The Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) Ltd is a local authority-led cross-border development organisation. It comprises 11 member Councils in the area that is known as the Central Border Region.

Mission Statement

“ICBAN will continue to improve the quality of life and prosperity of the Central Border Region by creating a dynamic model of best practice and partnership in Cross-Border Development.”

The views and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission or the Special EU Programmes Body.

Annual Activity Report 2013/2014
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Chairman’s Foreword

I am delighted to present the second Annual Activity Report for the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN), covering the period April 2013 to March 2014.

We have been delighted to welcome Magherafelt District Council to the organisation during the past year, bringing to 11 the number of Councils that are now involved. We look forward to working with Magherafelt and hope that the Council can take advantage of the opportunities that will be presented through working within the partnership.

The past year has seen great advancements in the development and delivery of the INTERREG IVA projects funded for the Region. The activity report sets out the impacts these projects have, economically and socially, for the betterment of the communities of the area. These include a range of activity based initiatives as well as infrastructural developments. We look forward to their continuing success stories and I would like to pay special tribute to all our Project Partners, who have been working diligently and enthusiastically to bring these to fruition. I also wish to acknowledge and thank The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) and the two governments, who continue to commit to cross-border co-operation through the INTERREG IVA Programme.

In November 2013 one of the projects led by ICBAN was launched – the Regional Strategic Framework. This is an important initiative for the future development of the Region and represents the first such integrated plan of this type for a border area on the island of Ireland. The completion of this document has been well-received and we now wish to adopt the same partnership approach which has helped complete the Framework, to work on implementing a range of initiatives which will help improve the fortunes of the Region. The needs of the Central Border Region have been well documented and it is therefore incumbent on all with an interest to capitalise on the opportunities that are being presented.

On behalf of ICBAN I would like to add a word of thanks to every individual and organisation who has supported our work in the past year. I would particularly like to thank our member Councils whose support is invaluable in taking forward these regional interests.

I would also like to thank our staff for all their dedication to the organisation and its interests, for it is they who work day and daily on promoting and advancing the co-operation programme. A special word of acknowledgement must also go to my predecessor, Cllr. Jim Cavanagh, who was Chair of the organisation for much of this period also. Jim is a founder member of the organisation and has driven many of the activities mentioned within.

Cllr. Pat Treanor, ICBAN Chair April 2014
At a glance

The ‘Regional Strategic Framework for the Central Border Region’ has been completed and launched.

The Network membership has grown from 10 member Councils to 11, with the addition of Magherafelt District Council.

Data CENTRAL now available at www.icban.com brings together a wealth of Census based and other data from both jurisdictions.

‘Census 2011 Policy Implications Study’ was developed for the ICBAN Councils.

“Something for Everyone” Tourism brochure created to promote the Region in time for the G8 summit in Enniskillen.

The organisation is responsible for managing a total of 7 Projects under the INTERREG IVA Programme across the themes of Enterprise, Tourism and Collaboration, to a value of approximately £14.5 million.

In 2013/2014 just over £2 million was levered through ICBAN Projects.

The £1.8 million Innovation Growth Centre opened in Omagh, with work ongoing on 2 more capital building projects costing in excess of €1.5 million.

There has been a 0% error rate in the claims submitted for the INTERREG IVA Projects, demonstrating the sound financial management and governance systems that are in place.

352 stakeholders attended seminars and conferences organised by ICBAN. Since the Spatial Planning Initiative began in June 2010 there have been a total of 9 Conferences and 14 Seminars, with 611 attending conferences and 502 attending seminars.
Timeline of Activity

**APRIL 2013**
ICBAN’s first Annual Activity Report

**MAY 2013**
Opening of the Innovation Growth Centre in Omagh by Minister for Enterprise, Trade & Investment, Arlene Foster, MLA

Launch of “Something for Everyone” tourism brochure by Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, Leo Varadkar TD and the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Enterprise Trade & Investment, Mr David Thomson

**JAN 2014**
“Data Made Easy” Seminar for community stakeholders in Clones

Best Practice Visit to the Great Western Greenways, Co Mayo

**FEB 2014**
The first formal presentation on the work of ICBAN is made to Magherafelt District Council

**MAR 2014**
Briefing Sessions in Stormont and Leinster House on the Regional Strategic Framework

ICBAN attends Annual Conference of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) in Liège, Belgium and Maastricht, Netherlands

**MAR 2014**
ICBAN attends Annual Conference of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) in Liège, Belgium and Maastricht, Netherlands

**JAN 2014**
ICBAN attends Annual Conference of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) in Liège, Belgium and Maastricht, Netherlands

**MAR 2014**
ICBAN attends Annual Conference of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) in Liège, Belgium and Maastricht, Netherlands
Timeline of Activity

**JULY 2013**
- Formal consultation documentation issued on the ‘Regional Strategic Framework for the Central Border Region’

**AUG 2013**
- Construction work commences on the Interpretative Centre in the Cavan Burren, as part of the Border Uplands Project

**SEPT 2013**
- DataCENTRAL portal made publicly available

**NOV 2013**
- Launch of the ‘Regional Strategic Framework for the Central Border Region’ in Co Cavan

**AUG 2013**
- Cllr. Pat Treanor appointed as ICBAN Chair with Cllr. Allan Rainey as Vice Chair

**OCT 2013**
- Central Border Region represented at Brussels EU Open Days events

**APRIL 2014**
- Creative & Cultural Economy Conference in Cookstown

**Regional Strategic Framework** is shortlisted for the Royal Town Planning Institute’s annual awards for Planning Excellence under ‘Leading the way in planning for community’

**NOV 2013**
- ‘Expanded Territories’ Exhibition and Seminar for the Harnessing Creativity project took place in Carrick-on-Shannon

**SEPT 2013**
- Regional Strategic Framework is shortlisted for the Royal Town Planning Institute’s annual awards for Planning Excellence under ‘Leading the way in planning for community’
ICBAN’s Three Areas of Activity

The areas of activity in which ICBAN is involved are reviewed in detail:

INTERREG Programmes
Spatial Planning Initiative for the Central Border Region
EU Engagement.

INTERREG PROGRAMMES

Profiled over the following pages are the cross-border projects being delivered through ICBAN by a range of Councils and other stakeholder organisations. These are funded under the INTERREG IVA programme and managed by Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). ICBAN assumes a Lead Partner role for these projects, which involves leading on the management, legal and financial responsibilities, with others assuming project delivery roles.
The Individual’s Perspective:

Course Studied through HATCH: Advanced Diploma in Management Practice – Female Entrepreneurs

Name: Anna Costello

What Anna Says about HATCH:

“The course run through HATCH has made such a difference to my business. Pre- participation, I was the successful owner of a beauty salon for 8 years, employing 6 people.

Post participation, I now have 3 businesses and employ 10 people, including our IBPA National Award Winning beauty salon.

I started a new training and distribution company and have sole Irish distribution for an international skincare brand - Bioline Jato, servicing both the Irish and UK market, and I also plan to distribute a hair care brand in the next 5 years. I think the course has sealed my future!”
The Individual’s Perspective:

Concept Developed through Creative Labs: Go Gallivant A

Name: Sarah Fyffe

What Sarah says about Harnessing Creativity:

“Participating in the Creative Labs has helped me to concentrate on being creative by meeting with other like-minded people in sharing ideas and skills. It is great to be back at the development stage of, what I consider to be, a very exciting idea/concept.”

Project Partners:

- ICBAN (Lead Partner)
- Leitrim County Enterprise Board (Lead Beneficiary)
- Fermanagh District Council
- Leitrim County Council
- Leitrim Design House
- Omagh Enterprise Company
- Tyrone-Donegal Partnership

Project Aims:

1. Strengthen the capacity of the creative sector to be innovative and competitive in itself and to contribute to the vibrancy and competitiveness of counties Leitrim, Fermanagh and Tyrone
2. Assist the creative sector to recognise new opportunities and to improve business and marketing skills and in joint venture opportunities
3. Facilitating effective co-creativity linkages with other business sectors for the creation of ideas related to new product and service development
4. Creating an identity for the region based on the outputs of the traditional creative industries, which can be further used to promote the area as an attractive place to visit and/or locate to.

Key Achievements:

- 193 participants have taken part in Master Classes
- 59 participants of Creative Labs
- Expanded Territories Exhibitions held in Carrick-on-Shannon, Dublin and Letterkenny
- 1419 have attended Exhibitions

Project Value €799,880
The Individual’s Perspective:

Business Name: MCWits
Name: Christopher McWilliams

What Christopher says about the new Innovation Growth Centre in Omagh:

“Re-locating to the centre enabled us to provide our clients with an overall professional experience. The centre is located in an industrious area, providing the platform for instant business-to-business trading and the state of the art facilities can tailor for any need.”

Project Partners:
- ICBAN (Lead Partner)
- Omagh District Council (Lead Beneficiary)
- Leitrim County Council
- Leitrim County Enterprise Board
- Leitrim County Enterprise Fund
- Omagh Enterprise Company

Project Aims:
- Construct a 14,000 sq. ft. Innovation Growth Centre in Omagh and a 7,500 sq. ft. Technology Enterprise Centre in Carrick-on-Shannon
- Attract 20 new / expanding businesses to operate out of the Innovation Growth Centre in Omagh. Attract 14 new / expanding businesses to operate out of the Technology Enterprise Centre in Carrick-on-Shannon
- Deliver a minimum 12 innovation seminars per annum
- Facilitate a minimum of 4 cross-border networking events per annum
- Attract 34 new / expanding businesses to operate out of the centres.

Key Achievements:
- Opening of the £1.8 million Innovation Growth Centre, Omagh in May 2013
- Currently 13 tenants in the Innovation Centre
- Construction complete on the €1.2 million Technology Enterprise Centre in Carrick-on-Shannon
- All office space occupied within the new Technology Centre
- 36 seminars ran
- 12 cross-border networking events
- Strong cross-border relationships developed through a strong ethos of cooperation and mutual understanding between all project partners
Project Partners:

- ICBAN (Lead Partner)
- Fermanagh District Council (Lead Beneficiary)
- Cavan County Council
- Leitrim County Council
- Sligo County Council

Project Aims:

- Upgrade and enhance aspects of the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark and the surrounding upland areas, increasing the geo-tourism and recreational potential of the Region
- Joint marketing, education and management structures in the proposed area
- Increase visitor numbers to the area by 15% within three years of project completion

Key Achievements:

- Work was completed on the €380,610 Interpretative Centre in Cavan creating 15 construction jobs
- Earth Science Labs took place in Fermanagh, Cavan, Leitrim and Sligo in November 2013
- Works commenced at the sites in Leitrim County Council

The Individual’s Perspective:

New Interpretative Centre

Name: Joanne Hayes, Tourism Development Officer with Cavan County Council

What Joanne says about the new Interpretative Centre:

"The development of a new visitor interpretation centre at Cavan Burren (now known as Cavan Burren Park) ensures that the Park can now be positioned as a flagship visitor attraction in County Cavan and the wider region. The interpretive facilities will enhance visitor enjoyment of the geological, archaeological and cultural richness of the park. The new visitor centre and accompanying walking trails now ensure that Cavan Burren Park can be legitimately promoted as a unique tourist attraction to individual tourists and to tour operators. "

Project Value

€3,183,804
The Individual’s Perspective:

Name: Robert Gibson, Acting Chief Executive of Fermanagh District Council

What Robert Says about the St. Angelo project:

“The development of this new hangar at St Angelo is seen as a significant boost to both the airport and to the area. It will assist the airport to better deliver services to the wider region and the provision of more hangar space will lead to the airport being more sustainable in the future.”

Project Partners:
- ICBAN (Lead Partner)
- Fermanagh District Council (Lead Beneficiary)

Project Aims:
- Construction of 37,000 sq. ft. of workspace at St Angelo Airport, Enniskillen
- Securing a fixed-wing aircraft service and maintenance firm to locate at the airport
- Creation of 20 jobs within aviation, technical, engineering and mechanical disciplines
- Provide the infrastructure to enhance development of the tourism sector

Key Achievements:
- Construction work on the 37,000 sq. ft. of workspace at St Angelo Airport, Enniskillen completed
This Project, led by ICBAN and involving all member Councils, has secured funding of £1,456,995 under the INTERREG IVA Programme. The Project aims to give the Central Border Region a strong identity, through enhancing mutually beneficial relationships between key stakeholders involved in the area’s development.

Regional Strategic Framework

The Regional Strategic Framework (RSF) for the Central Border Region was launched on Friday 22nd November 2013 in the Slieve Russell Hotel, Co. Cavan by representatives of the governments of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The key addresses given at the event were made by Minister of State in the Republic of Ireland, Fergus O’Dowd T.D., along with senior officials from Northern Ireland departments including Mr. Tom Reid of the Department for Regional Development and Mr. Ian Maye of the Department of Environment.

The launch event marked the end of the development phase which included Stakeholder Input Sessions and a formal consultation process from July to October 2013.

The RSF is a Framework for the development of the Central Border Region and embraces the opportunities that regional co-operation can create. The Framework has been developed to influence the Governments of Ireland and Northern Ireland to consider the Central Border Region as an investment priority. It also seeks to address the inequalities in economic and social terms between the Central Border Region and other regions on the island. The RSF is also intended to enable the Region to play a more involved role within Europe through networking and engaging, as well as securing investments for key initiatives and projects.

Since the launch event work has been ongoing to promote and communicate the Framework and the ambitions underpinning it. This has included briefing sessions being held in Stormont and Leinster House.

To download a copy of the RSF please go to http://www.icban.com/The-RSF

Photo: Pictured at the launch of the Regional Strategic Framework are ICBAN’s Chair Cllr. Pat Treanor, with the First Citizens and/or their deputies of the constituent member Councils.
Data Capture Project

In early autumn ICBAN completed an 18-month Data Capture Project with the launch of the Data CENTRAL portal on the website - http://www.icban.com/Data-Central/Overview. The aim of the project was to ensure that data can be better utilised at local, regional and national levels. This involved collating relevant information as well as identifying and addressing information gaps.

The site consists of three main sections, namely:

Data MAPPING – This interactive map-based section features a range of topics such as demography, employment/unemployment etc.

Data PROFILE - An electronic document containing extensive high-quality data for each Council area, with a detailed commentary on the statistics and also supplementary hyperlinks.

Summary PROFILE – Provides data specific to each of the Council areas.

The information on the site consists of high quality ‘facts and figures’ that can be used by stakeholders to effectively plan for programmes, projects and other investments in the Region.

Political and Civic Collaboration Programme, Seminars and Conferences

Two information and training seminars were held to profile the use of the Data CENTRAL resource. Both “Data Made Easy” seminars were facilitated by Mr. Proinsias McCaughey, DoE Northern Ireland, who had been seconded to ICBAN to undertake the 18 month project of developing the Data CENTRAL portal. The first of the 2 seminars was held in the Rural Community Network in Cookstown in November 2013 with the second taking place in Clones during January 2014.
ICBAN in conjunction with the Border Regional Authority have created a tourism brochure profiling the main attractions within the Central Border Region. The driving force for the creation of the brochure was the G8 Summit which took place in the Lough Erne Resort, Enniskillen during June 2014. The brochure was included within the bedroom packs that were being made up for key personnel visiting the Region.
‘The Creative and Cultural Economy’ Conference

The Creative and Cultural Economy Conference was designed to profile the potential for the creative industries sector and examine possible funding opportunities for the development of projects. Over 60 delegates heard from a range of speakers form the local, national and international spectrum.

Best Practice Visit to Greenways, Co. Mayo

In January ICBAN facilitated a visit for member Councils to the Great Western Greenways in Mayo. The aim of the trip was to explore the possibility of developing similar facilities within the Central Border Region.

The Great Western Greenway (Westport-Newport-Mulranny-Achill) is a traffic-free cycling and walking facility that primarily follows the line of the old Great Western Railway, which closed in 1937. The first 18 km of the Greenway, from Newport to Mulranny, opened in 2010, while the two extensions linking south to Westport and east to Achill opened in July 2011, lengthening the route to 42 km. Significant funding has been invested in the project by both central and local government.
EU Engagement

Brussels Open Days

The Brussels Open Days took place between 7th–10th October 2013. This event, organised by the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions brings together local and regional players from across Europe, along with representatives from the European Commission and Committee of the Regions. The programme encompassed topics under EU Regional Policy from urban transport to energy, to research and innovation.

ICBAN attended a number of seminars and events at the EU Open Days 7th – 9th October. As part of the programme and together with the other Cross-Border Groups from Ireland / Northern Ireland held a networking seminar in the NI Executive Offices in Brussels for stakeholders, where the work of the Cross-Border Groups was profiled. Meetings arranged by ICBAN included: with “La Forem” who work for the Government of Wallonia and engage with industry experts to determine relevant training courses tailored to the needs of the region; with the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation who specialise in the area of Sustainable Transport; and with DG Connect regarding funding opportunities for Telecoms and broadband.

AEBR Annual Conference

ICBAN’s new Chair and Vice-Chair attended as part of an ICBAN delegation, the annual conference of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) in Liège, Belgium and Maastricht, Netherlands from 6th-8th November 2013.

The main topic of the Conference was “Cross-Border Urban and Rural Integrated Areas – Challenges and Chances”. This is an area which is of particular interest given that the Central Border Region is predominantly a rural area and is facing important challenges, for example, demographic change and brain drain, for which innovative solutions are needed.

The ICBAN delegation attending these events used the opportunity to foster links and gather information to enhance the ability of the Region to connect with EU institutions and stakeholders.
Learning for the Central Border Region

ICBAN facilitated a visit to the Central Border Region for the newly appointed Director of the Danish Cultural Institute in Brussels Ms Else Christensen-Redzepovic. During Else’s visit to the Region she was the key note speaker at the ‘Creative and Cultural Economy’ Conference. A number of field trips were arranged within the Region for the Director to meet projects within the culture sector. One of these visits was to Ranfurly House Arts & Visitor Centre in Dungannon, where she was able to view first-hand the Arts & Heritage programme and how it meets the needs of the area.

Photo: l-r Colin McKenna, Development Manager, ICBAN; Else Christensen-Redzepovic, Director, Danish Cultural Institute in Brussels; Cllr. Sean McGuigan, Mayor of Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
Appendix

Statement on Structure and Governance

The Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) Ltd is a cross-border local authority-led organisation comprising of 11 member Councils in the area known as the Central Border Region.

The need for ICBAN was identified by local authorities within the Central Border Region in the early 1990’s, which led to its formal establishment in 1995. In 2001 the organisation became a company limited by guarantee. 2 elected representatives from each of the ten member Councils serve as Directors of the Management Board.

ICBAN was established to promote co-operation and communication on a cross-border basis on common regional development concerns. This has provided a forum to respond to the unique economic and social needs of the Region.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
- Armagh City & District Council
- Cavan County Council
- Donegal County Council
- Leitrim County Council
- Monaghan County Council
- Sligo County Council

NORTHERN IRELAND:
- Cookstown District Council
- Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
- Fermanagh District Council
- Magherafelt District Council
- Omagh District Council

Annual Activity Report 2013/2014
The Governance Framework

ICBAN’s governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values, by which it is directed and controlled and the activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its members and stakeholders.

Risk, Audit and Finance Sub-Committee

The Risk, Audit and Finance Sub Committee oversee the internal control system and risk management framework. The Committee also provides a platform for peer exchanges, enabling members from both jurisdictions to compare responsibilities, activities, and processes.

Review of Effectiveness

ICBAN conducts an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework. This is informed by the work of the Internal and External Audit functions as well as the Senior Management Team within ICBAN, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment.

The results of Internal and External Audits in the past year demonstrate that the organisation has sound and robust systems in place.

Fund Management:

In the current economic climate, there has never been a stronger emphasis on accountability and transparency in the use of public funds. ICBAN is proud of its track record in this regard and in the past year has had a 0% error rate for claims being vouched under the INTERREG IVA Programme.

ICBAN is committed to making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
Appendix

ICBAN Management
Board Members and Staff 2013/2014

Armagh City & District Council
Cllr. Mealla Campbell
Cllr. Robert Turner

Cavan County Council
Cllr. Winston Bennett
Cllr. Fergal Curtin

Cookstown District Council
Cllr. Samuel Glasgow MBE
Cllr. Pearse Mc Aleer

Donegal County Council
Cllr. David Alcorn
Cllr. Brendan Byrne

Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
Cllr. Jim Cavanagh
Cllr. Robert Mulligan

Fermanagh District Council
Cllr. Alex Baird
Cllr. Brian Mc Caffrey

Leitrim County Council
Cllr. Gerry Dolan
Cllr. Sean Mc Dermott

Magherafelt District Council
Cllr. Peter Bateson
Cllr. Sean Mc Peake

Monaghan County Council
Cllr. David Maxwell
Cllr. Pat Treanor

Omagh District Council
Cllr. Frankie Donnelly
Cllr. Allan Rainey MBE

Sligo County Council
Cllr. Thomas Collery
Cllr. Matt Lyons
Shane Campbell
Chief Executive Officer

Lynda Monteith
Corporate Manager

Colin Mc Kenna
Development Manager

Stephen Cassidy
Programmes Manager

Joanne McNamee
Project Officer

Marie White
PA / Senior Administrative Officer

Edel Goodwin
Finance & Monitoring Officer

Tracey Farry
Finance Officer

Roisin Pearson
Communications & Administration Officer