturing industries in the INTERREG region, through development and rollout of industry specific training materials, equipping training and development laboratories for use by industry and third level students and thereby helping to ensure the long term sustainability of the key manufacturing and engineering industries in the region.'
<b>Innovation for Competitiveness Enterprises (ICE) Project</b> <b>EUR 1.859.527</b>	ICE Project - Promoting regional economic growth and development through the establishment of a Tri_Regional Innovation Network aimed at building the innovation capacity and capability of existing SMEs in the Northern Ireland, the Border Region and Western Scotland aimed ultimately at improving their competitiveness through the commercialisation of new ideas, products and processes.
<b>Success through Succession</b> <b>EUR 1.080.373</b>	A key part of the economies of South West Scotland, ROI and Northern Ireland are made of family businesses. These organisations face formidable growth problems due to family succession issues which limit innovation and diffuse the equity within the firms. This project develops ways of directly working with family businesses to overcome such innate problems to enable them to innovate and increase competitiveness.
<b>Tradelinks 2</b> <b>EUR 2.568.481</b>	Tradelinks 2 focuses on micro-enterprises and owner-managed businesses and offers a range of development options for each micro-enterprise that enables them to plan to grow their businesses, increase employment and participate in cross border trade. The Programme also has strong networking components, between the micro-enterprises and between the business support agencies on both sides of the border.
<b>Tradelinks 2 Continuance</b> <b>EUR 1.081.952.58</b>	This continuation project is designed to support businesses displaying 'entrepreneurial flair', but which do not have access to a continuous programme of company development, to become more sustainable and competitive and to generate greater added value, earnings and wealth within their host communities. Project partners include Enterprise NI and six County Enterprise Boards in the RoI.

<p><b>The Innovation Factory</b> <b>EUR 1.444.910</b></p>	<p>The project aims to increase both the innovation capability and capacity of small and micro businesses across the INTERREG IVA region. The applicant states that this SMEs comprises the largest sector of the business economy in the region but has suffered from having the least support directed towards it as well as being the least able to avail of such support due to financial, logistical and sometimes timeliness reasons.</p>
<p><b>Creative Futures Programme</b> <b>EUR 2.735.184</b></p>	<p>The Partnership is led by the University of Ulster supported by Dundalk Institute of Technology, Skillset and Adam Smith College, which has established a consortium of Scottish delivery partners. The partnership is supported by the Nerve Centre and Letterkenny Institute of Technology. The partners have identified a range of activities which will be delivered over a three year period across the eligible area. These are grouped around four specific Themes. Theme 1: Intelligence Gathering Theme 2: Developing Networks of Scale. Theme 3: Skills Development. Theme 4: Enterprise Development and Project Finance. Taking account of the Themes identified, the Partners will use their significant research capacity to conduct a baseline assessment and continual monitoring of the Creative Industries Sector in the eligible region to allow for up to date and dynamic development in the sector. This will be reviewed and benchmarked against the activities and performance of the industry against identified global exemplars on an on going basis. The intelligence gathered will be used to update all the other activities of the programme.</p>
<p><b>Food and Drink Channel Partner Development</b> <b>EUR 1.657.935</b></p>	<p>The overall aim of the project is to Improve the performance in UK and international markets of Food and Drink SMEs in the Programme Area. This project will form six clusters of Food and Drink SMEs and provide them with the marketing skill-sets, professional marketing assistance and logistical support to successfully supply and trade in the main UK and international markets. In the process these local companies will be empowered to grow profitably. This will enable SMEs to retain staff and expand employment in a region, which has a disproportionate unemployment rate. At the centre of each cluster will be a major distributor/wholesaler or retail multiple (Channel Partner) to enable the producers in the Programme Area to reach consumers in these high value, high volume markets and the introduction of mentors for the SMEs so that they can acquire management and marketing skills.</p>
<p><b>VITAL Project</b> <b>EUR 1.985.336</b></p>	<p>VITAL Project aims at new venture creation through the matching of validated knowledge based ideas and technologies with experienced/seasoned entrepreneurs and SMEs (small-medium sized enterprises) and fast tracking the route to market. The project therefore aims, through this unique and innovative approach, to promote regional economic growth and development by building the indigenous SME base within the knowledge based sectors in Northern Ireland and the six southern border counties of Ireland and thus creating and safeguarding sustainable jobs. For the purposes of this proposal, a new venture is defined as a new knowledge based business start-up, new business ideas implemented within existing businesses or new license or technology transfer opportunity exploited.</p>
<p><b>S4G</b></p>	<p>A Development Programme delivered at two levels; aimed at improving the management capabilities of manufacturing and traded services sector companies in the following counties in the south (Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan, Louth) and the following counties in the north (Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone and excluding Greater Belfast Area)</p>

<p><b>Integrated Aquatic Resources Management Between Ireland, NI and Scotland (IBIS Project)</b></p> <p><b>EUR 5.190.497</b></p>	<p>The overall aim of the proposal is to meet a range of environmental priorities for delivering high quality policy and sustainable management of freshwater and marine natural resources and the biodiversity they support across the programme area. Specific aims of this project are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a research programme to address applied aquatic resource management questions common to the cross-border programme area</li> <li>• deliver high quality training in field of freshwater and marine resource management</li> <li>• promote public and stakeholder understanding and awareness and aquatic resource management issues through knowledge transfer</li> <li>• enable skills transfer and development for practitioners of freshwater and marine resource management and biodiversity of biodiversity</li> <li>• develop cross border partnerships and collaborations between agencies, institutions and NGOs with aquatic resources management interests that will persist beyond completion of the project</li> <li>• provide world class facilities supporting training, research and skills sharing in aquatic ecosystems and their management into the future</li> </ul>
<p><b>Projects led by cross-border groupings of local authorities</b></p>	
<p><b>Higher Attainment through Cross Border Hubs (HATCH)</b></p> <p><b>EUR 750.000</b></p>	<p>To support and develop entrepreneurship in the Border Region. The HATCH project aims to support business growth opportunities to meet the demands of changing economic conditions in the ICBAN region. It aims to do this by providing courses to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: construction and engineering employees</li> <li>2: migrant workers</li> <li>3: female entrepreneurs</li> </ol>
<p><b>Innovation Enterprise Initiative</b></p> <p><b>EUR 1.959.960</b></p>	<p>This project seeks to build on the previous history of Omagh Enterprise Centre and Leitrim County Enterprise Board in working together to successfully deliver cross-border business support programmes. This initiative comprises of two key strands - Provision of technology-enabled business workspace; and Provision of cross-border business support services</p>
<p><b>Centres of Excellence in Traded Services</b></p> <p><b>EUR 23.522</b></p>	<p>The project envisages the creation of two 'Pilot Demonstration Centres' to attract and facilitate Traded Service businesses in the Cookstown/Mid-Ulster and Cavan areas. The aim of the project is to develop a feasibility study which will assess the contribution which the pilot demonstration centres would make to the marketing of the ICBAN region as a location for Traded Services companies, particularly in Cookstown/Mid-Ulster and Cavan.</p>
<p><b>Innovation Growth &amp;</b></p> <p><b>EUR 648.385</b></p>	<p>The project builds on the success of the Product Transfer Programme delivered by North East Councils and Údarás na Gaeltachta under Interreg IIIA programme. The new project will allow the project partners to retain specialist consultants to work with businesses on identifying low cost methods of innovation using collaboration with overseas firms. Up to 60 businesses from across North East and West Donegal will participate in the programme generating additional target sales in excess of £2m.</p>
<p><b>NW Construction Network Programme</b></p> <p><b>EUR 256.929</b></p>	<p>The project aims to develop a programme to support strategic sectoral clustering and networking within the Region to bring key businesses and stakeholders together to establish and promote a knowledge and experience-sharing environment of entrepreneurial and business development, at an operational level. The Construction Cluster will facilitate 60 ambitious businesses from the NW region to explore new business opportunities based on new technology and export markets.</p>

<p><b>The Renewable Energy Network (REN-NET)</b> <b>EUR 292.535</b></p>	<p>The Renewable Energy Network (REN NET) aims to establish a formalized business network for small businesses working in the renewable energy and green economy fields, with the aim of increasing vitality and profitability for those companies. The initiative shall establish a local network in each of the partner areas, these individual networks shall then feed to a larger regional network at North West cross border level. REN-NET shall seek to feed in and be additional to work carried out to date on networking in Donegal by the County Enterprise Board and in Northern Ireland by Invest Northern Ireland.</p>
<p><b>The Life Sciences Supply Chain Clustering Project</b> <b>EUR 361.138</b></p>	<p>The project will initially focus on building a sustainable supply chain which will centre principally around 2 major life sciences companies in the Region. It is anticipated that this supply chain will evolve in terms of both critical mass and expertise to the point where it will service the needs of the major life sciences manufacturing companies in both ROI and GB.</p>
<p><b>Sustainable Business Networking</b> <b>EUR 967.547</b></p>	<p>The project will engage with 220 businesses within the East Border Region across a number of industry sectors in a sustainable economic development business networking programme.</p>
<p><b>EBR Plato Programme 2011-2013</b> <b>EUR 498.393</b></p>	<p>16 Plato Groups involving 240 SMEs will be formed. These Groups will be facilitated by 32 experienced senior managers from large parent companies. Each Plato Group will also be supported by a paid mentor to follow up Group discussions and priorities. Bespoke training modules will be delivered to participant companies, a total of 44 training modules will be delivered to 600 participant SMEs. 48 facilitators and mentors will receive training in facilitation and mentoring skills. 80 SMEs will also be involved in 4 Plato Graduate Forums. A further 80 companies will be involved in 4 cluster development initiatives, each participant SME will receive an individual cluster action plan as part of the cluster development strategies developed. An annual networking and trade development event will be held on a cross-border basis, attracting 225 participants over the 3 year Programme.</p>
<p><b>Low Carbon Business Network</b> <b>EUR 726.000</b></p>	<p>The vision of the Low Carbon Business Network is to form a network of innovating companies, both north and south of the border, to foster vibrant low carbon innovation so that it can become a key driver of sustainable economic development stimulating business growth and job creation. The model proposed is based on European best practice and is structured on an innovation model known as a "triple helix" whereby state agencies, research and development organisations and the private sector work together to stimulate and drive organic growth.</p>
<p><b>Harnessing Creativity</b> <b>EUR 599.910</b></p>	<p>The project aims at harnessing creativity to stimulate innovation for a dynamic regional economy based on natural and cultural sources for added value.</p>
<p><b>East Border Region Innovation Programme (EBRIP)</b> <b>EUR 736.845</b></p>	<p>To provide a cross border Programme of Innovation support to potential/existing SME's and micro enterprises throughout the East Border Region. The structured programme of support will include initiatives under the following 3 Themes: A) Innovation Awareness Raising; B) Per Incubation Support; C) Support to Existing Businesses.</p>

<p><b>Gateways to Growth: Supply Buy Network</b></p> <p><b>EUR 373.954</b></p>	<p>The project provides opportunities for SMEs at all stages in the supply chain to meet and sell to potential buying organisations whilst developing the skills to assist them in securing business in new markets. The objective of the project is to give companies in the eligible region the skills which will contribute to future export sales in what is seen as nearby low risk markets. On an annual basis, over the three year period, SME participants will have access to: sales and networking skills development training; business to business support in the form of speed mentoring, shared experiences and case studies; and the opportunity to meet and potentially sell to buyers through a large scale Meet the Buyer event with an entire supply chain focus.</p>
<p><b>Business Boot Camp</b></p> <p><b>EUR 716.914</b></p>	<p>Business Boot Camp is a set of highly innovative interventions that aim to enhance the capacity of young entrepreneurs to develop businesses in underutilised growth and export sectors, creating a more diverse and sustainable cross-border economy, through the extension of the economic impact of the COMET region and the economic use of natural resources in the North West of Ireland.</p>
<p><b>ASPIRE</b></p> <p><b>EUR 1.244.452</b></p>	<p>ASPIRE is an integrated cross-border small business and economic development programme which has been designed to tackle some of the particular problems associated with the economic downturn. It will help small businesses to develop by employing graduates and harnessing graduate talent to create growing, strong innovative businesses which will contribute to a sustainable regional employment, forge cross border linkages and become involved in export markets.</p>
<p><b>North West Regional Science Park</b></p> <p><b>EUR 14.500.000</b></p>	<p>The NWRSP is, in essence, a business support and technology transfer initiative, which will: 1) Encourage and support young innovation led, high growth, knowledge based businesses and those seeking to expand; 2) Provide an environment where larger and international business can develop specific and close inter-relations with the centres of knowledge creation in the North West for their mutual benefit; and 3) Have formal and operational links with centres of knowledge creation.</p>

Source: KEEP database, documentation from Invest in Northern Ireland and information from visits

### **ANNEX 3. Programme of Interviews and Visits**

**Phone Interview on 23 February 2015: Shaun Henry** (Programme Manager SEUPB)

#### **Monday April 13<sup>th</sup> : Visit GLASGOW**

10:30am **Robert Gompertz** (Scottish Government Structural Funds Division & Programme Monitoring Committee)

#### **Tuesday April 14<sup>th</sup> Visit LOCH LOMOND**

10:30am **Prof Colin Adams** (SCENE Project, Scottish Centre for Ecology and Natural Environment, University of Glasgow)

#### **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April: Visit BELFAST**

10am **Pat Colgan** (CEO Special EU Programme Body)

2pm **Project stakeholders Focus Group** (SEUPB Conference Room)

- **Chris Johnston** (ANSWER project - Environment and Renewable Energy Centre Hillsborough)
- **Sadie Bergin & Carmel Mecpeake** (Putting Patients and Families First project, CAWT)
- **Steven Devlin** (SPIRE project, University of Ulster)
- **Paul Beaney** (Creative Features project, University of Ulster)
- **Pier Morrow** (COMET – Gateways to growth project, Belfast City Council)
- **Caroline Marshall** (HELP project – RSPB)

#### **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April: Visit DERRY**

1pm **Maureen Doherty** (North West Regional Science Park Project, North West Region Cross Border Group), **John Andy Bonar** (Development Manager at Letterkenny Institute), **Norman Apsley** (CEO of North West Regional Science Park)

#### **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April: Visit BELFAST**

9am **Caroline Laidlaw** (Halting Biodiversity Loss Project – RSPB)

2pm **Stakeholders of Mainstream Programme Northern Ireland**

**Maeve Hamilton** (CEO of Managing Authority for ERDF Competitiveness Programme Northern Ireland, European Support Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment), **Charles Hamilton** (Invest Northern Ireland); **Paul Brush** (Head of European Programmes, Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Investment); **Alberta Pauley** (Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Investment).

## ANNEX 4. List of indicators for the programme

(according to Annual Report 2013)

<b>OUTPUT indicators, targets and values achieved</b>			
		<b>Target</b>	<b>Value</b>
<b>Enterprise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No. of businesses assisted</li> <li>▪ No. of incubation units developed</li> <li>▪ No. of networking projects supported</li> </ul>	200 3 15	1879 2 21
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No. of new products developed/existing products enhanced</li> <li>▪ Tourism marketing/brand products completed</li> </ul>	10 10	15 7
<b>Cooperation for public services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No. of cross-border projects supported</li> <li>▪ No. of strategic local authority initiatives supported</li> </ul>	16 24	57 18
<b>Infra-structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Km of roads upgraded, restored or built</li> <li>▪ No of telecommunications projects funded – telecommunication line/infrastructure installed</li> <li>▪ No. of renewable energy projects and energy efficiency projects assisted</li> <li>▪ No. of environmental projects funded</li> </ul>	3 2 10 5	7.2 1 2 8
<b>RESULT indicators, targets and values achieved</b>			
<b>Enterprise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ per cent of assisted businesses developing new products</li> <li>▪ per cent of assisted businesses developing new processes</li> <li>▪ per cent increase in sales in supported businesses resulting from sales and marketing activities</li> <li>▪ No. of businesses collaborating on a cross-border basis as a result of participation in networks</li> <li>▪ M2 floor space constructed/refurbished</li> </ul>	40% 40% 10% 200 18000	6.7% 9.9% n.a. 394 5434
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ per cent increase in visitors to supported facilities</li> </ul>	5	0
<b>Cooperation for public services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No. of beneficiaries of supported programme public services</li> <li>▪ per cent of research projects completed</li> <li>▪ No. of conferences and seminars held</li> <li>▪ No. of attendees at conferences and seminars held</li> </ul>	1600 100% 24 960	75860 52% 323 12202
<b>Infra-structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in traffic flow of vehicles/freight after 1 year</li> <li>▪ Reductions in journey times (mins)</li> </ul>	0 n.a.	25% 33%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ per cent reduction in time taken to transmit data between North America and the North West</li> <li>▪ percentage point increase in the take up and use of Broadband by business</li> <li>▪ No. of renewable energy sources created/developed</li> <li>▪ <i>No. of households who switch to/take up renewable energy methods of production</i></li> <li>▪ <i>No. of businesses switch to/take up renewable energy methods of productions</i></li> </ul>	25%	25%
		5%	4%
		6	0
		250	0
		150	0
<b>IMPACT indicators, targets and values achieved</b>			
<b>Enterprise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ per cent of assisted businesses entering new markets, both domestic and international</li> <li>▪ No. of new jobs created</li> <li>▪ Increase in turnover of firms 2 years after receiving support</li> <li>▪ per cent of new firms still in existence after 2 years of receiving support</li> <li>▪ per cent turnover in assisted businesses coming from exports after 2 years</li> <li>▪ per cent cross-border networks still in existence after 2 years</li> <li>▪ per cent of floor space that has been bought or rented by firms after 2 years</li> <li>▪ No. of businesses occupying floor space</li> </ul>	20%	19.3%
		50	295
		n.a.	0
		80%	0
		5%	0
		40%	9%
		75%	1682m <sup>2</sup>
		20	28
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ per cent of new tourism products/facilities still in existence after 2 years</li> <li>▪ per cent increase visitors to eligible area in Apr-Sep</li> <li>▪ per cent increase visitors to eligible area in Oct-Mar</li> <li>▪ Increase in average length of stay</li> </ul>	80%	57%
		10%	n.a.
		5%	n.a.
		n.a.	n.a.
<b>Cooperation for public services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ per cent of innovative cross-border projects still in existence 2 years after the end of the Programme</li> <li>▪ No. of solutions to programme problems addressed through joint action</li> </ul>	80%	0
		24	60
<b>Infra-structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improved Safety: Reduction in number of accidents after 2 years</li> <li>▪ <i>per cent of electricity demand met from indigenous renewable</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Reduction in per capita emissions of CO2</i></li> </ul>	5%	6.8%
		12%	0
		0.5t	0

Note: Programme targets are used (another indicator captures cumulative projects targets).

Indicators in italic were intended to be suppressed by Programme Monitoring Committee (but are still present in the 2013 AIR).

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