



PRESS RELEASE

**CENTRE FOR CROSS BORDER STUDIES LAUNCHES IMPACT ASSESSMENT
TOOLKIT PROJECT**

Tuesday 28 September

The Centre for Cross Border Studies announced today the beginning of an action research project to develop and pilot an ‘Impact Assessment Toolkit for Cross Border Cooperation in Ireland’. The Toolkit will be a practical tool to demonstrate the added value of cross-border co-operation for those involved in cross-border programmes and projects on the island of Ireland. While there have been a number of initiatives in recent times seeking to develop an evaluation framework for reconciliation and conflict resolution, there remains a large deficit in determining the impact of practical co-operation across the Irish border.

This is one of five research projects based in the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Armagh that are funded by the European Union’s INTERREG IVA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body, under the Ireland/Northern Ireland Cross-border Cooperation Observatory (INICCO).

The Centre for Cross Border Studies will be delivering the project in partnership with the Euro Institute – a Franco-German cross-border co-operation institute based in Kehl, near Strasbourg, that specialises in continuing education and consulting on cross-border co-operation – under the direction of Professor Joachim Beck. The research team will be supported by an expert advisory group, whose members have many years of experience in implementing or evaluating cross-border programmes.

Impact assessment provides a valuable mechanism to make clear connections between the cross-border actions undertaken and the achievement of policy objectives and targets. Ideally, an impact assessment should assist policy-makers in thinking through the consequences of proposals, improving the quality of advice to Ministers and encouraging informed public debate. The Toolkit will guide policy-makers through this process, helping them to understand and define the cross-border policy challenge under consideration and to analyse the case for intervention.

Ruth Taillon, Deputy Director at the Centre for Cross Border Studies, explained why the project is relevant now:

“This research is particularly timely in light of the European Commission’s increasing focus on ‘Territorial Cooperation.’ Many issues do not respect administrative boundaries and may require a co-ordinated response from more than one region or country. An integrated place-based approach is ideally suited to respond to complex and strongly embedded issues. Of course, development of a ‘Cross Border Impact Assessment Toolkit’ for use in the island of Ireland must take into account the imperative for cross-border co-operation enshrined in the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. Our starting point will be a baseline study focused on the six areas of co-operation agreed between the two governments – *Agriculture; Education; Environment;*

Health; Tourism; and Transport – and the six cross-border bodies that were established under the Agreement.”

Pat Colgan, Chief Executive of the SEUPB, welcomed the project by saying: “The INTERREG IVA Programme places a strong emphasis on cross-border co-operation to help develop a more dynamic economy and support cross-border infrastructure that will improve access to services for people living within its eligible area. This project will enable us to understand and quantify the impact of the various initiatives to date, which will be fundamental in the definition of priorities for ‘Territorial Cooperation’ programmes in the future.”

The prototype Toolkit will be piloted in September-October 2011 with selected cross-border projects and agencies. Following the evaluation, the prototype Toolkit will be finalised for publication at the end of 2011. The aim is that the ‘Cross Border Impact Assessment Toolkit’ will provide a prototype tool to help demonstrate the added value of cross-border co-operation and thus a useful training resource.

#ENDS#

Photo caption: Members of the advisory Group at the launch event of the Cross Border Studies’ Impact Assessment Toolkit. The launch also marked the Advisory Group’s first official meeting. Photo Michael Cooper.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The Advisory Group includes public officials and other experts and with an interest in cross-border impact assessment.

Dr Kenneth Bush, INCORE International Conflict Research Institute
Mr Brian O Caoindealbain, Co-operation Ireland
Mr John Driscoll, International Centre for Local and Regional Development
Ms Teresa Lennon, Special EU Programmes Body
Mrs Celeste McCallion, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
Mr Adrian McNamee, Victims Commission
Mr Owen Metcalfe, Institute of Public Health in Ireland
Ms Colette Nulty, Pobal
Mr Andy Pollak, Centre for Cross Border Studies
Mr Joe Shiels, Centre for Cross Border Studies
Ms Ruth Taillon, Centre for Cross Border Studies

SEUPB

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Finance in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU structural funds Programmes PEACE III and INTERREG IV designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful

and prosperous society. The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland.

- The INTERREG IVA 2007-2013 Programme is worth €256 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders. It has two distinct priority measures to create co-operation for a more prosperous and sustainable cross-border region sustainable cross-border region.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu

The Euro Institute for cross-border co-operation (www.euroinstitut.org) is a French-German structure specialized in continuing education and consulting on cross-border co-operation.

German partners: Federal State of Baden-Württemberg; Cities of Kehl, Achern, Lahr, Oberkirch, Freiburg and Offenburg; Ortenau District; University of Applied Sciences, Kehl. *French partners:* French State; Region of Alsace; Departement Lower Rhine; city of Strasbourg; University of Strasbourg (non-financing member). The aims of the Euro Institute are:

- To improve cross-border co-operation through continuing education and consulting with regard to public policy
- To contribute to the resolution of problems resulting from different politico-administrative systems and bases
- To develop tools and methods which can be used by other cross-border territories in Europe.