

The Border Regional Authority

Údarás Réigiúnach na Teorann



Draft Regional Planning Guidelines (2010-2022)

January 2010





DRAFT REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR THE BORDER REGION 2010 – 2022

Planning & Development Acts 2000-2006

Planning & Development Regulations 2001 - 2009

Planning & Development (Regional Planning Guidelines) Regulations 2009

Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004

Public Consultation Period 26th February, 2010 – 14th May, 2010.

In accordance with Section 24(4) of the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2006, the Border Regional Authority hereby gives notice that it has prepared Draft Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2010 - 2022. The Draft has been prepared in accordance with the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2006, the Planning & Development (Regional Planning Guidelines) Regulations 2009 and the Planning & Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. The Constituent Counties in the Border Region are Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo.

The objective of the Regional Planning Guidelines is to provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the future physical, economic and social development of the Region and shall in accordance with the Act, be incorporated into the County Development Plans of the respective Planning Authorities in the Region. The Draft Guidelines are supported by a Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report, on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Guidelines, and a Draft Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) in accordance with Article 6 of EU Directive 92/43/EEC.

Individuals, Public Authorities, Community Organisations, Public and Private Agencies, and any other group are invited to make submissions/observations with respect to the Draft Regional Planning Guidelines, Draft SEA Environmental Report, and Draft Habitats Directive Assessment. Submissions/observations should be in writing or by email, and reach the Border Regional Authority no later than 4.30pm on Friday, 14th May, 2010. All such observations and/or submissions lodged with the Authority by the closing deadline, will be considered prior to adoption of the Guidelines.

Copies of the aforementioned Draft Regional Planning Guidelines, and related documents may be inspected at the following locations, during normal opening hours:

- ❖ Offices of the Border Regional Authority.
- ❖ Planning Departments of the Constituent County Council's
- ❖ Town Councils in the Region
- ❖ All Public Libraries in the Region

All documents may be downloaded from our website or are available, by request, free of charge on CD. Hard copies, (subject to payment of a fee), may be obtained from the Border Regional Authority. An Irish version of the Draft Regional Planning Guidelines document, is also available on our website.

Contact: Border Regional Authority, Corlurgan, Business Park, Ballinagh Road, Cavan, Co. Cavan.
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AA	Appropriate Assessment
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
APSR	Areas with Potential Significant Flood Risk
BIC	Business Innovation Centres
BMW	Border, Midland & Western
BRA	Border Regional Authority
CAWT	Co-operation & Working Together
CBI	Confederation of Business Industry
CFRAMs	Catchment based Flood Risk Assessment & Management Plans
CLÁR	Ceantair Laga Árd Riachtanais
CNS	Community Network Services
CREDIT	Centre for Renewable Energy Dundalk Institute of Technology
cSAC	Candidate Special Areas of Conservation
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSP	Core Strategy Policy
DCENR	Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources
DEHLG	Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment
DKIT	Dundalk Institute of Technology
DRD	Department of Regional Development
DWIRP	Drinking Water Incident Response Plan
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ENVO	Environment Objective
ENVP	Environment Policy
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESDP	The European Spatial Development Perspective
ESP	Economic Strategy Policy
ESRI	Economic & Social Research Institute
ETS	Emissions Trading Scheme
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FRP	Flood Risk Policy
GDA	Greater Dublin Area
GDI	Gateway Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
GHG	Green House Gases
GNP	Gross National Product
GSI	Geological Survey Ireland
GVA	Gross Value Added
HDA	Habitats Directive Assessment
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HLA	Housing Land Availability
HLR	Housing Land Requirement
HPSU	High Potential Start-Up
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICBAN	Irish Central Border Area Network
ICLRD	International Centre for Local & Regional Development
ICT	Information & Communications Technology
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management

IDA	Industrial Development Agency
IFS	Irish Financial Services
ILUTS	Integrated Land Use & Transportation Studies
INFO	Infrastructure Objective
INFP	Infrastructure Policy
INI	Invest Northern Ireland
IoT	Institute of Technology
IP	Internet Protocol
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IROPI	Imperative reasons of overriding public interest
ISNI	Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland
ITI	Intertrade Ireland
LA's	Local Authorities
LYIT	Letterkenny Institute of Technology
MANS	Metropolitan Area Network (Telecommunications System)
MBNA	Maryland Bank National Association
NAP	National Action Plan
NBS	National Broadband Scheme
NDP	National Development Plan
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NHP	National Heritage Plan
NI	Northern Ireland
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
NIRSA	National Institute for Regional & Spatial Analysis
NRA	National Roads Authority
NSMC	North South Ministerial Council
NSS	National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020
NSSPI	National Strategies for Social Protection & Social Inclusion
NUI	National University of Ireland
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NW	North West
OECD	Organisation for Economic Competitiveness & Development
OPW	Office of Public Works
PDA	Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended
POM	Programme of Measures
PRFA	Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments
R & D	Research & Development
RAL	Remedial Action List
RAPID	Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment & Development
RBD	River Basin District
RBMPs	River Basin Management Plans
RDS	Regional Development Strategy
RDSNI	Regional Development Strategy Northern Ireland
RES-E	Renewable Energy Sources
RFRA	Regional Flood Risk Appraisal
RPG	Regional Planning Guidelines
RTDI	Research, Technological Development & Innovation
S & E	Southern & Eastern
SDZ	Strategic Development Zones
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SFRA's	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SG	Strategic Goal
SIO	Social Infrastructure Objective
SIP	Social Infrastructure Policy
SME	Small & Medium Enterprises

SPA	Special Protection Areas
SPG's	Strategic Planning Guidelines
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats
TSO	Transmission System Operator
UFW	Unaccounted for Water
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation
VDS	Village Design Statement
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WISAR	Wilderness Search & Rescue
WSIP	Water Services Investment Programme

Preamble

Under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2007 and the 2009 Regulations, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government issued a direction to each Regional Authority to review existing Regional Planning Guidelines 2004 – 2016, and prepare new Regional Planning Guidelines for their administrative areas.

Following initial public consultation and consideration of submissions or observations received, the Border Regional Authority has prepared Draft Regional Planning Guidelines for the period 2010 – 2022. This document will be on public display for a period of 11 weeks commencing on the 26th February, 2010 up to and including the 14th May 2010.

All interested persons including any member of the public, public authorities, community organisations and public and private agencies, are invited to make submissions or observations regarding the Draft Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022, and associated Draft Environmental and Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) Reports.

Following closure of the consultation period, a Directors Report on submissions or observations received will be compiled and presented to the Members of the Border Regional Authority.

The Draft Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2010 – 2022 and all other related documents may be viewed at the following web address: <http://www.border.ie>

A hard copy of all documents may also be inspected at the following locations during regular office hours:

Offices of the Border Regional Authority, Corlurgan Business Park, Ballinagh Road, Cavan, Co. Cavan
Planning Departments at the offices of the six constituent County Councils;
Town Councils in the six constituent Counties; and
All Public Libraries in the six constituent Counties

The six constituent Counties in the Border Region are: Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth

Further details on the RPG review may be obtained from:

The Director,
Border Regional Authority,
Corlurgan Business Park,
Ballinagh Road,
Cavan,
Co. Cavan

Tel: (049) 4362600
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Executive Summary

The Border Regional Authority includes the geographical area of Counties Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo. The Planning and Development Act, 2000 requires Regional Authorities to provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the sustainable development of the region for a 12 year period up to 2022. The Planning Act also requires the Regional Planning Guidelines to be reviewed again in 2016.

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) is a long term strategic planning document which aims to direct the future growth of the Border Region, and seeks to implement the planning framework set out in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) published in 2002. It achieves this through appraisal of the critical elements involved in ensuring proper planning and sustainable development, and through the protection of sensitive and environmentally important locations. The RPGs inform and provide direction to County Development Plans of constituent Councils within the Border Region.

The first RPGs for the Border Region were adopted in May 2004 and set out a strategic framework for planning and development for the region up to 2016. This RPG review updates the 2004 document and provides a further outlook up to 2022.

Chapter 1 describes the planning context for the preparation of the RPGs. At a national level, these are identified as the Planning and Development Act 2000, the National Development Plan (NDP), the National Spatial Strategy, Smarter Travel, Transport 21, the National Climate Change Strategy and the National Energy Policy. At a regional level significant documents include the Platform for Change and River Basin Management Plans. The context and purpose of the review and the delivery of the 2004 RPGs are outlined under the topics of population, housing growth, economic activity, public transport, roads investment, ports and airports, water services, waste management, natural heritage and environment, built and cultural heritage, open space and recreation, rural development and social inclusion. The chapter concludes with an outline of the key planning issues and investment priorities for the Region over the period of the Guidelines..

Chapter 2 sets out the vision for the RPGs:

‘By 2022, the Border Region will be a competitive area recognised as, and prospering from, its unique interface between two economies, where economic success will benefit all, through the implementation of the balanced development model, which will provide an outstanding natural environment, innovative people, which in themselves, will be our most valuable asset’.

The delivery of this vision shall be achieved through the implementation of strategic goals and relevant policies and objectives of the Guidelines

Chapter 3 outlines the Core Settlement Strategy for the Region. The Chapter sets out the population growth framework, housing targets and Housing Land Requirement (HLR) for each Local Authority, which are to be incorporated into their Development Plans, through a Core Settlement Strategy. The minimum population targets issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government (DEHLG) in January 2009 are outlined below and are incorporated into the Core Settlement Strategy, which will provide for the proper planning and sustainable development of the Region.

Source	2008 (est)	2010	2016	2022
Border Region	492,500	511,000	552,700	595,000
(% of State Pop)	(11.14)	(11.14)	(11.06)	(11.06)
State	4,422,000	4,584,900	4,997,000	5,375,200

Source: DEHLG, January 2009

The settlement strategy outlines a settlement hierarchy that will set the framework for County Development Plans within the Region. It also outlines the following:

- Function of the Settlement Strategy;
- Legislative requirements;
- Settlement Structure of the Border Region;
- Population trends;
- Strategic development options and preferred growth model;
- Core Settlement Strategy;
- Implications for development plans;
- Policy framework for future development of the region

In essence, the settlement strategy will provide direction for future County, Town and Local Development Plans, in that it provides a framework outlining population targets, housing supply and a likely demand required, and the (HLR) to accommodate that growth.

Chapter 4 is the Regional Economic Strategy. This Chapter sets out the key documents which formed core elements in preparing this strategy, namely Building Ireland's Smart Economy, A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal, Our Cities; Drivers of National Competitiveness and the Regional Competitiveness Agenda Baseline and Realising Potential Reports by Forfás.

In setting the context, the factors of competitiveness are identified as; enterprise dynamic, skills and education, economic infrastructure, leadership and strategic capacity, innovation and quality of life. The challenges facing the Border Region in the current economic environment are outlined, including the growth in unemployment, decline in sectors such as construction and manufacturing and also regional outputs.

Access and connectivity, both in terms of physical and virtual infrastructure, and development of the transmission network are seen as the most critical components to improve the competitiveness of this Region. More specifically, the key areas identified for future growth and development include:

- **Agri-Food Sector** – taking advantage of depth of capabilities, natural resources, and changing consumer demands
- **Internationally Traded Services (incl. Global Business Services)** – Strengthened by enhanced broadband capacity through Project Kelvin
- **Renewable Energy and Environmental products and services (Clean Tech)** – based on the natural resource base and on the existing regional capabilities in engineering and manufacturing and in R & D
- **Life Sciences**– based on existing company activity and strengthening R & D capabilities north and south of the border
- **Tourism** – based on historic strength, existing natural and cultural amenities and infrastructure, and exploiting un-tapped potential through product development

Chapter 5 sets out the key physical infrastructure needs of the Border Region which are required to ensure the successful delivery and implementation of the Settlement and Economic Strategies. The infrastructure identified is required to ensure that the RPGs provide a deliverable framework for the full integration of land use and national investment in infrastructure. The chapter lists key areas of priority investment under the different types of infrastructure –

- Transport - Public, Roads, Rail, Airports, Ports, Cycling and Walking;
- Water Services;
- Waste Water and Surface Water Treatment;
- Energy Infrastructure
- Telecommunications; and

- Waste Management.

Chapter 6 outlines the importance of Environment and Amenities at the regional strategic scale. The Chapter is divided into a number of sub-sections that include

- Climate Change
- Natural Heritage
- Landscape,
- Water,
- Built Heritage,
- Amenities and Recreation,
- Coastal Management.

The Border Region is well known and recognised for its unspoilt and natural environment, which is considered a significant asset for the region. This Chapter highlights the importance of the natural environment and those areas where stricter control will be required due to new Directives from the European Union (EU).

The Chapter also outlines a list of those priority areas for the management of the environment over the coming years:

- the continued protection, management and enhancement of natural heritage, built heritage and environmental resources;
- a revised approach to policy and objective formulation, structured around compliance with existing and emerging European and national legislation. These include flood protection measures, biodiversity management, improving water quality status and the identification and management of coastal management zones;
- continued development and promotion of areas of heritage value which have importance to the Region, county or locality, including the development of management plans, for long term and sustainable investment and monitoring;
- ensuring that Council boundaries do not result in fragmentation of policy implementation;
- re-assessment of the way in which open spaces are managed, linked and developed and the potential for integrating additional functions in that reassessment.

Chapter 7 covers the key issue of social infrastructure and the building of sustainable communities. This Chapter has an important supporting role to the Settlement Strategy, in that it outlines the softer infrastructure and assets that are required to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. Central elements of this are design quality, sustainable densities, integration of housing strategies, schools and crèche provision, leisure and recreational facilities, healthcare, community facilities, and the role of the Arts and Culture, including the Irish language, to the supporting and enriching the many communities and places in the region. Also highlighted, is the importance of planning policy and decisions, taking into account the key issue of social inclusion, and the role that the County Development Boards and other programmes can play in supporting Local Authorities (LA's) in tackling social inclusion issues.

Chapter 8 meets the requirements of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government recently published Flood Risk Management Guidance to Planning Authorities. Through a Regional Flood Risk Appraisal, it outlines a number of recommendations to Local Authorities with regard to assessment of flood risk. It sets the framework for Local Authorities to carry out a more detailed Strategic Flood Risk Assessment within County, Town and Local Area Plans.

Chapter 9 outlines the legal context of the RPGs and how they will be implemented over the six year period up to 2016. It highlights the role and intentions of the Regional Authority in carrying out implementation and monitoring of the Guidelines. The composition of committees and working groups are identified and suggested as a means of assessing the implementation of the Guidelines. It also outlines the

intention of the Regional Authority to monitor the delivery of the RPGs throughout their lifetime using a series of potential targets, indicators and update reports.

Separate processes of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) have been carried out as part of the review and preparation of the Regional Planning Guidelines. These reports are available in parallel and supporting volumes to the RPGs.

Chapter 1 Contextual Background

1.1 Introduction

In accordance with Section 26(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2007, Planning and Development (Regional Planning Guidelines) Regulations 2009 and Ministerial Direction issued by the Minister for the Environment and Local Government, each of the eight Regional Authorities are required to review existing Regional Planning Guidelines 2004 - 2016 and prepare new Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022. The aim of the Guidelines is to provide a long term strategic planning framework for development of the Border Region for the period 2010 – 2022. The Guidelines must be consistent with the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2002 – 2020 and ensure the successful implementation of the NSS at the regional, county and local level.

Legislation that will give effect to these matters is currently being considered by the Oireachtas. A key element in the draft legislation is a requirement for local Planning Authorities to produce an evidence based “core strategy” in development plans which will provide relevant information as to how the development plan and the housing strategy are consistent with Regional Planning Guidelines and the National Spatial Strategy. The location, scale, and phasing of proposed development would be required, as well as growth scenarios, details of transport plans and water services investments, and also proposals for development in rural areas.

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region were first prepared and adopted in 2004. Since then there have been significant changes in Ireland and within the Border Region. In addition to these changes, which will be outlined and discussed later in the Guidelines, a number of significant new European Directives, National Plans and Strategies have been published and adopted, which will influence the future development of this Region. It is therefore critical that the new Guidelines incorporate these changes and set a framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the Region.

1.2 Purpose of the New Regional Planning Guidelines

A vision for the Border Region, and a number of strategic goals required to achieve that vision have been set out in Chapter 2. The revised Guidelines will provide a strategic planning framework to deliver the above, and will focus on the following key areas:-

- A new Regional Settlement Strategy to structure and focus development potential across the Region;
- An update of regional, county and key settlement estimates of population and housing needs, including specific estimates to be applied to future reviews of County Development Plans;
- A new Regional Economic Strategy which outlines the future enterprise potential and related development, as and when they arise during the course of the life of the next Regional Planning Guidelines;
- Those strategic infrastructure investments likely to be made within the life of each RPG, or that have been identified in national level plans, and need to be provided for in the longer term in more local level planning;
- Updating the approach with regard to other important objectives for RPG's, in relation to for example, climate change, sustainable development etc.
- Carrying out of a complementary high-level Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the selected regional settlement and infrastructure strategies, and outlining where critical issues may arise to be dealt with in city/county plans

The main objective of the Regional Planning Guidelines is to provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the development of the Border Region. In doing this, Section 23 (4) (a) of the Planning and Development Act States that:-

'When making regional planning guidelines the regional authority shall take account of the proper planning and sustainable development of the whole of the region to which the guidelines relate, the statutory obligations of any local authority in the region and any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or of any Minister of the Government, including any national plans, policies or strategies specified by the Minister to be of relevance to the determination of strategic planning policies'

It is expected that new Regional Planning Guidelines will be adopted by mid 2010 and will be the subject of a further review in 2016.

1.3 Summary Profile of the Border Region

The Border Region derives its name from its location in relation to Northern Ireland (NI). It comprises the six counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth, which form the border with Northern Ireland, providing the key interface between the two jurisdictions.

With a total population of 502,000 persons (Regional estimate, Central Statistics Office (CSO) Sept. 2009), it is a unique Region with Counties in each of the three provinces of Connacht, Ulster and Leinster. Under the 2007-13 round of EU Structural Funds, the Border Region is no longer eligible as an Objective 1 Region, and qualifies for assistance as a Regional Competitiveness and Employment Region (objective 2).

It encompasses an area of 12,156 sq. km. from the Atlantic Ocean on the West Coast to the Irish Sea on the East Coast. One of the key strengths of the Region is its areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These, along with its strong cultural and heritage assets, make it an area very suitable for a strong tourism base. The Region is the source of Ireland's two longest rivers - the Shannon and the Erne. It has a considerable coastal area and unique mountain ranges. The Donegal Gaeltacht is also a unique asset.

The Region is challenged by some of the most difficult socio-economic and physical barriers to development. The bulk of the Region has little natural geographic or economic cohesiveness or identity, and has always been characterised by peripherality and disadvantage. The distortion effect, created by strong urban centres close to the border in Northern Ireland has been prominent, and the difficult and sensitive political situation has compounded the natural disadvantage of the Region. Persistent weaknesses in infrastructure have resulted in underperformance, and the inability of the Region to compete for employment on a national or international scale.

The continuing Peace Process and the development opportunities arising as a result, now need to be capitalised upon, and the support and promotion of strategic and local links with Northern Ireland will provide an effective interface between the two economies.

Building a competitive and attractive Region will be the fundamental objective behind the Guidelines, as the restructuring of economic and employment activity, and the achievement of scale and capacity, will be seen as being the key factors. The creation of a distinct identity for each of the Gateways, along with the focus on critical mass and employment activity at these locations, will be an overriding priority, with a recognition and facilitation of the supporting development of the Hubs, other Key Towns and rural areas.

1.4 Planning Context

The Regional Planning Guidelines sit within a planning policy framework that operates at European, National, Regional and Local level. This Planning Framework is summarised in figure 1.1. The new Guidelines must incorporate the key elements of the parent documents; each of which are summarised as they apply to the Guidelines in the following sections.

1.4.1 European Spatial Development Perspective

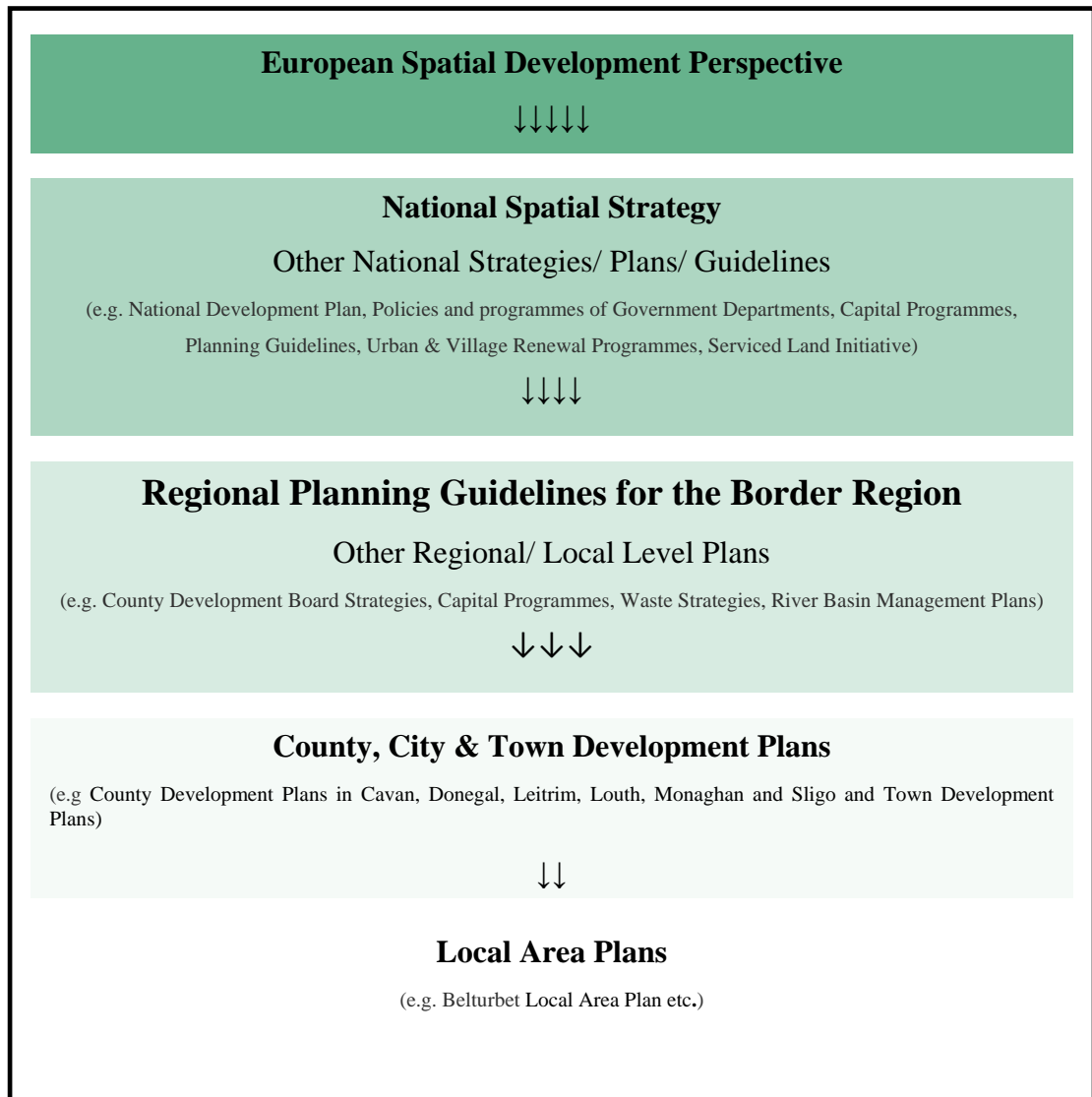
The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) was adopted in May 1999. Ireland, as a member of the European Union, is directly affected by EU policy and legislation. EU Regional Policy and Ireland's access to European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), continue to support and influence developments at a regional level in Ireland.

The ESDP established a number of common strategic objectives for community policies and development initiatives relevant to the Border Region. The strategic guidelines include the development of a polycentric/multi-centred urban system to strengthen partnership between urban and rural areas, and promote integrated transport and communications concepts. The future of urban regions within Europe is dependent on a combination of policies involving economic competitiveness, social cohesion and environmental quality, as essential requirements in delivering a sustainability agenda. Development processes influencing such policies provide a combination of factors, including the restructuring of economic activities resulting in shifts towards technology based industries and internationally traded services. Secondly, the agglomeration of commercial economic activities is being encouraged through clustering of enterprises, so as to achieve economies of scale. Finally, the emergence of economic corridors within regions which are experiencing strong development pressures, particularly along the main transport axis which link urban areas and smaller settlements.

The ESDP has three underlying objectives:

1. Economic and Social Cohesion across the Community.
2. Conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage
3. Balanced competitiveness across the EU.

Figure 1.1 Planning Hierarchy



1.4.2 National Spatial Strategy

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is a twenty year planning framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development and population growth between regions in Ireland, and to assist in the implementation of the National Development Plan.

The NSS has identified a number of key areas in a spatial context including areas relevant to the Border Region:

- Potential for co-operation on key strategic planning issues with Northern Ireland;
- The role of the Border Region in relation to achieving critical mass and especially in Gateways and Hubs;
- Infrastructure links between Northern Ireland and Ireland south of the Border Region; and
- The roles of other areas within the Region beyond the Gateways and Hubs.

The NSS also emphasises that the Border Region must:

- respond to the role of Derry as a major regional city for the North West, which has been identified in the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (first adopted in 2001) as having a hinterland in County Donegal;

- develop the Gateways in the western half of the Region which would contribute to the development of the West, offering a strategic counter-pole to the more traditional pull towards the eastern seaboard;
- link the eastern and western corridors through development of strategic links.

The NSS also makes reference to the role of urban centres in activating the potential of the Region, by virtue of their locations and proximity to towns in Northern Ireland. This is further facilitated by improvements in transportation links. The NSS Framework for the Border Region is best illustrated in the map extract below.

Map 1.1 Framework for the Border Region



(Source: National Spatial Strategy)

1.4.3 National Development Plan 2007 – 2013

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013, sets out a detailed development strategy for the country, supported by investment in the key areas of infrastructural development, education and training, the productive sector and the promotion of social inclusion. The NDP also contains a commitment to support the National Spatial Strategy in the promotion of more balanced regional development throughout the country.

Many of the key elements of the NDP underpin these common, and interlinked, objectives:-

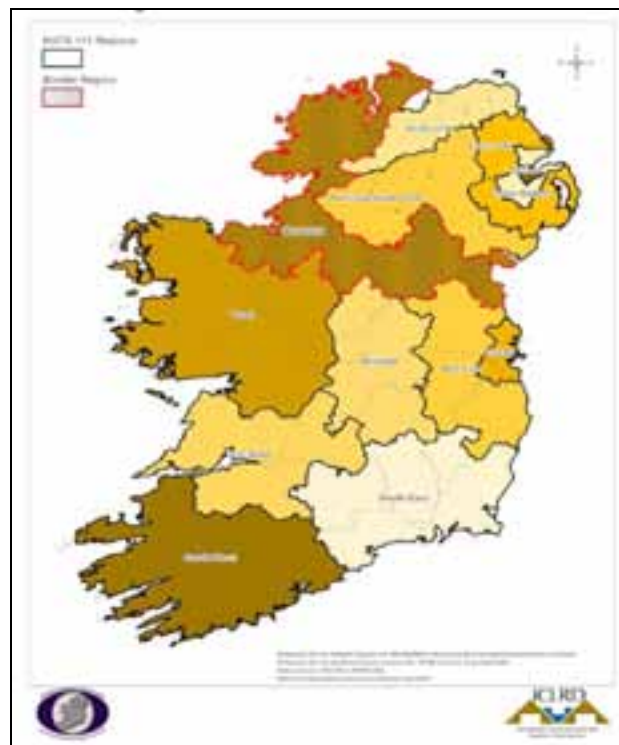
- **Decisively tackle structural infrastructure deficits** that continue to impact on competitiveness, regional development and general quality of life, and to meet the demands of the increasing population;
- **Enhance Enterprise Development, Science, Technology and Innovation, working age training and skills provision** to improve economic performance, competitiveness and our capacity to generate new enterprise 'leaders' from the indigenous sector as well as continue to attract high added value Foreign Direct Investment (FDI);

- **Integrate regional development within the National Spatial Strategy framework** of Gateway cities and Hub towns to achieve the goals of economic growth in the regions, and provide for major investment in the rural economy;
- **Invest in long-term environmental sustainability** to achieve the national goal of preserving the integrity of our natural environment for future generations, as well as meeting international responsibilities and Climate Change obligations; this also involves a more balanced, efficient and sustainable use of our land resources;
- **Realise the opportunities of strengthened all-island collaboration in areas of mutual interest** to build up the island's competitive strengths particularly in the areas of infrastructure, Research and Development (R&D), skills and innovation and to enhance the provision of public services on the island;
- **Deliver a multi-faceted programme for Social Inclusion** and improvements in the quality of life across all age groups, and among all population cohorts; and
- **Provide Value for Taxpayers' Money** through robust and transparent appraisal, management and monitoring systems for NDP investment.

1.5 Inter-Regional Issues and Northern Ireland

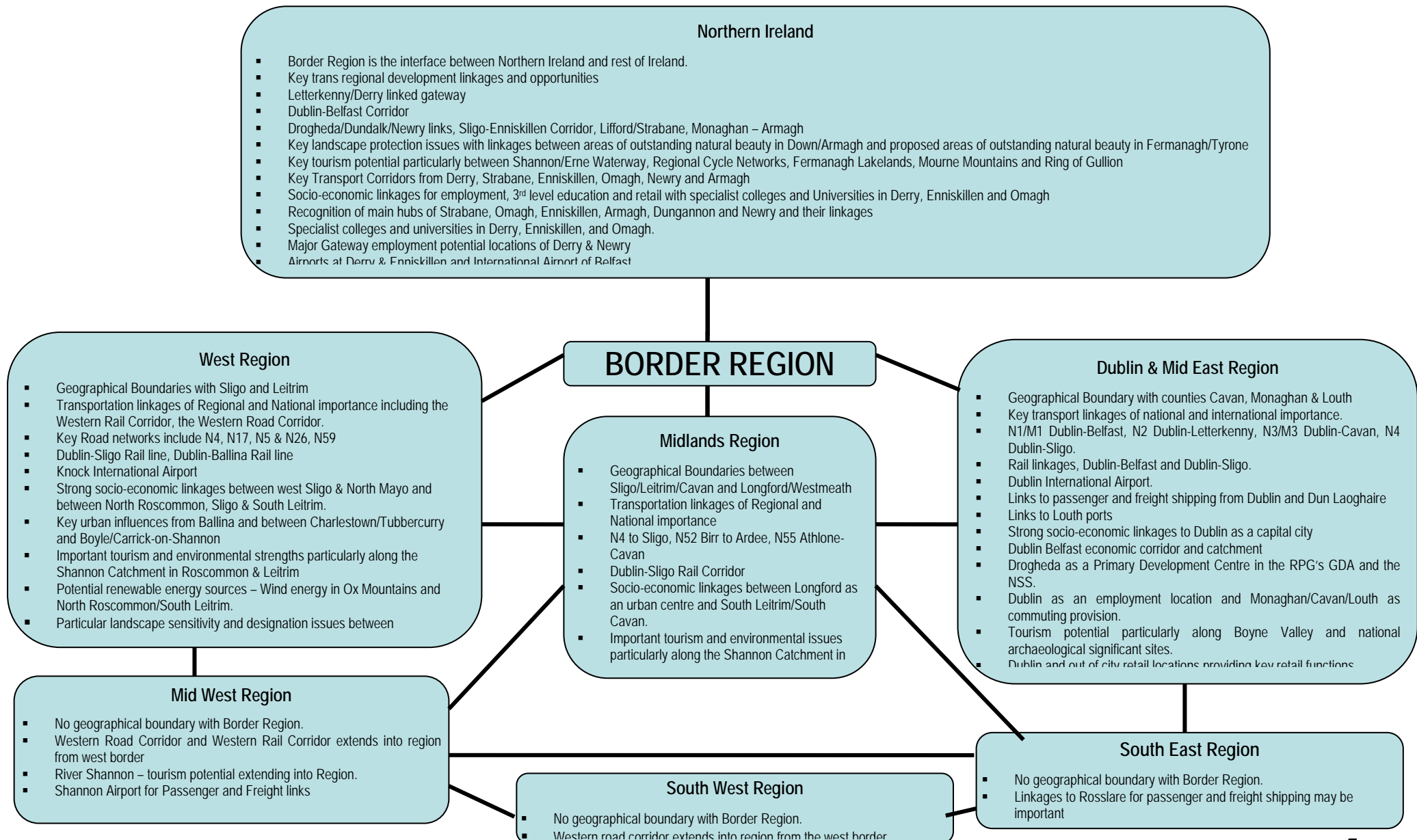
The Border Region is bounded by Northern Ireland, the West, Midlands and Mid-East Regional Authorities in Ireland, and its location relative to these is outlined in figure 1.2 below. There are a considerable number of interregional issues for the Border Region, its location being strategic in that it borders with Northern Ireland and provides a key link between the two principal cities on the Island. It also extends from the busy eastern corridor to the more peripheral underdeveloped, culturally distinct areas in the west. It is defined in places by Ireland's most significant inland waterway, the River Shannon, and has a number of settlements which straddle borders into other Regions. In this regard, the key interregional matters which will be addressed and developed with the adjoining Regions and with Northern Ireland, are set out in the diagram on the following page.

Figure 1.2 Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) III Regions on Island of Ireland



Source: National Institute for Regional & Spatial Analysis (NIRSA), 2009

Figure 1.3 The Border Region in Context



1.5.1 Northern Ireland

The Border Region provides an interface between two national economies of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It possesses key trans-regional development linkages and opportunities. The Letterkenny/Derry linked Gateway and Newry/Dundalk Twin City Initiative are significant linkages, which have progressed significantly as entities in themselves since the Guidelines were first adopted in 2004. In addition to these linked Gateways, there are also other important linkages with Northern Ireland including the Dublin/Belfast corridor, Sligo/Enniskillen corridor, Cavan/Enniskillen linkages, Lifford/Strabane, and Monaghan/Armagh, all of which represent urban strengthening opportunities.

The development of complementary links between the Gateway of Dundalk and the Hubs of Monaghan and Cavan have yet to be developed to their full potential, due in no small part to the continued deficiencies in both private and public transport links between the three centres. These deficiencies, whilst being partially addressed, are nevertheless reflected across the Region with access between the Regional Gateways, and particularly, between Dundalk and Sligo, remaining as an issue for the Region.

On a cross border basis, the accelerated development of the Dundalk Gateway, in conjunction with Drogheda and Newry along the eastern corridor, together with the Letterkenny Gateway operating in partnership with Derry, will be crucial in driving forward effective economic and spatial ties with Northern Ireland. A number of Northern Ireland towns and cities have existing strong functional relationships with centres within the Border Region as outlined above. These links need to be re-emphasised within, and formalised in conjunction with the review of the Regional Development Strategy in Northern Ireland. The urban structure of Northern Ireland is much stronger than that of the Border Region however, the Border Regions towns could benefit from the presence of such a strong urban structure in close proximity to it, and the further development of complimentary roles between these centres.

The Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland "Shaping our Future", is undergoing a review in parallel with these Guidelines. It has identified the existence of the Key Transport Corridors from Derry, Strabane, Enniskillen, Omagh and Newry, and a Link Corridor from Armagh, as being crucial to improved cross-border movement. Socio-economic linkages for employment, third level education and retail sectors are important sectors in cross-border trading. There should also be recognition of the main hubs of Strabane, Omagh, Enniskillen, Dungannon, Armagh and Newry and their linkages. Derry, Enniskillen and Newry are particularly identified as having major inter-regional Gateway roles.

Derry and Newry have major employment potential. Derry, Belfast and Enniskillen have airport facilities, along with the George Best international airport outside of Belfast. Regional ports are located in Derry, Larne and Carlingford Lough along with the international port of Belfast.

In addition to the Regional Development Strategy, there have been significant publications in cross border spatial planning post 2004, which have been considered in the development of the new Guidelines for the Border Region. These include:-

- Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland – Development of a Framework for Collaborative Action (InterTradelreland, June 2006)
- Non-Statutory Spatial Development Framework for the North West Gateway (Report due 2010) The Twin City Region:
- Supporting the Implementation of Cross Border Collaborative Frameworks in Newry/Dundalk (Published 2009)
- Fostering Mutual Benefits in Cross-Border Areas (Report published by International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) in 2008)
- Newry Dundalk Twin City Strategy

1.5.2 Sub Regional Context

In 2004, the Regional Planning Guidelines were adopted, and incorporated the roles of Northern Ireland and the commonalties shared with those areas on the northern side of the border. Consequently, three sub regions were defined as follows:-

Sub Region 1: Border North West: Donegal and Northern Ireland Hinterland

Sub Region 2: Border West: Sligo, Leitrim and the Northern Ireland Hinterland

Sub Region 3: Border East: Cavan, Monaghan and Louth and Northern Ireland hinterland

Post 2004 it has become apparent that these classifications, whilst broadly accurate, nevertheless require clarification at the sub-regional level in order to reflect emerging spatial and economic trends.

- Firstly, the growing dynamic presented by an increasingly resurgent Northern Ireland, is one which must now be factored into any consideration of the spatial direction of the Border Region;
- Secondly, a factor which must be regarded as a constant, is the continued influence of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) on a wide geographical area, which spreads far beyond its immediate physical extent. This GDA sphere of influence now impacts significantly upon eastern areas in the Border Region;
- Thirdly, there is evidence that the increased galvanisation of the eastern corridor, principally through infrastructure improvements, is establishing this area of the Region as a distinct sub-region in itself, with weak ties to the remainder of the Region;
- Fourthly, there is increasingly more evidence to suggest that a development corridor is also emerging along the western seaboard, and is anchored mainly by the linked Gateway of Letterkenny – Derry. Derry is being afforded a greater spatial planning role within the context of Northern Ireland, and Letterkenny has grown significantly since the 2002 census. Although Sligo has not grown in parallel with Letterkenny, there are other settlements such as Ballybofey/Stanolar, Ballyshannon and Bundoran which have performed well along this corridor post 2002, and reinforces its north – south relationship;
- Finally, there are areas of the central Border Region which by the nature of their geographic position, are not as readily engaged or connected in spatial development terms as postulated by the NSS.

1.5.3 Emergence of Corridors in the Region

As outlined above, the existing sub regions define the diversity of the Region, but do not accurately reflect the functional areas within the Region. There are now two emerging key corridors within the Region, one being on the eastern seaboard and the other on the western seaboard. The eastern corridor is driven by the ever increasing ties of the two cities of Belfast and Dublin, and is anchored in this Region by Drogheda and Dundalk and the ever improving relationship between Newry and Dundalk. This corridor's sphere of influence extends into eastern parts of Monaghan and Cavan, and this is reflected in the catchment and travel to work patterns as outlined in the 2006 census. The western corridor is an extension of the Atlantic Corridor and extends from the Gateway of Sligo up to the linked Gateway of Letterkenny – Derry. The North West Gateway Initiative is a key driver of this corridor. Both linked cross-border Gateways, and their respective development strategies, demonstrate an ability and willingness for collaborative action across both jurisdictions, and also reflect a strong political commitment in support of cross-border development strategies.

The remaining area between these corridors is the central Border Region. The challenge for the RPGs is to link the two emerging corridors through the central Border Region. Key to this will be the linking of the main settlements through physical and virtual infrastructure links.

1.6 The Border Region Today

1.6.1 Regional Population Change and Distribution

The Border Region has a population of 492,500 (as estimated in 2008), and has therefore, the fourth highest regional population in Ireland. Between 2002 and 2006 the population grew by 8.3%, which is in line with the growth for the State overall. Between 2006 and 2008 (est), the population is estimated to have grown by 5.1%, surpassing the national growth rate of 4.3%.

Table 1.1 Population change and density by region in Ireland (2002 – 2008)

	2002 (‘000)	2006 (‘000)	2008 (‘000) Estimate	% Change 2002 - 2006	% Change 2006 - 2008	Density (per sq.km.) 2006
Midland	225.4	251.7	266.8	11.7%	6.0%	39
West	380.3	414.3	426.1	8.9%	2.8%	30
Dublin	1,122.8	1,187.2	1,217.8	5.7%	2.6%	1,295
Mid-East	412.6	475.4	514.5	15.2%	8.2%	79
Mid-West	339.6	361	371.9	6.3%	3.0%	46
South-East	423.6	460.8	487.8	8.8%	5.9%	50
South-West	580.4	621.1	644.6	7.0%	3.8%	51
Border	432.5	468.4	492.5	8.3%	5.1%	39
State	3,917.20	4,239.8	4,422.1	8.2%	4.3%	62

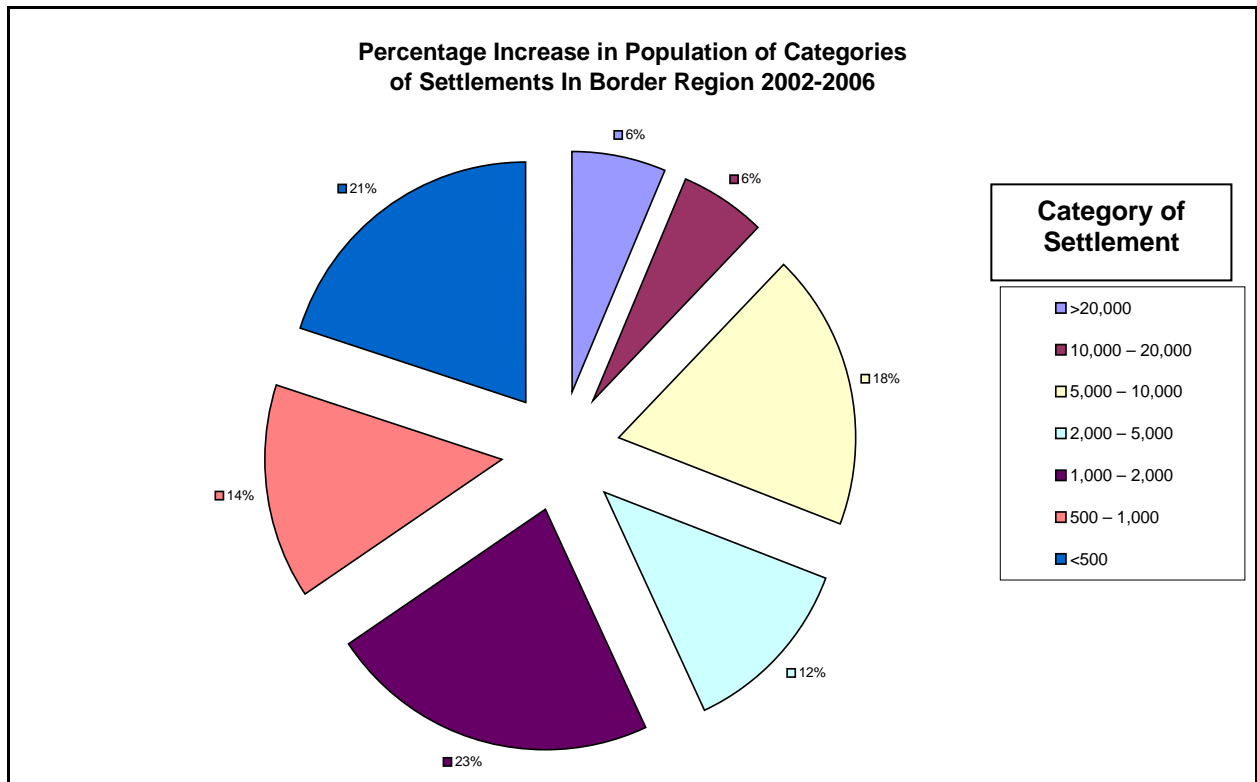
(Source: CSO, Census of Population 2002 & 2006, Population Estimates 2008)

The Border Region is predominantly rural in nature with 305,252 persons, (65.2%) of its total population living in rural areas¹ in 2006 – a reflection of the relatively small size of its urban settlements. It remains one of the least densely populated regions in the country. The largest towns in the Border Region have seen modest growth over the period 2002-2006. Dundalk and Drogheda in County Louth have the largest populations and their proximity to Dublin is a major factor in their growth. The other Gateway towns of Sligo and Letterkenny are the next most populated towns in the Region and have experienced contrasting growth patterns over the 2002-2006 period, at -1.7% and 15.5% respectively. The experience of Sligo is similar to the pattern of growth experienced in other Gateways in Ireland, where a decline or lower than average growth is seen within the city boundaries, while more substantial population growth has taken place in the surrounding countryside and surrounding satellite villages. This trend presents significant challenges for the future development of Sligo. The remaining larger towns in the Border Region all have populations of less than 10,000 people, and some have grown strongly over the four year period 2002-2006.

Table 1.2 summarises the urban population in the Region. The settlements outlined in column 2 include only those towns and villages listed in the census data. The table shows that the most significant population growth took place in settlement categories of 1000 - 2000 (23%) and <500 persons (21%). This pattern of growth is demonstrated graphically in Figure 1.4 below. Overall, this means that these categories now enjoy a greater percentage share of the Regions population and indicates that more people chose to live in smaller settlements and the rural area of the Region, reinforcing a dispersed rural pattern.

¹ Rural areas refer to the CSO definition of 'aggregate rural areas' which represent the population residing in all areas outside clusters of 1,500 or more inhabitants.

Figure 1.4 Percentage Increase in Population of Categories of Settlements in the Border Region 2002- 2006



Anecdotal evidence would suggest that this is due to the significant land banks of residential zoned lands that are available in smaller settlements throughout the Region. As a result, this in turn attracted and encouraged developers to provide new residential units in smaller towns and villages during the last number of years, and can be attributed to the relatively cheaper land values. The Housing Land Availability (HLA) Return from Local Authorities to the DEHLG in 2008 indicates that there were 6,314ha of undeveloped zoned residential lands available for development in the Border Region. The DEHLG State of the Regions Report went on further to state that, in 2008 the Region had the highest supply of zoned undeveloped serviced land with residential potential (3 295ha), which could accommodate approximately 80,800 dwelling units. This is a significant issue which must now be addressed through all development plans, as outlined in the spatial planning framework in figure 1.1. The Regional Planning Guidelines must therefore provide the lead in this regard.

Table 1.2 Urban Hierarchy and Urban Area Growth

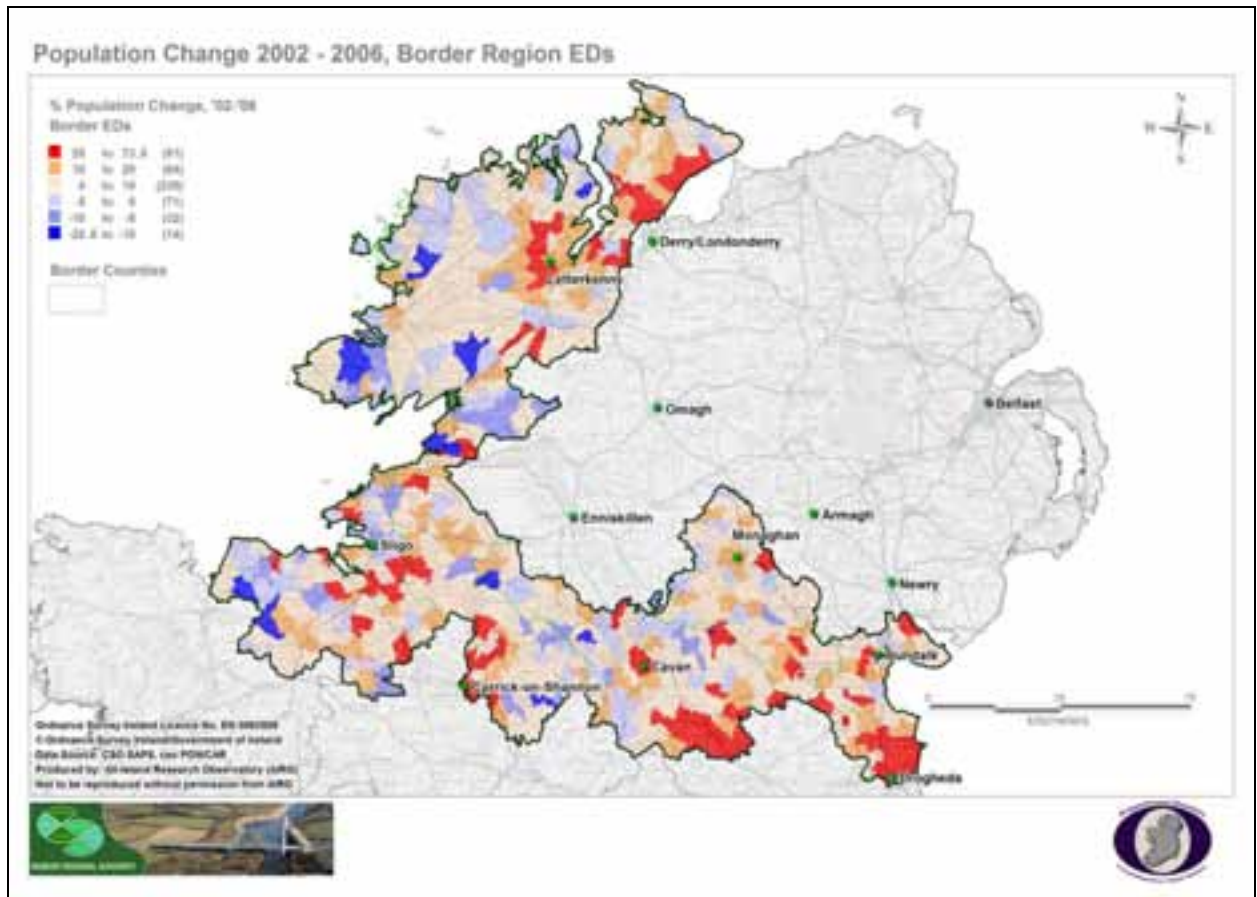
Urban Population Category	No. of settlements	Included settlements	Combined Population 2002	Combined Population 2006	Increase 2002-2006	% of increase from 2002-2006	% share of urban population 2002	% share of urban population 2006
>20,000	2	Dundalk, Drogheda	61,392	65,388	3,996	6.5	30.3	28.7
10,000 – 20,000	2	Sligo, Letterkenny	34,966	36,988	2,022	5.8	17.3	16.3
5,000 – 10,000	3	Cavan, Monaghan, Buncrana	17,305	20,504	3,199	18.5	8.6	9.0
2,000 – 5,000	7	Ballybofey/Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Donegal, Carrick on Shannon, Ardee, Carickmacross, Castleblayney	21,329	24,001	2,672	12.5	10.5	10.5
1,000 – 2,000	25	-	29,805	36,504	6,699	22.5	14.7	16.0
500 – 1,000	32	-	20,416	23,364	2,948	14.4	10.1	10.3
<500	73	-	17,303	20,787	3,484	20.1	8.5	9.1
Region Total	144	-	202,516	227,536	25,020	100	100	100

Source: Census of Population 1996, 2002 (Volume 1) and the Census of Population 2006 (Volume 1)

1.6.2 Spatial Population Trends

Map 1.2 shows that population growth over the period 2002-2006 has been extensive, but is most pronounced in areas that are in closer proximity to the trunk roads leading to the Greater Dublin Area (N2, N3 and M1), the surrounding areas of the Letterkenny-Derry Gateway, the Sligo Gateway, and the hubs of Cavan and Monaghan. Large areas, including Western Donegal, Western Sligo, Leitrim (with the exception of Carrick-on-Shannon and environs) and West Cavan and Monaghan have experienced decreases in population.

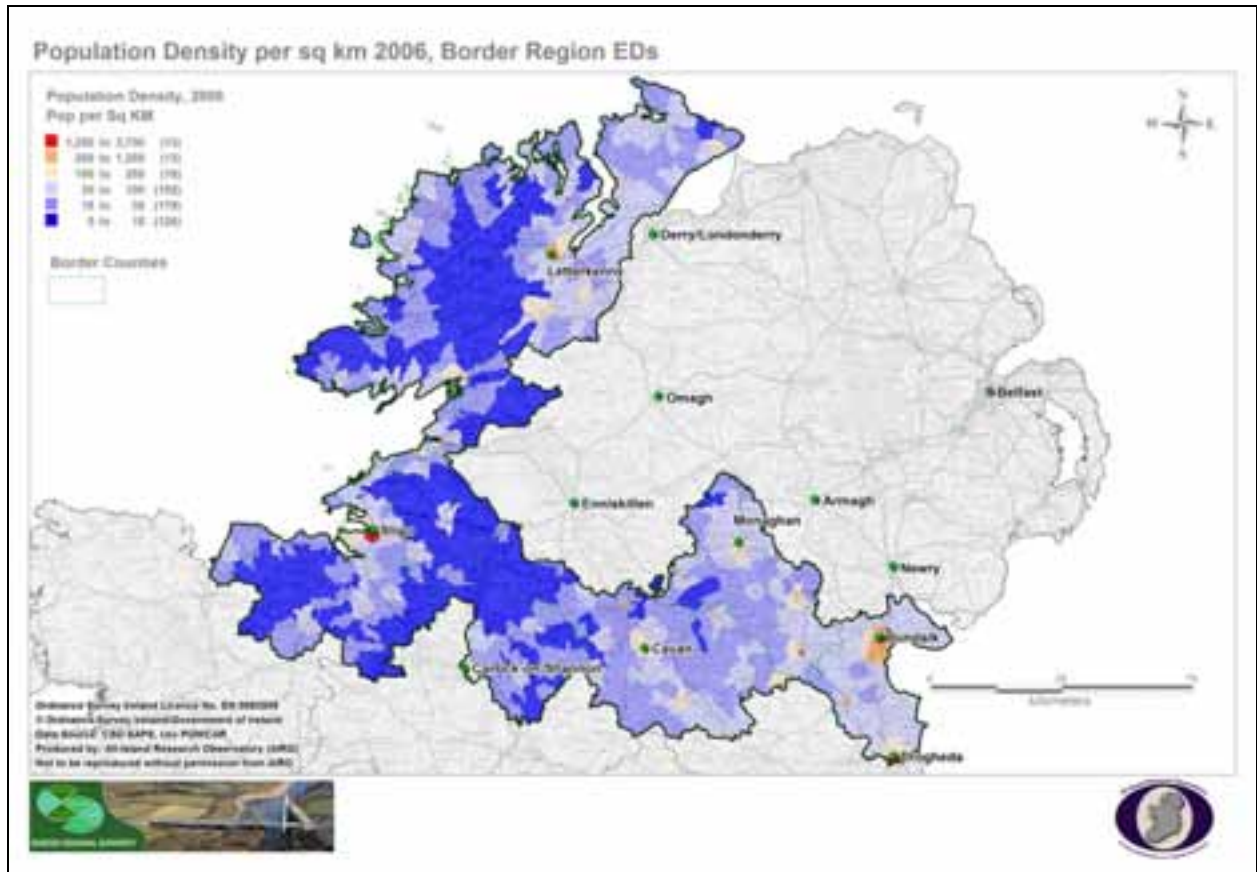
Map 1.2 Percentage change in population of electoral divisions (2002 – 2006)



(Source: NIRSA, 2009)

The spatial distribution and density of population across the Border Region is illustrated in Map 1.2. Given the physical landscape, particularly in the North West Border Region, there are large areas where the population density is very low. The Eastern part of the Region is the most densely populated, particularly in Co Louth and in areas within commuting distance of the Greater Dublin Area. The dispersed settlement pattern, whilst posing certain challenges in terms of infrastructure provision, is also a characteristic of the Region which, along with its diverse landscape adds to the attractiveness and potential as a tourism and recreation destination.

Map 1.3 Population Density of Electoral Divisions, 2006



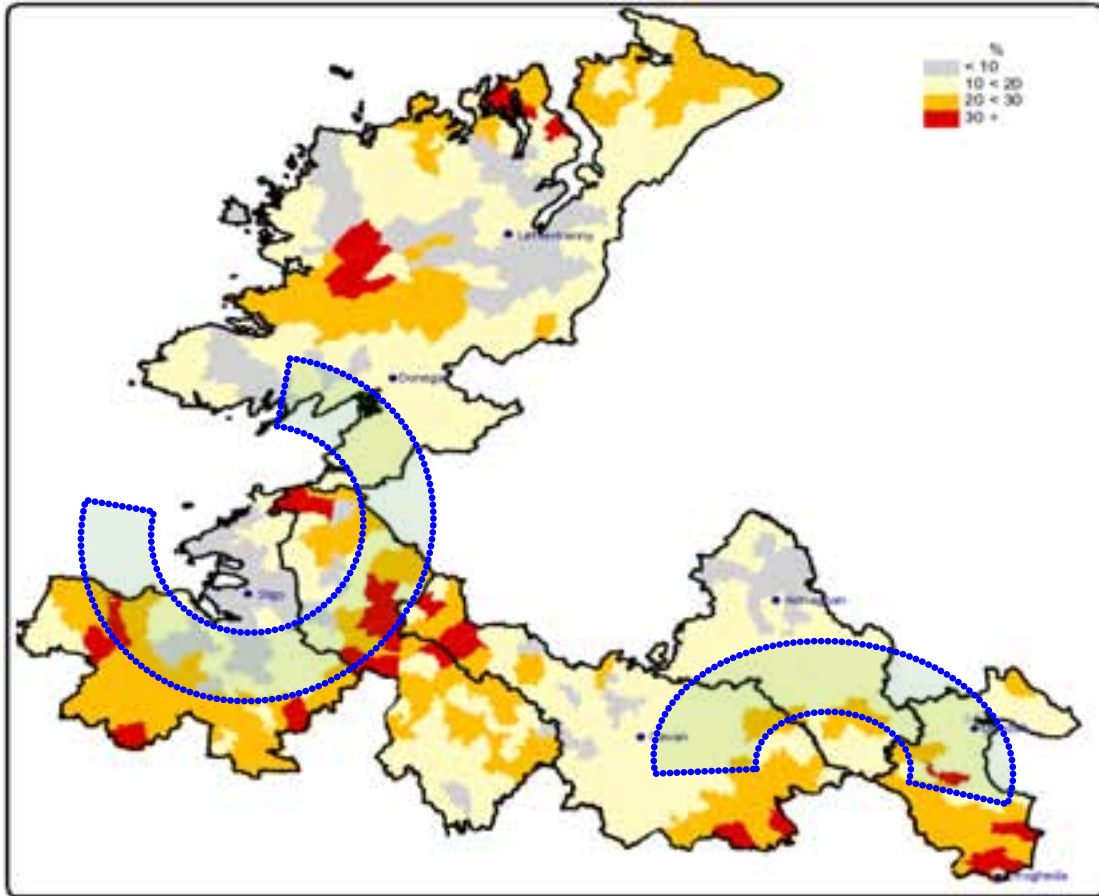
(Source: NIRSA, 2009)

Significant population pressures have been exerted on certain parts of the Region such as the southern parts of Counties Louth, and Monaghan and east Cavan, by external influences such as the Greater Dublin Area. Beyond these specific areas, the Region is experiencing population growth, but not always in a manner consistent with the NSS or the RPG's. There is also some variance across the Gateways and Hubs in terms of population growth and by implication, the ultimate aim of balanced regional development.

1.6.3 Travel to Work Patterns in the Border Region

Census 2006 shows that areas closest to Dublin, (Drogheda, East Cavan, South Monaghan), have a high percentage of the population travelling more than 30km to work each day, suggesting people commuting to the GDA for work. The surrounds of Sligo also show a high percentage of people travelling more than 30km to work each day. Many of the more remote and less densely populated areas in Donegal also have a high percentage of people that have to travel over 30km to work each day, with some of these commuters travelling across the border with Northern Ireland. Long distance commuting in the remainder of the Region is not considered to be a significant issue.

Map 1.4 Percentage of Population that Travels 30km or more to work



(Sources: CSO Census of Population; Ordnance Survey Ireland, 2006)

1.6.4 Development of Gateways Post 2004

The Border, Midland & Western Regional Assembly (BMW) recently commissioned Fitzpatrick Associates to produce a detailed examination of how Gateways are developing throughout Ireland, as there was no formal systematic way of identifying how each gateway is performing. A publication was launched in February 2009 and was entitled the Gateway Development Index (GDI). In this study, a detailed analysis of quality of life indicators was used to develop eight domains with a maximum of three variables in each. Appendix 1 provides an outline of the domains and variables from the index. The GDI provides an overall score for each Gateway for the baseline year, which in this case is 2008. An average score is considered to be 5 where anything below that is considered to be underperforming, while any score above it indicates that the Gateway is performing quite well.

The following is a summary of the results for the three Gateways of Dundalk, Letterkenny and Sligo in the Border Region.

1.6.4.1 Dundalk

- The overall GDI score of Dundalk as a whole is 2.7, against an average of 5. This is the lowest score of any Gateway
- Conclusions and implications: Dundalk is one of the most challenging of the Gateways in terms of its structure and performance as revealed in this preliminary GDI analysis. Dundalk is likely to improve its relative position with respect to GDI scoring, as the functional relationships with Drogheda and Newry develop further, leading to a strengthening of all three settlements in the spatial and economic context of the Eastern Corridor.

1.6.4.2 Letterkenny

- Letterkenny's overall GDI score is 3.2 (against an average of 5) for the combined Gateway Zones 1 and 2. This is well below the national average, and is one of the lowest Gateway scores.
- *Conclusions and implications:* the present results for Letterkenny must be treated as provisional, given the absence of Northern Ireland data for this linked Gateway. Taking Letterkenny as a stand-alone Gateway, despite considerable growth over the past decade, it has not progressed towards the national average on most GDI Domains.

1.6.4.3 Sligo

- The overall GDI score for Sligo is 5.0, just on the national average.
- *Conclusions and implications:* Sligo is showing considerable promise as a Gateway, and has held its position at the national average GDI score during a period when that average rose. Its urban core is somewhat weaker than its catchment.²

Relative to the other Gateways outside the Region, Sligo performed quite well with a score of 5 as only Galway (5.6), Cork (5.8), and Dublin (5.4) recorded scores above the average. Like Dundalk and Letterkenny, the other Gateways of Athlone/Tullamore/Mullingar (3.6), Limerick/Shannon (4.7) and Waterford (3.7) all recorded scores below the average.

The findings of this study indicate that there are significant challenges, especially for the Gateways of Dundalk and Letterkenny, in this Region. The scores provided in this research may form a baseline for future monitoring of the performance of Gateways. Ultimately, the aim will be to improve the score rating of each principal settlement, as outlined through the Gateway Development Index. It is also proposed to roll out this assessment to all Hubs throughout the country, but this will be subject to future funding.

1.7 Economy and Employment

There were 217,400 persons at work in the Border in Q2 2007. Unemployment in the Region stood at 5.3% in the same period, compared to 4.5% nationally. The regional participation³ rate, at 61.1%, was slightly behind the national rate of 63.4%.

As outlined in table 1.3., in terms of absolute employment levels, the largest employer in the Border is the public sector⁴, which accounts for almost 50,000 jobs (or 22.7% of all employment compared to 22% nationally). This is followed by the construction, wholesale & retail and manufacturing sectors, each employing between 31,000 and 33,000 people.

² Preparation of a Gateway Development Index Report on Stages 1, 2 February 2009

³ The participation rate is the labour force expressed as a percentage of the population aged 15 and over.

⁴ Defined here as the sum of employment in public administration, defence, education and health.

Table 1.3 Numbers Employed in the Border and Percentage Change, 1998 & 2007

Sector	2007 Q2 (‘000) Border	% Change Q2 1998- Q2 2007 Border	% Change Q2 1998- Q2 2007 National	% Of Total Employment Growth Accounted for Border 1998- 2007	% Of Total Employment Growth Accounted for National 1998-2007
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	16,800	-16.0%	-15.7%	-4.5%	-3.5%
Other Production Industries	31,000	-13.9%	-3.6%	-7.1%	-1.8%
Construction	33,400	125.7%	122.3%	26.4%	25.6%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	32,000	76.8%	39.0%	19.7%	13.7%
Hotels and Restaurants	14,900	58.5%	27.6%	7.8%	4.5%
Transport, Storage and Communication	10,100	65.6%	40.7%	5.7%	5.9%
Financial and Other Business Services	17,600	114.6%	68.1%	13.3%	19.4%
Public Sector (Includes, Administration, Education and Health)	49,400	79.6%	65.1%	31.1%	30.1%
Other Services	12,200	76.8%	43.9%	7.5%	6.2%
Total	217,400	48.0%	40.3%	100%	100%

Employment grew by 48% in the Border Region between 1998 and 2007, well ahead of the national rate of 40% over the same period. Agriculture and manufacturing ('productive industries'), each recorded steep declines in employment, while in all other sectors employment was up between a range of 59-125%. Compared to sectoral employment changes nationally, growth in all service related sectors was significantly higher in the Border Region. Employment in the 'productive industries' sector (manufacturing), recorded a sharper decline in the Border Region than in any other region of the country over the period 1998-2007.

The main source of growth in the Region's employment over the 1998 to 2007 period was the public sector, which expanded by 79.6%, and accounted for 31% of the overall increase in employment. The next biggest contributor was the construction sector, which accounted for 26% of new jobs in the Region between 1998 and 2007. At a national level, construction and the public sector were also the main contributors to employment growth, accounting for similar shares of employment growth, as was the case in the Border Region. All sectors outlined above face significant challenges due to current economic conditions being experienced in this country. It is therefore likely that this Region will face higher unemployment as these sectors further decline over the coming years, particularly in the public sector where the Government has made significant commitments to reducing the size of the public sector.

The retail sector has grown significantly over the ten year period since 1998, and in 2008 represented 14.7 % of those employed in the Border Region as a whole. Due to the proximity of the Region with Northern Ireland, the sector is particularly vulnerable to currency fluctuations, and the resultant comparative

advantages or disadvantages experienced either side of the border, at particular stages in the economic cycle. Due to the further weakening of sterling in 2009, there has been a significant increase in the number of persons resident in the Border Region, and the state in general, crossing the border to shop in Northern Ireland. This retail leakage to the Northern Ireland economy is having a significant effect on the local economy in the Border Region and threatens many local retail businesses and chains, and ultimately employment levels. The retail sector in the Border Region will require a regional approach, possibly by the development of a Regional Retail Strategy. Any attempt to address this issue must also consider and address the relaxation of retail planning policy within Northern Ireland, which has led to the proliferation of retailing within the border counties in Northern Ireland.

Although not apparent in the figures presented above, the Border Region is a key location for the seafood industry in Ireland. This industry is a significant employer within the Region and is concentrated in counties Donegal (over 2,500 employed or c. 22% of the total employed in this sector nationally); Louth (c. 250 employed or 2% of the total); and Sligo (200 employed or less than 2% of the total). Donegal is a major national centre for pelagic fish (at Killybegs); the harvesting of shellfish is prominent in North Donegal and Carlingford Co. Louth.

A more detailed analysis of the changing nature of the employment sectors in the Region is provided in the Regional Economic Strategy in Chapter 4.

1.7.1 Summary of Key Points: Regional Economic Performance

An obvious and important feature of the Border Region is its proximity to the Sterling currency zone. Nationally, large swings in currency differentials with trading partners, particularly the UK, have a significant impact on exporting sectors, as is being witnessed in 2009. However, border areas experience the added dimension of currency differentials, impacting on local trade as well as on exporting firms. In final quarter of 2009, the impact is being acutely felt with Sterling's historically low levels against the euro. Continued euro strength, at levels currently being experienced, has the potential to have significant and negative impacts on employment in locally traded activities in the Border Region. Other significant issues facing the Region include:

- There has been a significant decline in manufacturing employment in the Border Region, driven mainly by the collapse of the clothing and textile industry;
- There has been a significant dependence on locally traded and non-traded activities for growth in employment and output (for example Construction, Retail and the Public Sector);
- There has been nascent growth in international services activities across the Border Region

Agriculture & Rural Development



The Agriculture sector, although it remains a significant sector in the Region, has been in decline within the Region for the last number of years. The majority of agricultural activity in the Region is based around small dairy and cattle farms, followed closely by fringe farming in the North West of the Region. Agricultural incomes in the Border Region, like the rest of the BMW Region, are substantially lower than in the S&E region. The need for ongoing State intervention to support rural development and sustainability is vital, but Ireland and this Region must respond to the changing nature of agriculture and the food sector, in particular, in order to survive. It is considered that the Region possesses a number of inherent advantages within emerging economic drivers and, in particular; renewable energy, agri-food industries where value is added, clean energy, tourism and services. Sustainable vibrant rural communities are critical for the Region.

1.8 Transport

There have been significant improvements in terms of road access in the Border Region over recent years, for example, completion of the M1 (Dublin to Border), and sections of the N2 and N4/M4. Further development of the key transport corridors traversing the Border Region, and linking the Gateways and main development centres north of the border, still remain to be completed.

Effective infrastructure is required as a pre-condition for economic success. There, however, remains a lack of connectivity within the Region, and notwithstanding the infrastructure improvements in recent years (particularly in the East); it is clear that infrastructure deficits must be addressed if this Region is to compete with other regions as well as Northern Ireland. Connectivity, in this regard, includes all elements of infrastructure.

1.8.1 Roads

Significant progress has been made on roads in the Border Region since 2004. Some of the more significant road schemes that have been completed are outlined in the table below.

Table 1.4 Significant Road Schemes Completed in the Border Region since 2004

County	Route	Scheme	Year
Cavan	N55	Cavan Bypass Link	2006
Donegal	N15	Bundoran/Ballyshannon Bypass	2006
Donegal	N56	Mountaintop (Letterkenny to Illistrin)	2007
Leitrim	N4	Dromod Roosky Bypass	2007
Louth	M1	Dundalk Western Bypass	2005
Louth	N1	Cross Border (Dundalk/Newry) Section	2007
Monaghan	N2	Carrickmacross	2005
Monaghan	N2	Monaghan Town	2006
Monaghan	N2	Castleblayney Bypass	2007
Sligo	N4	Sligo inner Relief Road	2005

There are also a number of major schemes in planning which will have a significant influence on the Border Region over the coming years. The schemes in planning are listed in the table below.

Table 1.5 Significant Road Schemes in Planning within the Border Region

County	Route	Scheme
Cavan	N3	Belturbet Bypass
	N3	Edenburt to Cavan Bypass
	N87	Ballyconnell Inner Relief
Donegal	N13	Stranorlar to Derry
	N14/N13	Junction (Manorcunningham) to Lifford / Stabane
	N15	Ballybofey/ Stranorlar Bypass
	N15	Lifford/Stranorlar
	N56	Mountcharles to Killybegs (Five Points)
	N56	Letterkenny Relief Road
Leitrim	N4	Carrick on Shannon to Dromod
	N16	Glenfarne to Glencar (incl. Manorhamilton Bypass)
Louth	N2	Ardee Bypass (N2/N52)
	N2	Ashbourne to Ardee
Monaghan	N2	Monaghan Bypass Phase 2
	N2	Clontibret to Border
	N54/N2	N54/N2 Link
Sligo	N4	Collooney to Castlebaldwin
	N4	Sligo Western Bypass
	N15	Sligo to County Boundary
	N16	Sligo to Glencar
	N17	Collooney to Tobercurry
	N17	Tobercurry Bypass

Significant improvements are however required on the main arterial routes between the Gateways, Hubs, the Regional Strategic Town and Primary Development Centre in the Region. These improvements will improve access in an east – west direction, which would significantly improve access into, and within the Region. It would also increase the likelihood of more balanced regional development.

A list of the significant road schemes under construction and in planning in Northern Ireland, which will significantly improve access to the Border Region, are outlined in appendix 2. A number of key joint investments by the Governments in Ireland and Northern Ireland have significantly improved infrastructure within and adjoining the region and include:

- A high quality route from the port and airport over the Foyle and around the City of Derry which will significantly improve access to the North West in general;
- The A8 improvement (Belfast-Larne) which extends the economic potential of the Eastern Corridor by offering more reliable connections for ferry services from Larne to Scotland and Europe;
- Proposals in Northern Ireland to complete the upgrade of the A6 (Derry- Belfast) between Toome and Derry, and the further upgrade of the rail line between Coleraine and Derry will underpin shared investment.

1.8.2 Public Transport

The main public transport providers in the Border Region are Bus Éireann and Ulster Bus (Northern Ireland), with remaining smaller routes being taken up by private bus operators. Within the Region there is no provision of rail services in the Counties of Monaghan, Cavan, Donegal and north Leitrim. Maintaining and improving our existing rail lines is a key challenge for the Region. The rail line on the eastern corridor mainly services County Louth and the principal towns of Dundalk and Drogheda.

Improvements on the Enterprise Service between Dublin and Belfast are on-going with works yet to be completed. Significant improvements have been made to the services of the Sligo – Dublin line, with rolling stock now upgraded. There remains much scope for improvement in public transport provision in the Region, as it lags behind all other Regions in the country, and is therefore at a comparative disadvantage.

Donegal County Council has initiated feasibility work on the potential extension of the Western Rail Corridor from Sligo up to Letterkenny and into Derry City. This missing rail link would complete a loop for rail services around the island of Ireland, and would provide significant benefits to a catchment population of western counties in the Border Region. Balanced regional development is a cornerstone of the Guidelines. In order to achieve a balance of social, economic and physical development throughout the island of Ireland, it is important that the development of rail services in the North West is aggressively targeted for investment. New rail services, as identified above, will provide an alternative mode of transport for the population of the North West, but may also provide an alternative for freight services around the island of Ireland. The implementation of the Balanced Development Model, and in particular the Atlantic Arc, detailed in Chapter 3 of these Guidelines, will provide the critical mass required to justify such investment in rail services in the North West of the Island

1.8.3 Ports and Airports

Ports and Airports offer excellent external linkages for the Region, both nationally and internationally. Given the proximity of the Region with Northern Ireland, there is great potential to expand these services by offering mutually beneficial services.

Donegal and Sligo are the existing airports within the Region. They provide essential services for catchment populations. Significant improvements are, however, required in both airports so that they can remain operational and compete with others throughout the country. Sligo airport is planning to extend its runway, which is an essential safety project. It is currently at planning application stage.

City of Derry Airport has benefitted from joint investment by the two Governments on the island. Road improvements now underway in Northern Ireland will provide a high access from the port and airport over the Foyle, around the City of Derry towards Letterkenny and the wider North West. Development plans now have a role to play in capturing the economic potential of these investments.

1.9 Water and Waste Water Services

Water Services in the Border Region has seen unprecedented investment and progress over the last number of years. Table 1.6 outlines those significant developments within water services that have taken place post 2004. In many instances however, population growth has taken place in areas that did not have the necessary infrastructure to support it. On the other hand, there are also areas that have experienced significant investment in infrastructure, but do not have the necessary loadings required for the effective running of plant machinery. These are issues which will have to be addressed within Local Authorities in the Region over the period of these Guidelines, and must be in accordance with the requirements of the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations SI No. 684 of 2007 and associated Circular PD 7/09.

Table 1.6 Developments in Water Services in the Border Region Post 2004

COUNTY	PROJECT	STATUS
CAVAN	Kingscourt Sewerage/Water Supply Scheme	Advanced works completed
	Cavan & Cootehill Regional water Supply Scheme	Advanced works completed
	Cavan Sewerage Scheme	Advanced works completed
	Ballyjamesduff RWSS Extension to Ballinagh	Completed
	Crossdoney/Stradone/Mountnugent Wastewater Treatment Plant	Completed
DONEGAL	DBO (Design, Build & Operate) Group A, comprising of Donegal, Rossnowlagh and Ballyshannon Wastewater Treatment Works	Completed
	Letterkenny Sewerage Scheme	Network Completed
	Letterkenny Water Supply Scheme	Bore Holes Completed
	Ardara Waste Water Treatment Plant	Completed
	Malin Town Sewerage Scheme	Completed
LEITRIM	Carrick- On- Shannon Wastewater Treatment Plant	Under Construction
	Drumkeeran /Manorhamilton/Dromahaire Water Supply Scheme	Under Construction for completion end 2009
	Leitrim Towns & Villages Phase II	Preliminary Report Completed
	North Leitrim RWSS Phase I	Completed
LOUTH	Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant Extension	Completed
	Baltray Termonfeckin Sewerage	Completed
	Dundalk and Drogheda Sludge Drier	Completed
	Mid Louth RWSS Emergency Works	Preliminary Report Completed
	Dundalk Northern Environs Water Augmentation/Drainage Stage I	Completed
	Cooley RWS Stage II	Preliminary Report Completed
	Dundalk & Environs Strategic Water Study	Completed
	Ardee Sewerage Scheme	Preliminary Report Completed
	Tallonstown/Collon/Knockbridge/Louth Waste Water Treatment	Completed
SLIGO	Sligo Wastewater Treatment Plant	Completed
	Teesan/ Lisnalurg Sewerage	Completed
	Sligo and Environs water Supply Scheme Stage 2	Completed
	Enniscrone Sewerage Scheme	Completed
MONAGHAN	Carrickmacross Sewerage Scheme	Under Construction
	North East Service land Initiative	Completed
	Old Armagh Road, Monaghan Service Initiative	Completed
	Monaghan Town Main Drainage Scheme	Preliminary Report Complete
	Carrickmacross Water Supply Scheme	Preliminary Report Complete
	Castleblayney, Clones & Ballybay Sewerage Schemes	Preliminary Report Complete

1.10 Energy

Electricity is the main energy demand in the Region, largely met by the main energy supplier, the ESB. The development of more sustainable, competitive, diverse and secure supplies of electricity to support economic and social development is a key challenge for the Region. Extending the network into Northern Ireland and the UK through interconnectors, will provide the Region, and the Country, with a secure and reliable electricity supply into the 21st Century. Like many of the Regions in the country, demand for electricity will continue to increase, despite the efficiencies being made through innovation and new technologies.

Gas is not a major energy source within the Region. Table 1.7 outlines those counties and towns currently supplied by the gas network.

Table 1.7 Areas Supplied by Natural Gas within the Border Region

County	List of Towns Supplied with Natural Gas
Louth	Ardee, Blackrock, Clogherhead, Drogheda, Dromiskin, Dundalk, Dunleer, Termonfeckin, Tullyallen
Cavan	Kingscourt, Virginia, (Bailieborough – Industrial Plant only)
Monaghan	Carrickmacross, Lough Egish

The lack of gas supply in the Region could become a competitiveness issue into the future, and should be explored as an alternative energy source for the Region.

1.11 Telecommunications

The previous RPGs considered the rollout of broadband as critical to provide infrastructure and services on a balanced regional basis. The new focus is on broadband uptake, performance and availability, and is a key priority for the growth and development of the Region. Despite the aims of National Strategies and the existing RPGs, Ireland and the Border Region continue to have poor broadband performance in relative European terms. Advancement in telecommunication infrastructure and performance, represents one of the most critical steps in creating a more competitive regional and national economy. As a remote and currently high cost location, Ireland and the Border Region need to take advantage of best available broadband technologies such as Next Generation Networks and Services.

Telecommunications has been identified as one of the key enabling pieces of infrastructure required to develop a competitive regional economy. Unfortunately, due to its location and dispersed population, and ultimately the costs involved, the development of this sector has proven difficult in the Border Region. The Region was joint lowest (with the Midlands) for both PC (53%), and Broadband (12%) penetration in Ireland (Census 2006). This is an area where the Region must improve if it is to improve its levels of economic growth, and promote balanced regional development. The recent announcement of Project Kelvin⁵ is a major development in this sector (see Section 5.6.1 for further details).

1.12 Tourism

The Border Region is rich in natural resources such as topography, landscape, indigenous heritage and its unique culture. The tourism sector in the Region has traditionally been stable but, to date, it is a sector with much potential which has yet to be realised. The lack of progress in the tourism sector has in the past been linked to poor infrastructure, and lack of access to many areas. Moving forward, economic conditions will be a key factor in the future development of tourism. The Region must develop its resources in a sustainable manner. Recent announcements such as the proposed reopening of the Ulster Canal between Lough Erne and Clones, and the designation of the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark, will significantly raise the profile of the Region, and its potential as a tourist destination. It is a world first for a Geopark to cross an international border, and in light of the recent turbulent history of Ireland, sets a wonderful example of co-operation to the rest of the world. It is important that these flagship projects, are promoted so that multiplier effects can be enjoyed throughout the Region.

There is strong potential to develop tourism products, (i.e. cultural tourism) which harness existing linkages across the region with regard to history, geography, economic development, folk traditions, language and musical heritage as well as activity based and marine tourism. Development of Green Tourism Products such as the Green Box initiative is another area where the tourism product can be developed, in a

⁵ Project Kelvin is a major cross-border project initiated by the Department of Enterprise, trade and Employment and the North's Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI). At a cost of £32m, it involves connecting a new submarine cable to an existing transatlantic cable 22 miles off the north coast of Ireland. The new cable will come ashore in Co. Derry, and Hibernia Atlantic aims to complete the work by March 2010.

sustainable manner. Development of the tourism product in the region is a key factor to economic success and essential to the retention to the Hotel & Hospitality and Retail sectors.

1.13 Key Planning and Development Issues for Regional Planning Guidelines

1.13.1 Employment & Economic Development

The existing RPGs in the Border Region were adopted in 2004, and were drafted during a period of unprecedented economic success. In 2004 it was estimated that economic growth could reach 5.4% Gross National Product (GNP) towards 2010. Changed economic circumstances now see forecasts of economic contraction in the short term, and lower levels of growth in the long term, with no clear trends yet predictable on economic recovery rates. This significant change to economic growth and Government finances will impact on these Guidelines, and it is now more important than ever that prioritisation of key infrastructure are clearly identified in the Guidelines. In terms of the economy and employment, the following key areas have been identified as critical to the development of the Region.

1.13.2 Quality of Life

International research shows that quality of life factors have become increasingly important in attracting, (and retaining), a mobile workforce. Although quality of life is a subjective concept, the Region has much to offer in this regard, with a high quality and attractive rural environment, improving accessibility, and vastly improved cross-border political and community relations arising from the Good Friday Agreement. The key urban centres in the Region, although relatively small in national terms, play an important role in the delivery of key services, and as focal points for a range of cultural, educational, sporting and recreational activities. A continued focus on development of the Gateways and Hubs will further enhance the attractiveness of the Region. The following is a list of factors that must be considered in developing a way forward for this Region:-

1.13.3 Enterprise

Compounding the over-reliance on construction, the Border has experienced a greater than average decline in manufacturing employment. The Region has experienced higher than average employment growth in Wholesale and Retail activity, which again is experiencing particular challenges in the current economic climate, with the added dimension of cross border currency volatility; Agency employment⁶ in the Border Region is predominantly in the indigenous sector, (70% compared to 50% nationally), and reflects the challenge in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI)

1.13.4 Skills, Education & Innovation

The changing sectoral profile of employment, presents a particular skills challenge for the Border Region. The challenge is all the more serious given the relatively lower levels of educational attainment within the Region, and a relatively high level of early school leaving - although this has reduced considerably in recent years. There is a low level of expenditure on R&D, within business and the Higher Education Institutes (HEI) - efforts are required to identify collaborative opportunities⁷.

⁶ Agency Employment is employment in companies that are clients of the enterprise agencies like IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Shannon Development or Udaras na Gaeltachta

⁷ Lónra, is a network of the seven third level colleges in the Border, Midlands and Western (BMW) Region of Ireland whose aim is to develop effective collaborative responses by the third level sector to the developmental needs of the BMW region. The group which was established in 2000 has recently announced a 'Collaborative Research and Innovation Strategy'.

1.13.5 Economic Infrastructures: Access and Connectivity

The location of the Border Region, its cross-border relationships and potential opportunities, and its challenging/yet attractive physical environment, present certain connectivity challenges which need to be addressed in support of maximising the economic development potential of the Region.

Significant progress has been achieved in terms of road access over recent years, and there now needs to be a clear understanding, north and south of the border, of the main transport corridors that must be developed.

The development of Project Kelvin is a significant boost to the Region in terms of critical telecommunications infrastructure. However, additional investment will be required in broadband infrastructure throughout the Region.

Air access is of immense importance to the Region underlining the need for good road transport links serving the international airports at Belfast and Dublin, and the need to maximise the impact of the four regional airports serving the Region: Sligo, Donegal, Derry and Knock.

The Region benefits from interconnection to the Northern Ireland electricity grid and further integration of the grids north and south is planned. The transmission network in the North West requires significant reinforcement, and is essential if the significant un-tapped wind energy potential in this part of the Region is to be realised.

1.14 Future Development Patterns

The Border Region has experienced strong population growth over the 2002 to 2006 period, reflecting levels of growth nationally. Since 2006, population growth in the Region up to April 2009 was 7.17%, and is well in excess of the national average of 5.18%. An uneven pattern of growth across the Region has reinforced a dispersed settlement pattern, with some clustering around the main towns, (environs of the three Gateways in particular), and in eastern areas within commuting distance to Dublin as outlined in Map 1.1. The dispersed settlement pattern and low population density, pose significant challenges from an infrastructure and service delivery perspective. Travel to work patterns are not considered a significant problem in the Region when compared to others throughout the state. However, population growth has mainly taken place on the periphery of towns and villages, often at the expense of the urban core. This pattern of development and sprawl creates significant challenges for the delivery of services within Local Authorities. This is particularly obvious in the towns and environs data from the 2006 census.

The key issues therefore associated with future development patterns in the Border Region are as follows:-

- Careful management of the rural/urban population growth balance, which must be delivered through more evidence based and policy driven approach;
- The need for a greater focus in the development of Gateways and Hubs, as well as improved connectivity between them. A strong urban structure will provide the engine for the future growth of the Region. Strong urban centres are required so that this Region can compete with other regions in Ireland and Northern Ireland;
- the need to provide a more sustainable form of development outside larger settlements, in a way that ensures the viability of rural communities, which is consistent with the aims of the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, and addresses and considers the issues of climate change and water quality;
- the need to develop cross border spatial planning so that there is a greater understanding of the role and function of border settlements which should be developed in a complimentary role, rather than in a competitive way;
- the need to maximise the benefits from public transport and water services investments;

Gateways

- In Letterkenny, a key challenge is to ensure continued strong growth in ways which draw on the critical mass of the larger Derry component of the linked Gateway. In addition, careful management of the corridor between Letterkenny and Derry is required;
- In the Dundalk Gateway, a key challenge is to take advantage of the excellent transport infrastructure and its location midway between Dublin and Belfast. There is also a major challenge for Dundalk to combine its potential with that of both Drogheda and Newry, so that they can together realise their location potential in a coordinated manner. The critical mass of the combined areas needs to be exploited to further drive forward the eastern corridor in which they are located.
- In the central portions of the Region, there is a need to develop on a cross- Border basis, this area which builds on the presence of the Sligo Gateway and the Hub towns of Cavan and Monaghan in the Republic and Enniskillen, Armagh, Dungannon and Omagh across the border in Northern Ireland. This part of the Region is essentially rural nature, and would need to acknowledge this reality and build on the rural strengths and potentiality of the area

1.15 Key Future Investment Priorities for the Border Region.

The next few years will be amongst the most challenging times ever experienced in the history of this state. It is therefore critical that the Guidelines prioritise key development projects needed to fulfil the Regions vision and strategic goals, whilst working within a tighter national fiscal environment. The key infrastructure projects, that are considered strategically significant for the key settlements, are outlined in Table 1.8, and will be required to ensure that they develop as strong urban centres which will be the engines for growth in the future development of the Region.

Table 1.8 outlines those projects that are considered significant to the overall development of the Region, and are therefore, considered as key investment priorities.

Table 1.8 Future Investment Priorities for Key Settlements in the Region

Settlement	Future Investment Priorities	Time Scale	Progress
Letterkenny	Relief Road		
	Sewerage Scheme	Completion by 2011	Under Construction
	Water supply Scheme	By 2014	At planning stage
Dundalk	Western Infrastructure (Major Internal Distributor Road Network including Bus Corridor)	-	At Planning Stage
	Coastal Protection Measures	2015	In Capital Works Programme
Sligo	Western Distributor Road	2011	Phase one under construction
	Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads	2012	Planning Complete – Awaiting Funding
	N4/N15 upgrade to Borough Boundary including widening of Hughes Bridge	2012	At planning stage
Cavan	Cavan and Cootehill Water Supply Scheme	2011	At planning stage
	Inner Relief Road into Town Centre	-	At planning stage
Monaghan	Extension of By pass onto N54, Cavan Road	-	At planning stage
	Sewerage Scheme Advanced Works	-	At planning stage
	Extend and Improve Sewerage Treatment Works in Castleblayney	-	At planning stage
Drogheda	Improve Port Access	-	-
	Drogheda Sewerage Network Improvements	-	-
	Water Supply Scheme	-	-
Carrick-on-Shannon	Carrick-on-Shannon upgrading of Sewerage Scheme	Completion Mid 2011	Contractor appointed; work commended on DBO
	By pass	Completion 2015	Project upgrade currently at route selection stage

Table 1.9 Future Investment Priorities for the Border Region

Priorities for the Region (Intra & Inter-regional)	Time Scale	Progress
Development of the N2/A5 Dual Carriageway	Completion by 2015	At planning stage
Delivery and Completion of Project Kelvin	Completion by end of 2010	Under construction
Roll out of National Broadband Scheme (NBS)	Completion by end of 2010	Under construction
Development of all Strategic Radial Corridors and Strategic Link roads (see transport section)	Period of the Guidelines 2010 - 2022	At planning and under construction
Development of Transmission Grid Network	Grid 25 Strategy extends up to 2025	At planning stage

All of the key investment priorities identified here, and outlined in Tables 1.8 and 1.9 will be subject to policies INFP1 and ENVP4 and ENVP5.

1.16 Challenges for the Region

1. The Region is diverse in terms of economic activity and settlement patterns. The Guidelines must build on the strengths and opportunities identified in the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis outlined in appendix 3 ;
2. There are now two emerging corridors in the Region with the eastern corridor anchored on the three key settlements of Drogheda, Dundalk and Newry. The emerging western corridor anchored on the Derry/Letterkenny linked Gateway, and extends south towards Sligo and beyond towards the Galway Gateway. The central Border Region, between the above two corridors, presents significant challenges in terms of realising its potential;
3. There is a need to develop a clear, concise and simplified settlement framework at regional level, which can further be developed at County Council level through County Development Plans. This includes a more evidence based approach to land use planning;
4. The three Gateways in the Region can be considered as 'developing' Gateways, relative to other designated Gateways on the island, followed by the development of the Hubs as supporting centres. All analysis points to their increasing importance as drivers for future development of the Region.
5. Future economic growth in the Region will rely heavily, (though not exclusively), on the performance of the indigenous sector, with enhanced competitiveness, innovation, productivity, and renewal, (in terms of new firm formation and transformation of existing firms), being key elements.
6. Internationally traded services have gained a foothold in the Region over recent years. Recent connections into international broadband infrastructures are a positive development for realising future potential in this area, but requires more investment;
7. The strong food sector in the Region offers potential for further growth, with added value and increased productivity being key challenges. Similarly, tourism offers significant un-tapped potential.
8. The changing sectoral profile of the Border, (decline in construction and manufacturing activity in particular), alongside legacy issues in relation to educational attainment and early school leaving, will require a key focus on skills development.
9. The electricity grid infrastructure, in the North West (NW) in particular, requires upgrading if the potential for renewable energy generation is to be realised.
10. Continued emphasis will need to be given to enhancing physical connectivity, specifically in relation to facilitating international access (incl. road links to Dublin and Belfast); the strategic radial and linking corridors which link the Region's Gateways and other important settlements; and other strategically important intra-regional and cross-border transport links.

Chapter 2 Vision and Strategic Goals for the Region

2.1 Vision

'By 2022, the Border Region will be a competitive area recognised as, and prospering from, its unique interface between two economies, where economic success will benefit all, through the implementation of the balanced development model, which will provide an outstanding natural environment, innovative people, which in themselves, will be our most valuable asset'

The 2004 Guidelines set out a vision for the Region and nine key strategic goals that are required to achieve that vision. It is considered that the vision remains valid, and the key strategic goals have been updated to reflect the new circumstances that this Region faces over the period of the Guidelines of 2010 – 2022.

2.2 Key Strategic Goals

The key Strategic Goals required to achieve this vision for the Region are as follows:

- SG.1** To foster the development of the Region's most important asset, its people by providing an improved quality of life for all people and communities living, working and visiting the Region.
- SG.2** To ensure the development of the key urban settlements and to facilitate integrated sustainable development between urban and rural areas;
- SG.3** To improve intra and inter regional connectivity and mobility throughout the Region through the development of Strategic Radial Corridors and Strategic Links;
- SG.4** To promote economic growth, competitiveness and the development potential of the Region, and to facilitate emerging sectors in the Region that will provide sustainable jobs for the future;
- SG.5** To protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment and built heritage of the Region;
- SG.6** To co-ordinate a regional approach to the key environmental challenges facing the Region;
- SG.7** To co-ordinate and integrate key issues in National and Regional Spatial Planning Strategies and in particular, the National Spatial Strategy and the National Development Plan, and associated inter-regional development initiatives that support and promote strategic links;
- SG.8** To co-ordinate and integrate key aspects of cross border spatial planning strategies, and in particular, the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland and associated inter-regional development initiatives, that support and promote strategic links between the two economies.
- SG.9** To exploit the Region's unique location at the interface between two economies, by putting in place the drivers for economic growth, through the development of the Eastern Corridor, Atlantic Arc and the Central Border Area

Chapter 3 Population and Settlement Strategy

3.1 Introduction

The pattern and distribution of economic development, population growth and housing provision within the Border Region is central to achieving proper planning and sustainable development and balanced regional development. In this regard, this section summarises the implications of a continuation of current trends, summarises the key strategic development options for the Region, and selects a core settlement strategy as a spatial planning framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the Region over the next 12 years and beyond. More specifically, this section addresses the following matters:-

- Function of the Settlement Strategy;
- Legislative requirements;
- Settlement Structure of the Border Region;
- Population trends;
- Strategic development options and preferred growth model;
- Core Settlement Strategy;
- Implications for development plans;
- Policy framework for future development of the Region

3.2 Function of Settlement Strategy

The settlement strategy of these draft Guidelines sets a regionally strategic context for spatial planning of all planning authorities in the area of the Border Regional Authority.

The strategy addresses the fact that while the Region has experienced unprecedented growth over the last number of years, which has significantly boosted the local economy, such growth has not been uniform, or taken place in a manner that optimises the long term sustainability of the Region in economic, social and environmental terms.

The settlement strategy will act to structure future growth in the longer term, to maximise and optimise the development potential of the Region taking account of the strengthening linkages between the economies of Northern Ireland and the Republic, and the increasing recognition of the prospects for both economies on the island of Ireland.

3.3 Legislative Requirements

The settlement strategy has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the current legislative requirements in relation to Regional Planning Guidelines, but also in anticipation of the provisions of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill, 2009, that aims to ensure closer alignment between the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines, Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

In particular, the settlement strategy of these draft guidelines has been drafted in a manner to facilitate the preparation of core strategies, as outlined in the Bill, in future development plans. Such core strategies will provide relevant information as to how the development plans and the housing strategies are consistent with Regional Planning Guidelines and the National Spatial Strategy.

3.4 Settlement Structure

The predominantly rural and dispersed nature of population distribution in the Border Region conversely means that the Region has a weak urban settlement structure.

Unlike other regions in Ireland, the Border Region does not have a single dominant urban centre at its core, but instead, contains a number of moderately sized settlements, the largest of which are Dundalk and Drogheda which are located in the extreme east of the Region.

Other significant settlements include the Gateways of Sligo and Letterkenny and the Hubs of Cavan and Monaghan. Buncrana in Donegal is also a large settlement that has experienced significant growth over the last few years. These settlements are then supported by a group of towns such as Carrick-on-Shannon, Ballybofey/Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Donegal, Ardee, Carrickmacross and Castleblayney, all of which have populations between 2000 -5000 persons. Finally, based on the CSO definition of a settlement, there are 130 remaining settlements in the Region which have a population of less than 2000 persons, further highlighting the rural nature of the Region.

A Regional Settlement Strategy for the Region must therefore address:

1. The three Gateways of Letterkenny, Sligo and Dundalk;
2. The Hub Towns of Cavan and Monaghan;
3. Other strategic towns such as Drogheda and Carrick-on-Shannon which perform as regional strategic centres in terms of residential, employment, administrative and other public service functions

These seven urban centres outlined above will form the key urban settlements which are considered of regional significance, and will be the focus of the core settlement strategy. The core settlement strategy will also outline a policy framework for the future development of all other urban settlements in the Region, as well as the future development of rural areas. Table 3.1 below outlines a settlement hierarchy for the Border Region and the key function of each category of settlement.

It will be the role of the local planning system, and in particular County Development Plans, to develop this planning hierarchy at the local level, in accordance with this core strategy. Development Plans must clearly outline the role and function of all other settlements, in addition to the seven key urban settlements. It should also be noted that the development of all urban settlements will be contingent upon the development of sufficient water supply and waste water services, which must comply with policies ENVP 4, 5 and 6 as outlined in the Environment Chapter.

Table 3.1 Settlement Hierarchy in the Border Region

Development Model	Settlement	Category of Settlement	Settlement Function
Eastern Corridor	Dundalk	Gateway	To promote and facilitate the achievement of critical mass within the Gateway of Dundalk that will be necessary to sustain growth and to act as a catalyst for and driver of growth within the Region
	Drogheda	Primary Development Centre	To promote and facilitate the development of Drogheda as an important strategic urban settlement in the region and within the Eastern Economic Corridor in support of the Dundalk Gateway.
Atlantic Arc	Letterkenny & Sligo	Gateways	To promote and facilitate the achievement of critical mass within the Gateways of Sligo and Letterkenny that will be necessary to sustain growth and to act as a catalyst for and driver of growth within the Region
Central Border Area	Cavan Monaghan	Hubs	To promote and facilitate the development of the hub towns of Cavan and Monaghan in order to link the Gateways with other areas of the region and to act as drivers of growth within their respective catchments.
	Carrick-on-Shannon	Regional Strategic Town	To promote and facilitate the development of Carrick-on-Shannon as a key strategic urban centre within the region in support of the Sligo Gateway
Settlements dispersed throughout the region	- *	Settlements with more than 1500 persons	To promote and facilitate the regeneration of towns in excess of 1500 population to act as local development and service centres
	- *	Settlements with less than 1500 persons	To protect and support the role of small rural settlements with less than 1500 persons as local neighbourhood service centres.

* Includes all Rural Settlements within ranges identified in 2006 Census and County Development Plans

3.5 Summary of Recent Population Trends

In September 2009, the CSO published a paper entitled 'Population and Migrations Estimates, April 2009'. At the time of drafting these Guidelines it is the most-up-to date census information available on population and migrations patterns at NUTS III Level in the state. The paper stated that in April 2009, the estimated population for the Border Region is 502,000 persons which is an increase of 7.17% from the 2006 CSO population census data. This information indicates that, despite the recent downturn in the economy, the Border Region experienced stronger population growth than the national average of 5.18% in the three years up to April 2009. This strong population growth provides the region with a significant resource.

In order to understand how this growth occurs, it is important to look at natural growth and migration patterns over the most recent census period 2002 – 2006. This analysis may give us some indication of future growth trends. Table 3.2 outlines the regional components of population growth over the period 2002 – 2006. The table shows that of the 61,080 population increase in the Border Region over the period, the rate of net inward migration was almost twice that of the natural increase. This growth pattern was also experienced in the Mid East and Midlands Regions, with the Western Region experiencing almost 3 times the natural increase from net inward migration. The analysis indicates that the above regions are now most

vulnerable to net-out- migration which we are now experiencing, as outlined in the CSO Population and Migration Estimate publication in September 2009.

Table 3.2 Components of Population Growth 1996 – 2006

Region	1996 Population	2006 Population	10-Year Increase	Natural Growth	Net Inward Migration	Mig.:NG Ratio*
Border	407,295	468,375	61,080	20,945	40,135	1.92:1.00
Dublin	1,058,264	1,187,176	128,912	92,584	36,328	0.39:1.00
Mid-East	347,407	475,360	127,953	44,521	83,432	1.87:1.00
Midlands	205,542	251,664	46,122	15,068	31,054	2.06:1.00
Mid-West	317,069	361,028	43,959	20,887	23,072	1.10:1.00
South-East	391,517	460,838	69,321	27,356	41,965	1.53:1.00
South-West	546,640	621,130	74,490	31,397	43,093	1.37:1.00
West	<u>352,353</u>	<u>414,277</u>	<u>61,924</u>	<u>15,791</u>	<u>46,133</u>	<u>2.92:1.00</u>
Total	3,626,087	4,239,848	613,761	268,549	345,212	1.29:1.00

Mig:NG – Migration – Natural Growth Ratio

Source: B. Hughes analysis of CSO 2002 and 2006 Census Data, 2009

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 outline a summary of population growth in each county, and the key settlements in the Region between 2002 and 2006. More recent data will not be available until the next census in 2011.

Table 3.3 Population Change in the Border Counties between 2002 – 2006

County	2002	2006	Actual Change	Percentage Change
Louth	101,821	111,267	9,446	9.3
Leitrim	25,799	28,950	3,151	12.2
Sligo	58,200	60,894	2,694	4.6
Cavan	56,546	64,003	7,457	13.2
Monaghan	52,593	55,997	3,404	6.5
Donegal	137,575	147,264	9,689	7.0
Border Total	432,534	468,375	35,841	8.8

Counties Leitrim, Louth and Cavan experienced the highest rates of population growth with 12.2%, 9.3% and 13.2% increase over the period. Much of this growth was driven mainly by the influence of the Greater Dublin Area, which was experienced in all counties throughout the country that were within commuting distance of Dublin. Leitrim experienced strong population growth, which was driven mainly by the tax incentives schemes that were available throughout the county over the last number of years.

Table 3.4 outlines the population growth of the key urban settlements in the Region between 1996 and 2006. Letterkenny, Cavan and Carrick-on-Shannon all recorded significant increases in their overall populations, while Dundalk, Drogheda and Monaghan all experienced more modest increases in population growth.

Table 3.4 Distribution of Population Growth in Key Settlements and their Catchments in the Border Region between 1996 and 2006

Settlement	Area	Population numbers			Rate of Growth (%pa)	
		1996	2002	2006	1996-02	2002-06
Dundalk	Town	25,762	27,385	29,037	1.0	1.5
	Environs	4,433	5,120	6,048	2.4	4.3
	20% Catchment	22,825	23,922	25,401	0.8	1.5
	Total	53,020	56,427	60,486	1.0	1.8
Sligo	Town	17,786	18,473	17,892	0.6	-0.8
	Environs	723	1,262	1,510	9.7	4.6
	20% Catchment	42,685	44,100	48,521	0.5	2.4
	Total	61,194	63,835	67,923	0.7	1.6
Letterkenny*	Town	7,606	7,965	15,062	0.8	17.3
	Environs	4,390	7,266	2,524	8.8	-23.2
	20% Catchment	33,799	35,632	38,691	0.9	2.1
	Total	45,795	50,863	56,277	1.8	2.6
Cavan	Town	3,509	3,538	3,934	0.1	2.7
	Environs	2,114	2,560	3,949	3.2	11.4
	20% Catchment	18,198	19,031	19,798	0.7	1.0
	Total	23,821	25,129	27,681	0.9	2.4
Monaghan	Town	5,628	5,717	6,221	0.3	2.1
	Environs	214	219	489	0.4	22.2
	20% Catchment	18,688	19,290	20,391	0.5	1.4
	Total	24,530	25,226	27,101	0.5	1.8
Drogheda	Town	24,460	28,333	28,973	2.6	0.6
	Environs [Louth only]	36	554	1,330	240	35
	[Meath only]	786	2,133	4,787	29	31
	Total	25,282	31,020	35,090	3.8	3.3
Carrick-on-Shannon	Town [Leitrim only]	1532	1842	2595	3.4	10.2
	[Roscommon]	336	395	568	2.9	11.0
	Total	1868	2237	3163	3.3	10.3

* 20% catchment" refers to the EDs which had 20% or more of the employed persons in the ED who worked in the adjacent Gateway.

Boundary changes took place in the case of Letterkenny, which are reflected in substantial shifts in the population numbers from the environs into the urban area. With the exception of Sligo, all of the key settlements in the Region experienced modest and high population growth during the most recent census period 2002 – 2006. Sligo did, however, experience significant increase in population in the environs and within the 20% catchment area as defined. This is also a characteristic of most settlements within the Region, such as Monaghan and Cavan in particular, where a significant portion of growth has taken place within the environs and catchment area of the Gateways and Hubs. This pattern of growth does not lead to sustainable urban settlements and must, therefore, be addressed within relevant future County Development Plan reviews.

It should not be underestimated how the short to medium term growth of the Region poses significant challenges, and in particular, for the key settlements. As outlined in Chapter 1, the Border Region is predominantly rural in nature, with 65.2% of its population living in rural areas. With the country now facing net-out migration, it is critical for the long term economic prospects of the Region, that the key settlements at least maintain their status quo in terms of population. It is the aim of these Guidelines that the Gateways should grow at 1.5 times, and the Hubs at 1.33 times the regional growth rate between 2016 - 2022. In the

intervening period, it is considered that growth rates should be geared towards achieving these targets and should be considered in relevant County Development Plans.

3.5.1 Continuation of Existing Population Trends

In considering the development options to manage future population growth in the Region, it was considered necessary to look at a continuation of the existing population trends. In order to do this, it was considered necessary to make a number of assumptions as follows:-

- Due to the high level of population growth experienced in the Region over the last census period (2002 – 2006), it was considered that an average growth figure over a longer period was required, that included modest growth rates i.e. 1991 - 2006;
- The plan period for the new Guidelines is 12 years, therefore, it was considered reasonable to look at population growth over the last 15 years from the most recent census data;
- An annual growth rate was considered appropriate for projecting growth over the coming years and should be calculated using the average percentage change in population over the period 1991 – 2006. This figure is outlined in column 2 in Table 3.5

Table 3.5 Continuation of Population Trends in the Border Region

County/Key Settlement	Average % Change in Pop 1991 – 2006	Assumed Annual growth*	Resultant Population		
			2010	2016	2022
Cavan	6.8	870	67,483	73,573	78,793
Cavan Town	14.9	235	8,823	10,468	11,878
Donegal	4.8	1,414	152,920	162,818	171,302
Letter Kenny	18.1	637	20,134	24,593	28,415
Leitrim	4.7	272	30,038	31,942	33,574
Carrick-on-Shannon^	20.9	108	3,027	3,783	4,431
Louth	7.1	1,580	117,587	128,647	138,136
Dundalk	5.3	372	36,573	39,177	41,409
Drogheda^	8.4	509	32,339	35,902	38,956
Monaghan	3	336	57,341	59,693	61,709
Monaghan Town	4.3	58	6,942	7,348	7,696
Sligo	3.6	438	62,646	65,712	68,340
Sligo Town	2.6	101	19,806	20,513	21,119

* Assumed annual growth based on average percentage increase in population over the period 1991-2006.

^ Refers to area within Border Regional Authority only

If existing population trends were to continue over the period of Guidelines, the population figures outlined in the last two columns of table 3.5 would be the most likely resultant population.

The increases are modest, but more importantly, it is likely that a continuation of current trends would mean that the majority of population increase would take place in the rural areas, and not in the main urban centres, which would serve to further undermine the urban structure of the Region and reinforce the dispersed nature of the regions population. The Economic Strategy in Chapter 4 highlights the importance of the emerging employment sectors in this Region, and it has emerged that the Region will face a

continued decline in its traditional manufacturing and construction sectors, which have been very much dominant over the last number of years.

All research now indicates that a greater percentage of future jobs will be located within urban centres. It is, therefore, critical that this Region develops critical mass in its key urban centres, so that it will be in a position to compete with other regions in attracting larger employers to the Region.

3.6 Strategic Development Options

In January 2009, the DEHLG published population targets for each region in Ireland, which would set the framework for future population growth in the state up to 2022. An outline of these population targets are provided in section 3.7. The DEHLG paper sets the wider development context for the future development of the Border Region, and outlines how it is part of an overall framework at the national level.

Working within these figures, and to identify a regional strategy that could facilitate and manage the growth of the Region, up to a population of 595,000 persons by 2022, the Strategic Environmental Assessment explored the strategic development options that could set the framework for the management of this growth. The three development options considered are as follows:-

- Continuation of Current Trends;
- Predominantly Gateway Led Development Model;
- Balanced Development Model

3.6.1 Continuation of Current Trends

One option for the regional settlement strategy would be minimal intervention in terms of spatial planning, thereby allowing current trends to continue, whereby market forces largely dictate the location of future growth and development. The key features of the development of this option are as follows:-

- it is likely that the future population growth would be concentrated in the eastern part of the Region and there would be a greater dispersal of population into the rural areas;
- future population growth would most likely be located along the strategic radial corridors extending from Dublin into the Region;
- the dispersal of population will negatively impact on the key urban settlements, as there is likely to be an increasing number of persons choosing to live in smaller settlements and the rural area, due to comparatively cheaper land values when compared to the larger settlements.

This option will also see an increase in the numbers of persons commuting to the Greater Dublin Area, with increasing commuting times and distances posing significant problems for this Region and others, through increased congestion and significant infrastructure pressures in parts of the Region.

Rural communities will continue to decline and become further marginalised as the 'daytime' countryside is empty of people, as commuters replace traditional rural persons who are intrinsic part of local communities.

The Environmental Report also outlined the main environmental problems and issues associated with this option. In summary, this scenario is considered unacceptable for the following reasons:

- it will promote the further weakening of the Regions urban structure, and direct future population growth to smaller settlements and the rural areas of the Region;
- there will be no justification for improved connectivity across the Region as growth will occur on an ad-hoc basis, and most likely in the eastern part of the Region.;
- the Regions competitiveness will be undermined, due to the lack of critical mass and economies of scale which are to be gained from strong urban centres;
- there will be a further reduction in the potential for improving and developing a good public transport system;

- new development is likely to occur in, and conflict with, environmentally sensitive areas, rather than being directed towards fully serviced and robust receiving environments;
- A further weakening of the Region's urban structure will leave this Region at a comparative disadvantage, as its key settlements will not benefit from the economies of scale and critical mass required to be competitive with other settlements throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland;
- there will be greater pressure on surface and ground water of those rural locations where development pressure is greatest, which will be counter to the aims of the Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Plans;

3.6.2 Predominantly Gateway Led Development Model

Another option is where growth would primarily be focused on the development of the three Gateways of Letterkenny/Derry, Sligo and Dundalk.

The Environmental Report indicates that this option may have advantages in terms in concentration of services, however, there will be environmental degradation and reduced quality of life outside the Gateways.

In summary, this alternative is unacceptable due to the following:

- Given the geographical spread and diversity of the Region, no Gateway, alone, or in combination with others, is large enough to support and sustain the overall development and service requirements of a geographically very large region;
- All other urban centres within the Region will continue to decline in terms of population, services, economy etc;
- Rural areas will decline further and become further marginalised;
- The concentration of investment in the Gateways alone, would not be likely to create the level of multiplier effects required to benefit the remainder of a very large Region;

3.6.3 Balanced Development Model

This model addresses the weaknesses of the previous models by focusing development on the Gateways of Sligo, Letterkenny/Derry and Dundalk, the Hubs of Cavan, and Monaghan and the strategically important towns of Drogheda and Carrick on Shannon.

These towns are the most significant urban centres within the Region, and they provide a significant regional strategic function within each of the respective counties that make up the area of the Border Regional Authority. They also have extensive links to Northern Ireland. This model would facilitate co-operation between settlements, and in so doing, would enable them to function as a larger urban entity (i.e. 'punch above their individual weights'), thereby securing and improving the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the Region. This model could further be developed by improving the physical and virtual connectivity between the above settlements, which effectively brings them closer together, and provides them with a platform on which they each can develop a complimentary role, rather than competing with each other. This model will also promote more balanced development of the Region which can further be developed through improving cross border links with Northern Ireland.

The Environmental Report indicates that this model will provide a sustainable spatial planning framework, which will maximise the potential of the Region, whilst providing balanced regional development, and provide for the protection of the Region's most sensitive areas. In summary, this model is considered most desirable for the following reasons:

- It will provide balanced regional development throughout the Region;

- It offers the potential to develop the model further in county development plans, through the development of the urban hierarchy outlined in table 3.1;
- It will direct an appropriate portion of development and investment to existing urban centres where services exist;
- It reinforces the priority required for the strategic road network between the key settlements;
- The key settlements will act as key drivers for the Region whilst providing key services and functions for the smaller settlements and rural hinterland;
- It creates a sustainable relationship between urban and rural areas and will support the future vitality and viability of rural communities

3.7 Core Strategy

The key aims of the Border Regions settlement strategy are therefore to:-

- **Strengthen the critical mass of the Regions key urban settlements by prioritising regional population growth and housing requirements;**
- **Outline a policy framework for the development of the remaining share of population in the Region; and**
- **Sustain and revitalise rural areas within the above development framework**

In considering the balanced development model, it is important that it recognises the challenges facing the viability of rural settlements, (from peripherality to development pressures), and in response, promotes the treatment of urban and rural settlements, together with the surrounding countryside, as a functional, spatial entity involving the inter-dependencies of small and medium-sized settlements.

To address these shortcomings, achieving a dynamic urban or rural settlement structure “will involve working with and building upon the strengths of different places” (National Spatial Strategy (NSS), p.41); while at the same time, protecting these same assets for future generations. In the case of the Border Region, its rural settlement pattern, together with the quality of life potentials that make rural areas attractive places to live and work, and its ability to adapt to meet changing lifestyle needs⁸, will play a key role in its future social and economic growth and development.

Given the Border Region's land-border with Northern Ireland, particular consideration must also be afforded to the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland adopted in 2001, and now under-going review in parallel with this document. Like the NSS, this Regional Development Strategy recognises the importance of sustainable development principles, and advocates balanced regional and territorial development. To this end, it also identifies specific locations as centres of growth; with investments in housing, business development and employment to be directed towards these larger, better-established settlements.

In terms of the rural sub-regions, the RDS emphasises the need to develop a vibrant rural Northern Ireland, with balanced development spread out across a polycentric network of hubs/clusters, based on main towns in these smaller sub-regions having a strategic role as centres of employment and service provision. And while highlighting the role of medium and small towns as ‘supporters’ of, and partners with, larger urban centres, in terms of generating critical mass and encouraging development, the RDS does not prescribe a specific role for these medium and small towns.

The Border Regional Planning Guidelines will develop the polycentric model to incorporate all settlements as outlined in the Settlement Hierarchy, together with the rural area and the adjoining environs with Northern Ireland and other regions in Ireland.

⁸ As evidenced in the multi-functional role of the rural; the rural changing from being primarily a site of production to encompassing areas of consumption also (NUI Maynooth *et al*, 2005).

3.7.1 National and Regional Population Targets 2010 - 2022

Regional Planning Guidelines are set within a national framework of population targets published by the DEHLG in January 2009, which outline the growth of the state up to 2022. Table 3.6 sets out the minimum population targets as they apply to the Border Region.

Table 3.6 DEHLG Population Targets for Border Region

Source	2008 (est)	2010	2016	2022
Border Region	492,500	511,000	552,700	595,000
(% of State Pop)	(11.14)	(11.14)	(11.06)	(11.06)
State	4,422,000	4,584,900	4,997,000	5,375,200

Source: DEHLG, January 2009

In October 2009, the DEHLG further published specific population targets for the Gateways and Hubs as designated in the NSS, to ensure that the Gateways and Hubs are accorded priority in the RPGs. A key challenge for the 2010 – 2022 RPGs will be to continue to structure population growth throughout the Region in a more balanced manner, and facilitate more self sustaining growth within other parts of the Region.

3.7.2 Regional Population Targets

Having regard to legislative and policy requirements outlined earlier in this section, these draft Guidelines must act as the regionally strategic planning policy context, in co-ordinating the development plans of constituent planning authorities, and achieving the proper planning and sustainable development of the Region.

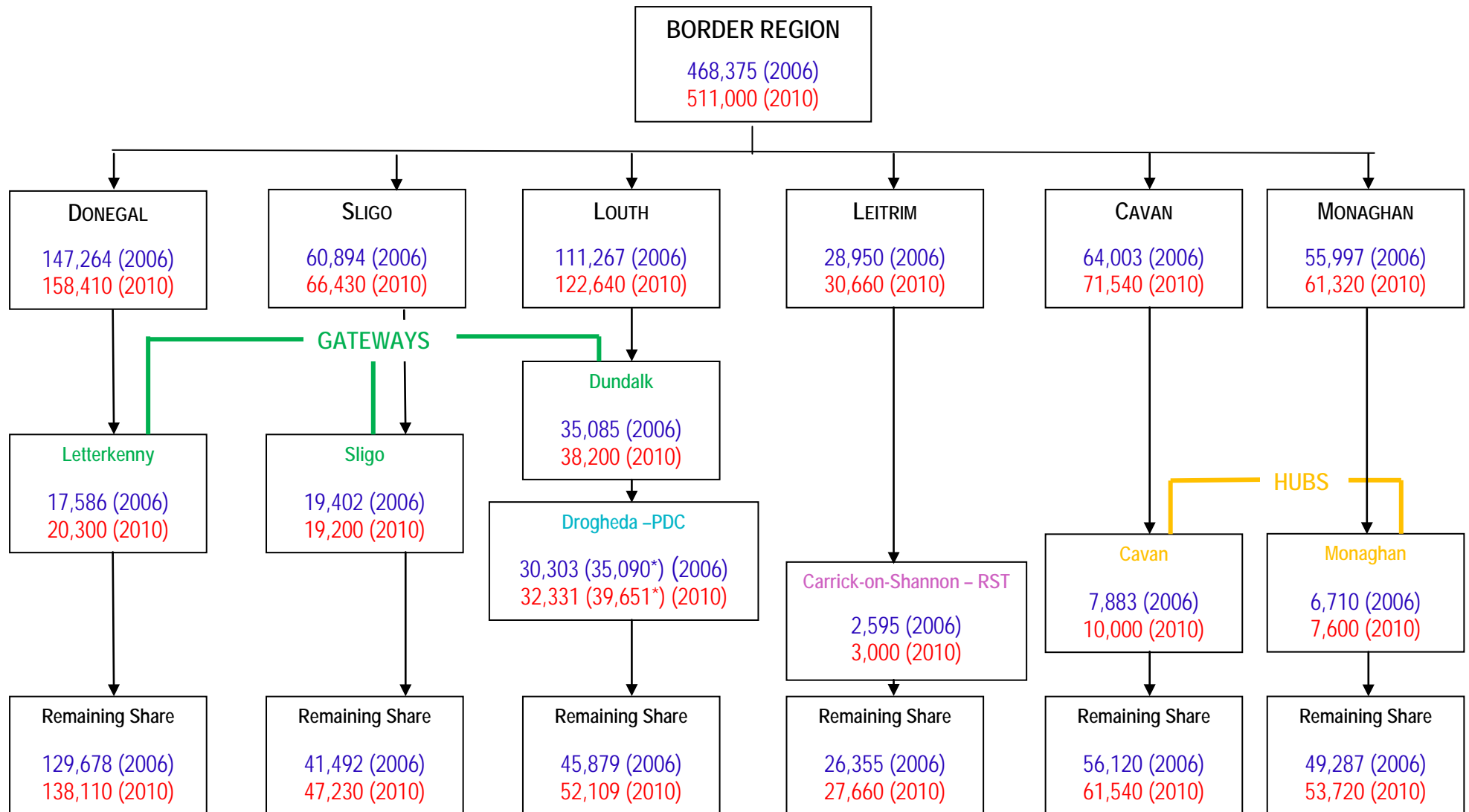
Having regard to the above, a key instrument is the setting of population targets and outlining the resultant likely housing demand and residential Housing Land Requirement (HLR), that must be factored in to the preparation of plans by the relevant planning authorities.

Figure 3.1 outlines the population of the Region from the 2006 CSO population census data, as well as a likely breakdown of the Regions population in 2010, based on the DEHLG figures of October 2009. Figure 3.2 outlines and incorporates the minimum population targets for 2016 and 2022. These population targets shall be applied to the prevailing County Development Plan area.

Following the adoption of these Guidelines, it will be the function of each constituent local authority to review County Development Plans in line with these population targets, and develop a core settlement strategy based on this information.

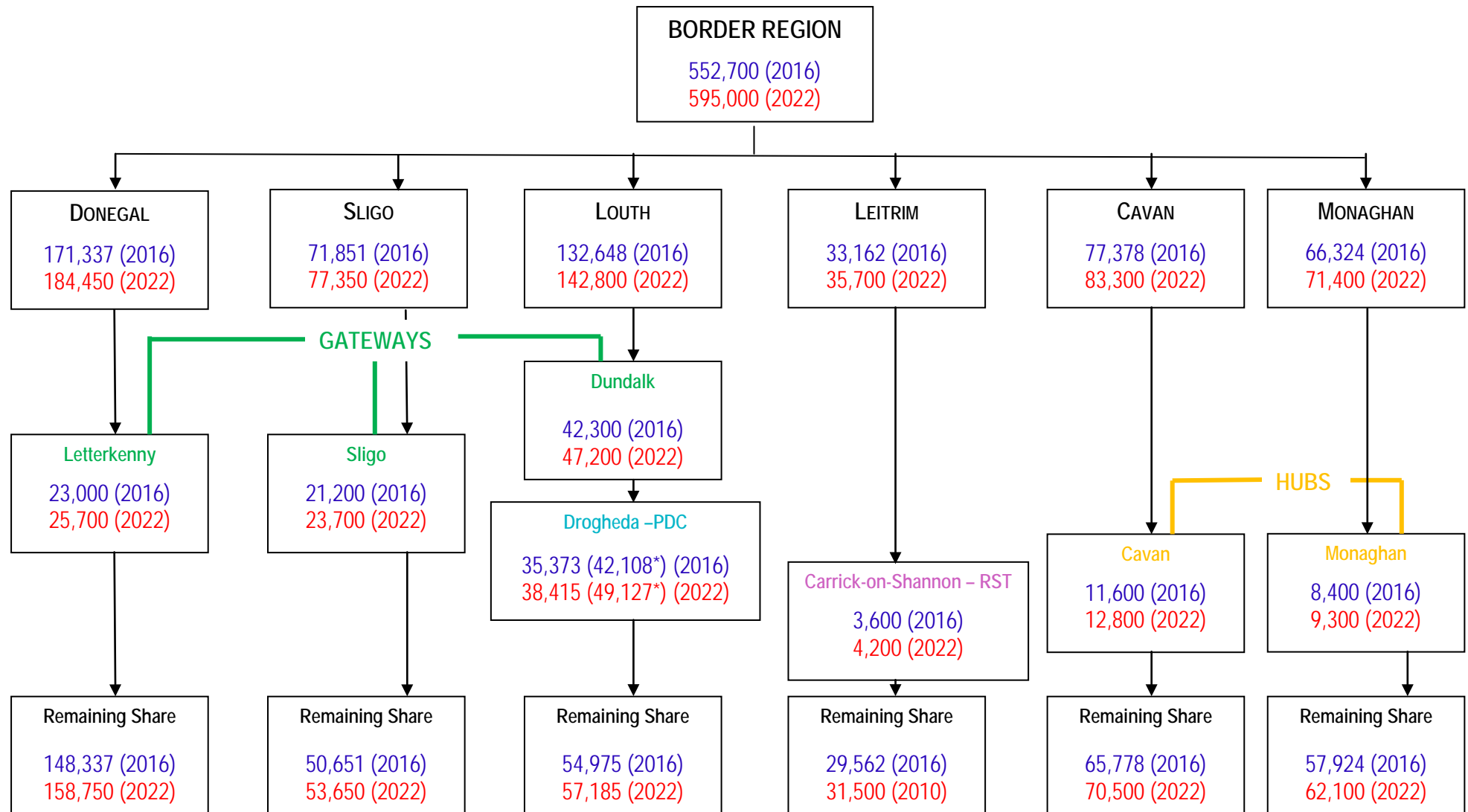
The core settlement strategy must be set within the framework of the RPGs and develop rational population growth models, outline resulting housing demand and how this demand will be accommodated through an appropriate HLR, consistent with these draft Guidelines. In this context, County Development Plans must develop the remaining share of population as outlined in figure 3.2, and re-distribute growth targets among its towns and villages and rural areas, whilst working within the framework outlined. An indicative approach to the management of the remaining share of population is outlined in section 3.7.7.

Figure 3.1 Border Region Population Breakdown 2006 (CSO Data) & Targets for 2010



(*) refers to entire population of Drogheda and includes Meath environs

Figure 3.2 Border Region Minimum Population Targets for 2016 & 2022



(*) refers to entire population of Drogheda and includes Meath environs

3.7.3 Settlement Strategy Model

As outlined in section 3.6, the balanced development model is the chosen development option for the future development of the Border Region. The Spatial Settlement Strategy map outlines the key components of the Border Region settlement strategy and includes the following:-

- Development of critical mass in the 7 key urban centres which will be the focal points for growth;
- The linking of the key urban centres through the development of Strategic Radial Corridors and Strategic Links;
- Promote and facilitate the emerging north/south corridors on the western (Atlantic Arc) and eastern (Eastern Corridor) seaboard, which will be linked through the Strategic Radial Corridors and Strategic Links;
- Development of the Northern Cross within the Region and into Northern Ireland;
- Improved and enhanced connectivity through the Central Border Region

3.7.4 Key Features of Development Model

3.7.4.1 The Atlantic Arc

This corridor includes the Gateway of Sligo, the Linked Gateway of Letterkenny/Derry which together, all three have a combined population of 128,954 persons in 2006⁹. The 2006 census also highlighted that there was strong growth experienced by smaller settlements along this corridor such as Ballybofey/Stranorlar, Ballyshannon and Bundoran. This corridor provides a combined critical mass sufficient to compete with the eastern corridor, and to counter its increasing emergence along the eastern seaboard. Its development will be significantly enhanced by the planned future development of the strategic links on an east – west basis. The collective pull of this corridor will also reinforce the need for, and in future, justify the extension of the Atlantic Corridor and, in the longer term, the potential development of the Western Rail Corridor. The development of the North West will also be dependant upon the work of ILEX; a regeneration company set up to plan, develop and sustain the economic, physical and social regeneration of the Derry City Council area and surrounding area.

3.7.4.2 The Eastern Corridor

The established eastern corridor extends from Dublin to Belfast in Northern Ireland. In the Border Region, the corridor is anchored on Drogheda and Dundalk, with Newry having an increasingly influential role through the Newry/Dundalk Twin City Strategy. In 2006, these three settlements had a combined population of 98,720 persons. The challenge for this corridor is to exploit the potential of Newry/Dundalk, coupled with the growth of Drogheda, which is driven by the Greater Dublin Area. The eastern corridor benefits from an ever improving inter-urban motorway and good cross border rail services. This corridor experienced very strong growth over recent years, and all indications are that it will continue to experience strong growth over the next number of years, despite the recent downturn in the economy. Complementary development of the Atlantic Arc on the western seaboard is necessary to counterbalance the development of the eastern corridor, alongside a focus on delivering in a staged manner, improved connectivity between eastern and western parts of the Region and between Dublin and Derry, thereby promoting within the Central Border Area, the Northern Cross concept described below.

3.7.4.3 Central Border Region

The Central Border Region is an integral area which will benefit greatly from the implementation of the balanced settlement model. The aim of the model is to reposition the spatial perception of the central and western portions of the Border Region from that of a peripheral area, to that of an area which is pivotal to

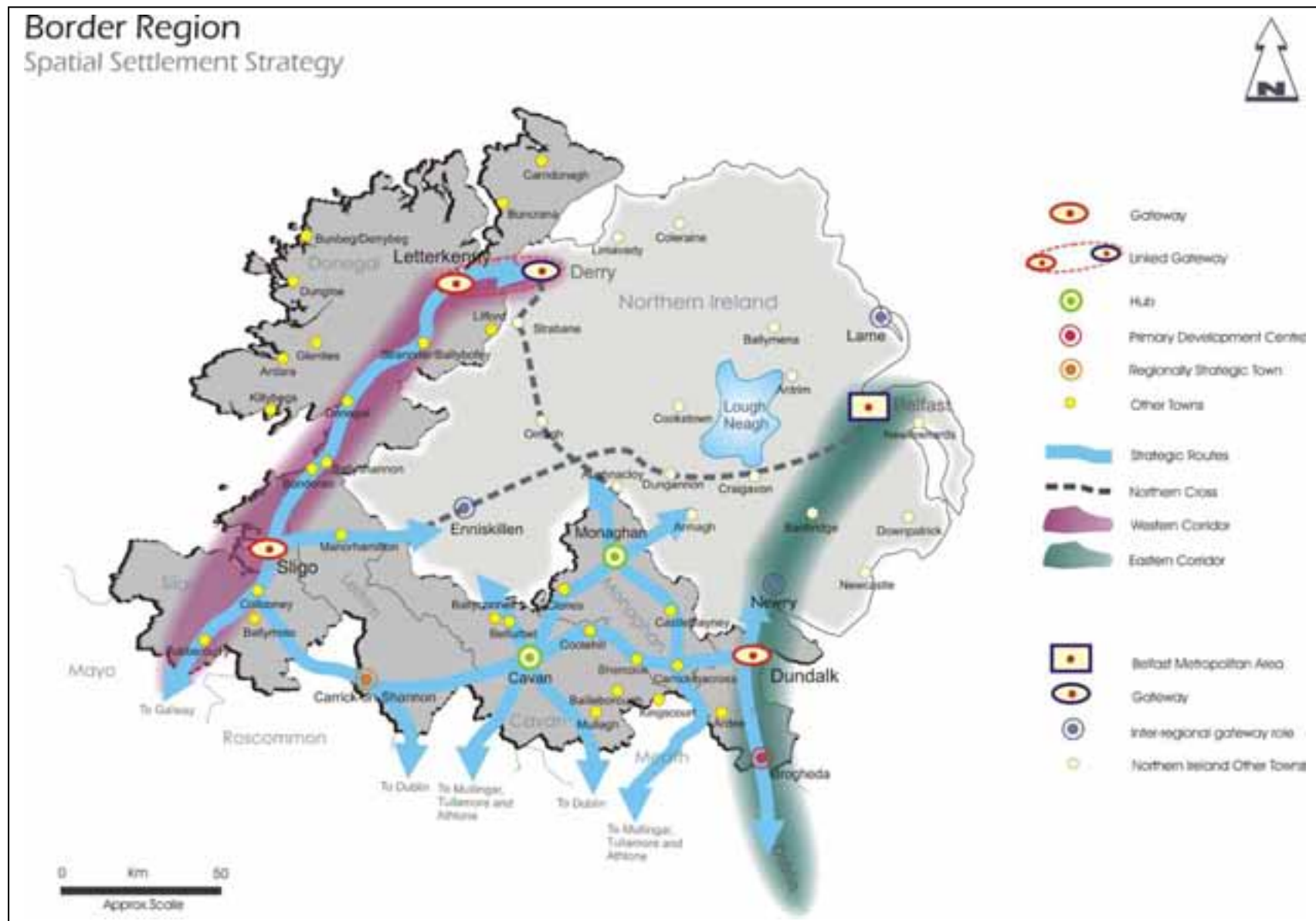
⁹ Based on an estimated Derry City population in 2006 of 96,000 persons

the future development of the island and regeneration of its economy. At a practical level, the Central Border Region will emerge as a spatial and economic entity in its own right. Its future functionality has the potential to provide a central connective, economic and infrastructural endoskeleton, linking East with West, and creating wider added value. With strategically supported and co-ordinated development, the Central Border Region has the capacity to increase the impact and benefits across the Border Region, of predicted and evidenced growth in the Eastern Corridor and the Atlantic Arc. It will reciprocally benefit these growth corridors on the basis of connected complementarity. It will no longer function largely at the extremities of wide catchment influences of Dublin and Belfast, but will develop and retain strong connections to both city regions, and provide a further link to other key settlements in the North and North West. Development of the model will also link this Region with adjoining Regions, particularly the Midlands and West Region.

Given that the full economic potential of the Central Border Region lies in acknowledging its cross-border nature, and in adopting an integrated cross sectoral development approach, co-operation will be necessary in order to realise this potential. In this context, harnessing and building on strategic co-operation between Statutory and Non-Statutory processes, currently under way, has unique benefits. The RPGs will benefit from further development within a cross border framework. In this context the proposed INTERREG IVA Central Border Region Spatial Planning Initiative, to be co-ordinated by Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN), in partnership with key regional stakeholders, has the potential to further articulate the benefits of the balanced settlement model for the Central Border Region. This approach will also provide the practical interagency framework necessary to progress an innovative, integrated and sustainable economic model for the Region. Ensuring a cross-border dimension to the development of the Central Border Region, will add value to any future investment in the Region. Of further and equal importance will be the articulation of this approach in any subsidiary and emergent strategic development and land use planning processes, such as those relating to County Development Plans, County Development Strategies, the Northern Ireland Regional Development Strategy and Local Area Plans/Community Plans.

In seeking to ensure the balanced development of the Central Border Region, and in acknowledgement of this Region's role in providing connectivity and added value to neighbouring growth corridors, the **Northern Cross**, (see Spatial Settlement Strategy map), is an important infrastructural element in developing this Region as well as others. The Northern Cross, providing strategic high speed road access from Dublin to Letterkenny/Derry (N2/A5), and from Belfast to Sligo/Enniskillen (M1, A4, N16), has the potential to spatially reintegrate much of the entire historic province of Ulster, including the south and west of Northern Ireland and the counties within the Border Region. Since 2004, these key corridors have gained strong political support in both jurisdictions, with advanced works already ongoing on some routes, particularly on the extension of the M1 from Belfast to Ballygawley, and the A4 towards Enniskillen. The further development of the Northern Cross will act as the conduit for the economic re-invention of the Border Region both north and south. Not only is the Northern Cross a key infrastructural concept for the Central Border Region, but it is also one which provides an essential infrastructural link between both jurisdictions on the island.

Map 3.1 Spatial Settlement Strategy



3.7.5 Housing Demand and Land Use Requirements

It is evident that a significant factor in the recent economic development cycle has been the construction and house building sector. However, in 2009 it is clear that the recent severe market correction indicates that much of the recent surge in activity, in fact represented a sharp over-supply, and has had major consequences for employment and economic activity levels. Estimates of future housing demand and land requirements must take account of both long term population targets, outlined in figures 3.1 and 3.2, and the current state of the housing market in the Region.

In August 2009 the Border Regional Authority assessed and analysed the Regions housing stock and recent trends in the housing market. A supporting paper entitled '**Report on Future Housing Demand in the Border Region and Implications for Planning and Development Policy – Input to Regional Planning Guidelines**' is available as a supporting volume to the Guidelines.

The Report states that the Border Region faces three specific issues which will dominate future policy-strategy considerations for housing:-

- First is the extent to which its 2006 census population is 'rural' in content. With the exception of Louth which is 64.39% urban, the five other counties' aggregate population is 74.38% rural, with the residual population being located in town settlements of 1,500 and over, vide CSO Volume 1, Tables 3 and 7 (2006);
- Second is the extent of the Region's housing supply-demand imbalance. Leitrim and Donegal have recorded the highest rate of vacancy in that census, with Sligo and Cavan also amongst the State's counties which have excessive levels of vacancy. Source: CSO Table 40, Principal Demographic Results from the 2006 Census
- The third issue, albeit anecdotal, would point to much of the current surplus housing being located in the remote locations, relative to the likely location of future housing demand

Based on the Population Targets outlined in figure 3.2, Table 3.7 outlines a summary of the likely housing demand and supply within the Region up to 2016. It is not considered appropriate to forecast housing demand up to 2022, given the current state of the housing market, and economy in general at present. Housing targets for 2022 will be developed in the 2016 review of the Guidelines.

Table 3.7 Housing Demand and Supply in the Border Region

Year	Total Population	Supply (Total Housing Stock)	Projected Demand	Excess Supply (+ 6% above Demand)	Excess as % of Total Stock
2006	468,375	209,955	174,821	35,135	16.73
2010	511,000	243,513	196,579	46,934	19.27
2016	552,700	258,513	222,937	35,576	13.76

Source: B. Hughes, B. Williams, D. Redmond, October 2009

In summary, the 2006 regional housing excess is estimated to be 35,135 units, out of a total stock of 209,955, which is 16.73%. In turn, by 2010 and with the addition of 33,558 units, this is estimated to result in an increase to 46,934 excess surplus units, or 19.27% of the Region's then housing stock of 243,513. By 2016, on the basis of an average annual addition of just 2,500 units, or a total of 15,000 additional units, the excess surplus level will have reduced somewhat to 35,576 units, which represent a 13.76% excess surplus on a total stock of 258,513 units. It is noted that no specific allowance is made in this study for housing obsolescence, given the 'freshness' of stock due to the quantum of new-build units, and also having regard to the sheer size of the Region's surplus stock.

3.7.5.1 Recommendations of Report

- In assessing the estimates for 2016 as outlined above, apart from very modest levels of one-off demand, it is not envisaged there will be much demand for estate-type housing construction, based on current surpluses or based on current or anticipated population growth expectations;
- Although the CSO Population and Migration Estimates 2007-2009 are not conducted at the county level, this regional analysis would suggest that the populations of the east-Border counties of Louth, Monaghan and Cavan are likely to have grown in line with the eastern half of the country, whereas Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim are likely to have replicated the much lower rate of growth exhibited by the western half of the State. If such analysis is correct, then the resultant housing implications for demand based on population growth differentials, would be of relevance in formulating the Border Region policy strategy for 2016, already aggravated by the higher housing vacancy levels in those counties to the west of the Region
- It is suggested that the focus for housing stocks should be put on the orderly regulation and management of surplus stocks. Accordingly, planning authorities must undertake individual county surveys of their major settlement housing stocks, as a matter of priority.

3.7.6 Potential Housing Demand and Residential Land Requirement in Key Settlements

Table 3.8 outlines the likely housing demand up to 2016 that will result if the minimum population targets are achieved as outlined in figure 3.2. As these Guidelines focus growth within the seven key urban settlements, it is therefore critical that any potential future housing demand will be catered for during the life of the Guidelines. The level of vacancies within the key urban settlements is not clear from the above analysis of the housing stock in the Region, and will only be known through a more detailed survey and analysis, by relevant Local Authorities, of their housing stock. A survey of the housing stock within each county must be carried out by local authorities as a matter of priority following the adoption of these Guidelines.

This core strategy will, however, outline the likely future housing demand in the key settlements, based on the population targets outlined in figure 3.2. From the analysis of population trends, **it is considered that the housing demand outlined in this strategy, marks the upper end of any demand likely to arise during the period 2010 – 2016.** It should also be borne in mind that, of the demand which arises within the key settlements, some of it could be accommodated within the existing vacant stock, as well as those sites which may be completed over the period, and any outstanding planning permissions that have been granted, and that are not yet built. The likely housing demand, and resultant residential zoning requirements of such growth within the key settlements, is outlined in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8 Potential Housing Demand & Residential Zoning Requirements in Key Urban Centres 2010 – 2014

Settlement	Population increase 2010-2016	Potential No. Residential Units required over period 2010-2016	Total zoned housing land required over period 2010-2016 (incorporating 50% over zoning in accordance with DEHLG Development Plan Guidelines)
Dundalk	4,100	1,507 (Based on average household size of 2.72 persons as set out in Louth Housing Strategy 2009)	47 ha (Based on housing density of 50 units per hectare in draft Dundalk Development Plan 2009-2015)
Letterkenny	2,700	925 (Based on average household size of 2.92 persons in Draft Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2009-2015)	41 ha (Based on average housing density of 35 units per hectare)
Sligo	2,000	1,000 (Based on average household size of 2.0 persons as per Sligo Housing Strategy 2010 - 2017)	40 ha (Based on average housing density of 35 units per hectare)
Monaghan	800	314 (Based on the average household size projected in Monaghan Housing Strategy 2007-2013 falling to 2.55 persons in 2016)	27 ha (Based on average housing density of 18 units per hectare)
Cavan	1600	640 (Based on the average household size projected in Cavan County Development Plan 2008-2014 falling to 2.54 persons in 2016)	54 ha (Based on average housing density of 18 units per hectare in Cavan Town and Environs Development Plan 2008 - 2014)
Drogheda	3,042*	1,086 (Based on average household size of 2.8 persons in 2006)	42 ha (Based on average housing density of 40 units per hectare set out in Louth Housing Strategy 2009)
Carrick on Shannon	600*	251 (Based on average household size set out in table 3.13 of Leitrim Housing Strategy 2006-2015 stabilising at 2.39 persons in 2016)	21 ha (Based on average housing density of 20 units per hectare for normal housing lands and 10 per ha for Low [zoned] density housing lands)
Settlements Total	16,300	4,823 Units	272ha

* Refers to the area within the Border Region Only

3.7.7 Remaining Share Population Growth

The remaining share of population includes both rural and urban population growth. It is generally accepted that some rural housing generated demand will be accommodated within the rural area, in accordance with the DEHLG Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines. This rural demand should also be accommodated within zoned areas of existing settlements, so as to allow choice in the market, provide an alternative to the

one-off house in the countryside, and introduce an element of flexibility within the local planning system. Development Plans must therefore allocate the remaining share of population growth within existing urban settlements in the Region, based on the sequential approach as well as the servicing arrangements in place, or likely to be put in place, during the life of these Guidelines.

3.7.7.1 Housing Land Requirement for Remaining Share

On the basis of the population distribution outlined in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, this section outlines **an indicative housing land requirement for the remaining share or balance of population.**

Estimating the amount of residential development land required to accommodate future population growth, within the remaining share of population, is a difficult task, as it involves a number of different parameters. These include population growth, household size and development densities.

It is acknowledged in these Guidelines that it is appropriate that housing densities increase, where appropriate. However, the increases in density must also recognise existing urban and village character, and the importance of protecting and preserving this character. There are many examples of poor quality high - density developments in rural villages, which have been successful neither in their impact on the village character, nor on the levels of occupancy they have exhibited. In addition, it is becoming clear that enhancing the quality of smaller towns and villages, and providing opportunities for lower density developments, is one of the mechanisms which will help to address the demand for housing that is located in the countryside.

Table 3.9 provides an indicative approach as to how the remaining share of population may be accommodated, through consideration of **three alternative housing land requirement figures for each county up to 2016.** It must also be noted that the housing land requirements outlined in Table 3.9 are **in addition to the significant vacant residential stock, and planning permissions already granted, for residential units that are yet to be completed or built.** These must first be considered in terms of accommodating future population growth, and only then, should additional housing land be zoned to accommodate the balance of population growth.

The parameters which are taken into account in identifying a likely housing demand requirement for the remaining share are as follows:

- There is likely to be a relatively small decline in household sizes;
- Each county is different in terms of its urban structure;
- Each county has different zoning objectives and provides for different variations of densities;
- The need for a range of densities at different locations within each county;

Table 3.9 Remaining Share of Population Growth & Housing Land Requirement in the Border Region Counties between 2010 – 2016

County	Remaining Share of Population Growth 2010-2016*	Projected Housing Demand 2010 – 2016 (average household size)	^HLR based on average Density of 12 units per ha (+50%)	HLR based on average Density of 15 units per ha (+50%)	HLR based on average Density of 20 units per ha (+50%)
Louth	2,816	1,043 (2.7)	131	105	78
Donegal	10,227	3,653 (2.8)	456	366	275
Sligo	3,421	1,555 (2.2)	195	156	117
Cavan	4,238	1,630 (2.6)	204	164	123
Monaghan	4,204	1,682 (2.5)	210	168	126
Leitrim	1,902	793 (2.4)	99	80	60
Border Region	26,808	10,356 Units	1,295 Ha	1,039 Ha	779 Ha

^ Housing Land Requirement

* Difference between 2010 and 2016 Remaining Share Target as outlined in Figures 3.1 and 3.2

During the period of these Guidelines, should there be a requirement for additional residential zoned lands within a county in addition to the above, this may only be provided through an evidenced based approach, within relevant development plan reviews or variations.

3.8 Strategy for Rural Areas

Rural areas are those places outside of urban centres with a population of less than 1,500 persons. 64.39% of the Border Regions population live in the rural area. The more rural parts of the Region, therefore, provide a strong network of towns and villages, which have a significant role within the peripheral and remote parts, as these centres help sustain local services, amenities and businesses and serve the wider rural hinterland.

At the local level, networks of smaller towns, villages and rural settlements can play a significant role in enabling these centres to generate a critical mass, and thereby sustain and anchor public services and businesses. This is particularly the case within peripheral and remote rural areas. Furthermore, towns have the potential to attract private inward investment into rural territories.

In this context, the future sustainability of rural areas will be shaped by well-developed connectivity with urban centres; which in turn, will result in access to a broad range of education and employment

opportunities, and specialised services being enabled. Diversification of the local economy should be nurtured through supports for indigenous enterprise and the fostering of both creativity and entrepreneurship. By conserving and utilising natural resources and amenities, the potential of local and endogenous resources, should be identified and enabled, by local stakeholders.

The enabling factor which is necessary for balanced growth through polycentric development is complementarity rather than competition. To achieve this, the focus turns from considering solely the 'hard' infrastructure and services available in rural areas, to working with and enhancing, the governance structures through community and stakeholder engagement – the 'soft' element of development. Yet, in order to manage a balance within the rural-urban relationship, it is important that planning authorities connect with rural areas, both on an intra and inter-jurisdictional basis in the Border Region. This includes understanding local needs; identifying the appropriate scale of ongoing development based on social, economic, and environmental capacity; and establishing what role the village-town network can play in supporting hinterlands – and vice-versa.

Local Authorities within this Region will be required to develop remaining settlements and rural areas within the planning framework outlined in these Guidelines, and specifically, through the allocation of the remaining share of population figures outlined in Table 3.9.

3.8.1 Rural Housing

The location of rural housing in the Border area continues to be a key focus of planning authorities in the Region, due mainly to the rural nature of its population. For predominantly rural areas, the location, density and amount of housing permitted are among the greatest challenges for spatial planning and rural development. This is particularly the case as the capacity of the countryside to absorb rural house building is becoming increasingly diminished, given the vulnerability of the groundwater system, the increased potential for landscape degradation, and the challenges inherent in the provision of water services, waste management, communications infrastructure and other services expected by a modern society, but in a geographically dispersed area.

Housing policy must also be mindful of the localised nature of settlement patterns, housing need and housing demand. It is, therefore, necessary that rural housing policy considers the impact of urban centres of all sizes on both hinterland areas and the potential for incremental urbanisation, while at the same time recognising the long-term and potential future local needs for a given area. The avoidance of speculative house-building to the detriment of local needs for example, needs to be addressed in planning policy for rural housing. In accordance with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, local authority's rural housing policy should therefore accommodate genuine rural housing need, rather than urban generated demand, which should be accommodated in zoned towns and villages. Map 1.1 and Table 3.4 should be used as part of the analysis and assessment of rural housing need, to determine where development pressures exist and where rural housing has occurred in recent years.

3.8.2 Emerging Influences on Rural Housing

Increasingly, planning decisions regarding rural housing and all other types of development in the countryside will be more strongly driven by EU Directives, with the Habitats Directive (1992/43/EEC), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), and the subsequent Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC), being the predominant guidance on rural planning into the future. Rural housing poses a very particular challenge to the requirements set out by the Groundwater Directive due to the high levels of reliance on septic tanks and other individual sewage systems. Continued maintenance and monitoring of individual septic tanks, particularly older systems, will be required for full compliance with the Groundwater Directive, which requires that pollution trends are reversed by 2015 and that measures are put in place to prevent or

limit inputs of pollutants into groundwater. In addition, travel to work patterns and the whole sustainability issues are ever moving up the environmental agenda and will increasingly guide future rural policy.

Rural Housing Policy

- CSP1** Local Authorities Rural Housing Planning Policy should be evidence based and accommodate rural generated housing; consistent with this settlement framework and the DEHLG Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, 2005
- CSP2** Rural housing and ancillary development shall be subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive

3.9 Land Use Zoning Objectives: Policy Framework

The following policy framework relates to all existing and proposed land use zoning objectives

CSP3. Land-use zoning for residential purposes by planning authorities has to take account of the following factors:

- The sequential development of land;
- The development of land, to make efficient use of existing and proposed infrastructure, such as roads and water services;
- The making available of sufficient land for development, to ensure that the market for development land performs effectively; and
- Avoiding an oversupply of land in that it becomes difficult to accurately identify and co-ordinate investment priorities in the provision of physical and social infrastructure such as water services, transport, schools and amenities, essential to achieving sustainable communities.

In addition to addressing the matters regarding population targets and housing land requirements outlined in the previous sections, planning authorities should also address the following matters, in assessing and deciding on land use zoning objectives for all settlements within their development plans.

CSP4. Land should be zoned on the basis of the population targets that are set for the settlement in question;

CSP5. A degree of headroom should be incorporated into the calculation of housing land requirements, arising from the assessment of population targets;

CSP6. The excess in zoned land over the amount needed, should have regard to the extent of existing and approved development, residential vacancies and the need to ensure a properly functioning market for housing land. The excess must be evidence based, and should normally lie between an additional 50% and 100% of the land requirement based solely on population targets;

CSP7. Land that is zoned should either be serviced, or about to be serviced, with essential infrastructure such as water services, local transport, schools and amenities;

CSP8. Zoned land should be assigned to different phases of development, with a proviso that generally, a later phase should not commence until a given percentage of an earlier phase has been granted permission, and another given percentage has been developed or currently being developed;

CSP9. All zoned lands that are identified for first phase development must follow the sequential approach outlined below:-

In order to maximise the utility of existing and future infrastructure provision, and promote the achievement of sustainability, a logical sequential approach should be taken to the zoning of land for development:

- Zoning should extend outwards from the centre of an urban area, with undeveloped lands closest to the core, and public transport routes being given preference (i.e. 'leapfrogging' to more remote areas should be avoided);
- A strong emphasis should be placed on encouraging infill opportunities and better use of under-utilised lands; and
- Areas to be zoned should be contiguous to existing zoned development lands.

Only in exceptional circumstances should the above principles be contravened. Any exceptions must be clearly justified by local circumstances, and such justification must be set out in the written statement of the development plan.

CSP10. Development plans shall be consistent with the approach to population distribution outlined in this core settlement strategy. In addition, the amount of land zoned for development within each settlement, should reflect the population assigned and should be in accordance with the phasing approach outlined above.

3.9.1 Development Plan Implications

Key Requirements Emerging from SEA/HDA – See Appendices 5 & 6

Major population growth and housing development will require the provision of waste-water facilities. The major centres identified for growth have, or will, require waste-water treatment systems that discharge to river systems. Many of these systems contain European Sites that would be vulnerable to inadequately treated waste-water discharges. Therefore, policies for the development of housing in such areas must be contingent on, and be stated to be contingent on, the provision of waste-water treatment systems with a capacity to produce waste water discharges of a standard that will not impact negatively on downstream European Sites.

Development Plan Implications

Following the adoption of these Guidelines, it will be the function of each constituent local authority to review County Development Plans and incorporate the minimum population targets and settlement policy framework outlined in this Chapter.

Development plans must be consistent with the minimum population targets, housing demand and housing land requirements outlined above. They should also incorporate the analysis and recommendations of the **'Report on Future Housing Demand in the Border Region and Implications for Planning and Development Policy – Input to Regional Planning Guidelines'**. Residential vacancies and existing planning permissions must first be considered in the management of future population growth within the Region

The significant population growth that has taken place within the environs and catchments of settlements as outlined in Table 3.4, must be more carefully managed in future development plan reviews

Implementation of the policy framework outlined above, coupled with the population targets in these draft guidelines will prevent over-zoning; provide an incentive for those owning first-phase development land to dispose of it and an incentive for purchasers not to hoard it, permit the orderly development of land, and the creation of a coherent urban form; and create either an actual or a virtual market for development land, particularly where a phasing is not guaranteed for the life-time of the plan.

Approaches to zoning that incorporate development land coming on stream on a phased basis should be adopted, as they would facilitate a flexible response to population movements. Variations from this

distribution will be regularly considered by the Monitoring and Review Committee of the Regional Authority and adjusted as necessary to respond to changing population trends.

During the period of these Guidelines, should there be a requirement for additional residential zoned lands within a county, in addition to the figures outlined in Tables 3.8 and 3.9, this may only be provided through an evidenced based approach within relevant development plan reviews or variations.

3.10 Monitoring and Indicators

Monitoring of the implementation of the Regional Settlement Strategy will be undertaken by the Border Regional Authority (BRA) in conjunction with each of the 6 constituent Local Authorities. In order to ensure the delivery of the Core Settlement Strategy, an implementation and monitoring plan has been incorporated into these Guidelines, and is detailed in Chapter 9.

Chapter 4 Regional Economic Strategy

4.1 Introduction

The Irish economy in 2009 is in the midst of extremely challenging economic and financial circumstances. Economic growth is contracting sharply, unemployment is rising and the public finances are in a difficult position. Following average annual growth rates of 7.2% in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 1997 and 2007 and annual average growth of 6.3% in Gross National Product (GNP), economic activity entered negative territory in 2008, (with GDP and GNP declining by -3.0% and -2.8% respectively over 2008, and expected to contract more severely in 2009, (by -7.2% and -8.7% respectively)).¹⁰ The effects of the downturn are being more severely felt in the Regions outside of the Greater Dublin Area, and while the Border Region displays some of the trends emerging across all regions – such as a rapid rise in unemployment, fuelled by a rapidly contracting construction sector, it is also having to contend more directly with cross-border price differentials and currency fluctuations, which is affecting a previously buoyant wholesale and retail sector in particular, and a manufacturing sector that has experienced severe decline over the past number of years. Moreover, although some progress has been made in recent years, decades of underinvestment in strategic infrastructure in the Region, (and north of the border), has hampered enterprise development, and adds to the vulnerability of the Region in the face of the current crisis.

Just as differentiating aspects of the Region's economic profile and business environment are shaping a particular manifestation of the international recession and domestic fiscal crisis, so too will the Region's particular and differentiating enterprise strengths and potential form the basis of growth, when the current economic cycle comes to an end. Key positive aspects are the vibrant indigenous sector in the Region, and the vastly improved political climate in the North, which may offer greater opportunities for deepening economic ties between the neighbouring regions north and south of the border, in the medium to long term (despite current challenges).

The Government's 'Building the Smart Economy' document identifies the fundamental importance of returning to export-led growth. A key feature of the 'Smart Economy' is building the innovation component of the economy, through the utilisation of human capital - the knowledge, skills and creativity of people - and its ability and effectiveness in translating ideas into valuable processes, products and services, (also known as the knowledge economy). A second important aspect is the 'greening' of the economy and the development of green enterprise. Fundamental to the successful delivery of this strategy, is keeping talented Irish people working in Ireland and attracting the most talented people from around the world. To this end, future policy must be geared towards providing and maintaining a high quality living environment.

Each region, building on its strengths, must be innovative and creative so as to move away from an (over)dependence on low value-added, low skill and low wage employment bases, since the competitiveness of the state as a whole is dependent on the competitive strengths of its regions (O'Donoghue, 2009¹¹). The purpose of this strategy is to identify key areas of enterprise development potential in the Border Region and focus on enhancing strategically important aspects of the business environment, so as to create the conditions for attracting investment by both foreign and indigenous companies, stimulating entrepreneurship, and enabling companies to grow and target international markets.

The Strategy draws on a number of sources, including the recently produced Regional Competitiveness Agendas prepared by Forfás¹², which may be viewed at <http://www.forfas.ie/publications/2010/title,5369,en.php>, and various

¹⁰ ESRI Quarterly Economic Commentary 2009 (Autumn)

¹¹ O'Donoghue, A (2009). 'Responding to the Recession: The Challenge for Ireland's Regions' in Public Affairs Ireland.

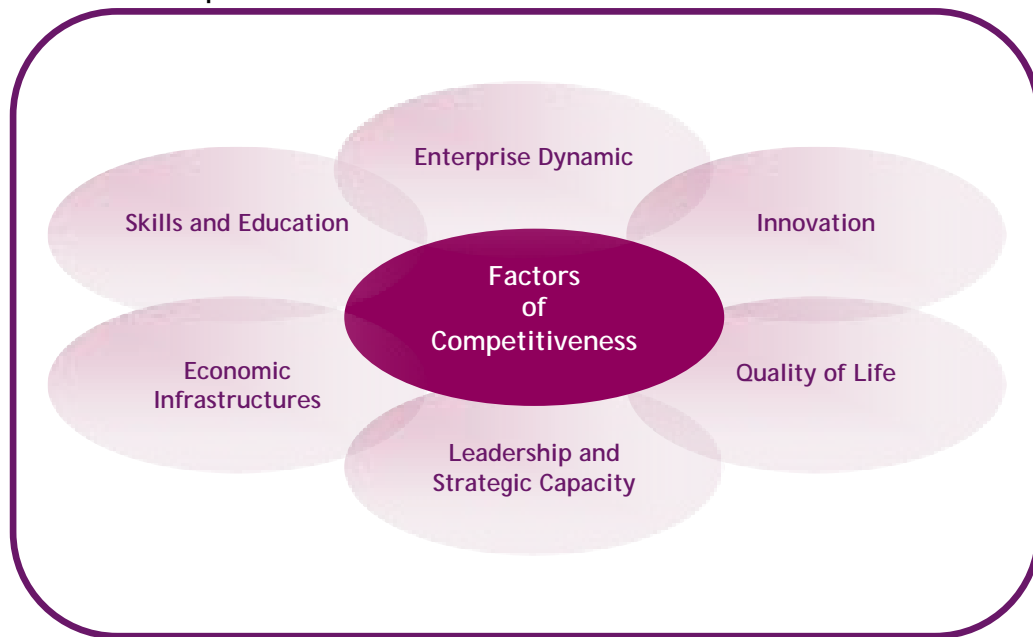
¹² Forfás (2009) *Regional Competitiveness Agenda: Realising Potential: Border Region* – Forfás is the national policy and advisory board for enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation.

other pieces of research and policy work undertaken by the Border Regional Authority, including: the study "*Towards a new Characterization of the Irish Border Region*"

4.2 Factors of Competitiveness

International research has been occupied extensively with understanding the factors that contribute to regional competitiveness, and there is considerable agreement on what the important drivers are.¹³ Based on a range of contributions to this research¹⁴, and some recent applications of this work in the Irish context¹⁵, a framework of competitiveness factors was developed by Forfás to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the Irish regions - to determine not just performance, but also to identify key regional assets and areas of enterprise potential (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Factors of Competitiveness



In essence, the following factors can be interpreted as essential needs for enterprise development and attraction of investment:

Skills & Education:	Access to skilled work-force: People and talent attraction
Enterprise Dynamic:	Access to networks, inter-linkages with firms, higher education institutes and government
Innovation:	Access to Research & Development and Innovation
Quality of Life:	Attractive to an internationally mobile workforce
Leadership & Strategic Capacity:	Efficient and high quality delivery of support services
Economic Infrastructures:	Ease of access to markets and customers, both physical and electronic

In addition to the above, another significant consideration for enterprise development is the importance of dynamic urban and rural areas, where the above factors can combine to greatest effect for enterprise development. Ireland's economic structure is shifting towards a higher proportion of services exports, balanced with a core of high-value added manufacturing activities. International evidence shows that high-value added services are attracted primarily to urban areas, and that today, internationally, cities are

¹³ Walsh (2005) in Fitzpatrick's Associates *Gateway Investment Priorities* report

¹⁴ For example: Parkinson et al (2004); Blakely (2004); and Florida (2004)

¹⁵ For example: Fitzpatrick Associates (2005) *Gateway Investment Priorities*; NCC (2009) *Cities and Competitiveness*; and BMW Regional Assembly (2009) *Gateway Development Index*

competing with each other for enterprise investment. It also points to the fact that urban areas play a key role in driving the development of their hinterlands, (with rural areas providing a key support role), and that successful regions having a dynamic and vibrant city – or regionally significant centre - at their core. This strategy acknowledges the importance of gateways in the Region and their role as drivers of regional economic development. It further recognises the need for strategic planning and development, to optimise the inter-relationship between gateways and their immediate hinterlands.

The Regional Economic Strategy for the Border Region has utilised the identified competitiveness factors in Figure 4.1, to guide analysis of the current economic status of the Region and to direct attention towards the key requirements, from a planning perspective, for successful enterprise development in the Region.

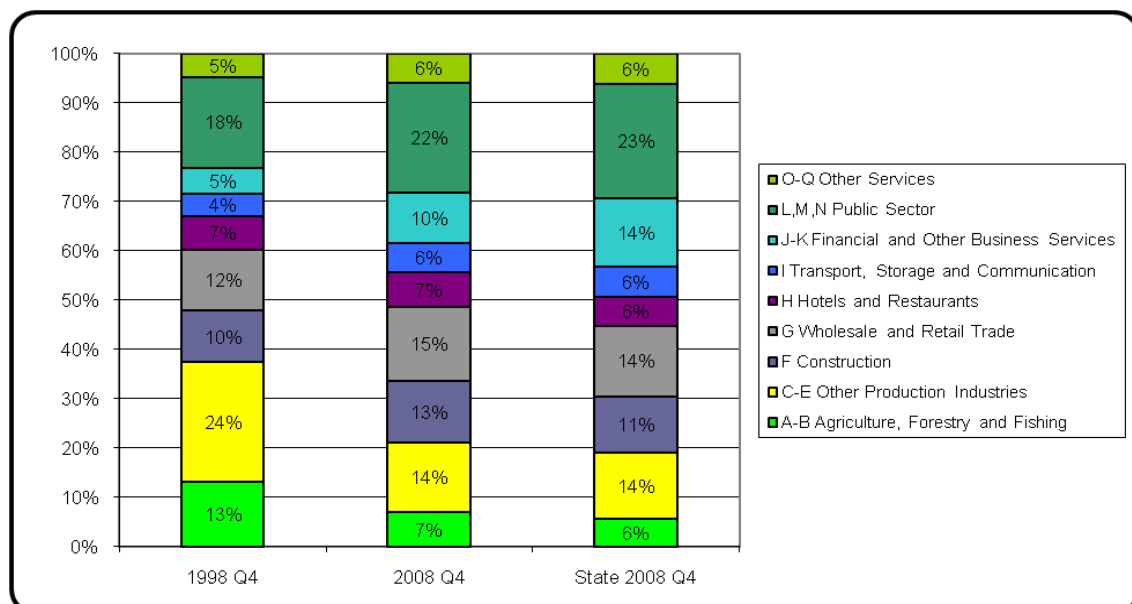
4.3 Economic Profile

4.3.1 Enterprise Dynamic

The Border Region has a total available workforce of 217,400. Over the period from 1998 to 2008, employment in the Region grew by 38%, ahead of the national rate of 36% over the same period. In many respects, the Border Region reflects the trends that have been exhibited across the country in terms of the main sources of employment growth, and the shifting importance of certain sectors in the overall employment 'mix' within the Region; for example, the declining role of manufacturing, the increasing scale of construction and the emergence of internationally traded services. There has been some important differences too however. The Region experienced higher than average employment growth in Wholesale and Retail activity, which is facing particular challenges in the current economic climate, with the added dimension of cross-border currency volatility. Employment growth in construction was also one of the highest nationally, and is now contracting significantly. The Region has experienced a sustained decline in manufacturing employment, as evidenced by its displaying the largest net decline over the period 1998 to 2008 nationally.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the current profile of employment in the Region by broad sector, in comparison to the overall profile nationally. It also illustrates how that profile has changed over the past decade. It is notable how the regional profile in 2008 more closely resembles the national picture, compared to the position highlighted in 1998.

Figure 4.2 Distribution of Employment in the Border Region by Sector, 1998 & 2008



Source: CSO, Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) - Q4 1998 – Q4 2008

Amongst agency-supported firms¹⁶, the most prominent in employment terms are the food sector, Information & Communications Technology (ICT) services, a range of manufacturing/engineering activities, and the more recently expanding financial services sector, (which did not have a presence in the Region a decade previously). Over the past ten years, the Region has seen strong growth in service related activity – ICT services (especially in the North-West), and financial services (particularly in the North-East).

The fact that agency-supported employment in the Border Region is dominated by indigenous firms (70% compared to 50% nationally), indicates the significance of 'home-grown' businesses to the future growth of the Region. The Region is home to many robust indigenous firms, particularly in the food processing and engineering/construction sectors. The large proportion of indigenous businesses in the region's enterprise base, also reflects the on-going challenge in attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to an area that has been traditionally perceived as peripheral, and lacking in strategic infrastructure. The presence of a strong indigenous sector within the Border Region is reflective of a strong entrepreneurial culture – a characteristic that can also prove attractive to companies, (foreign or indigenous), that are considering investing in the Region. It is also a trait that will help drive the development of North/South business linkages which, currently still in their infancy, offer real opportunities for the Region.

The agricultural sector will remain an important contributor to the local economy of the Border Region, although its activity base must diversify to respond to wider changes in national and world markets.

The Region has experienced a high level of growth in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA)¹⁷ over the period 2000-2006. However, it continues to have one of the lowest levels of GVA per capita in the State. While this may be a consequence of relatively lower levels of FDI activity, it also points to a need for a greater focus on increasing productivity amongst firms located in the Region.

(The Border Region has a multiplicity of business networks and organisations that support small businesses development and growth; including the County Enterprise Boards and the Business Innovation Centres BICs). These offer potential for increased collaboration and through the provision of training and mentoring, the fostering of innovation and entrepreneurship.

4.3.2 Skills, Education & Innovation

Education, and employment driven emigration, has been a characteristic of the Region for many years and has contributed to a statistically lower level of educational attainment amongst the regional population over time. This presents a particular challenge for the Region in seeking to build a knowledge-based economy.

The three Institutes of Technology (IoT) in the Border Region – Letterkenny, Sligo and Dundalk - are key resources in terms of skills development, knowledge transfer and research; and their campus incubation facilities provide valuable supports to prospective entrepreneurs and small businesses. The IoTs are increasingly proactive in their development of industry-academic linkage. However, the low level expenditure amongst businesses, and the higher education sector on R&D in the Region, (accounting for only 3.9 % and 0.8% respectively of the total expended in these areas nationally), may be attributed to the lack of universities and thus funding. This situation will now improve, as IoT will be able to access more funding for R & D opportunities, as their status has been bolstered through their provision of a greater number of third and fourth level courses.

¹⁶ 'Agency-supported employment' is employment in companies that are clients of the enterprise agencies IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, or Údarás na Gaeltachta. Companies in this category are typically internationally trading and so represent some of the most productive elements of the regional economy.

¹⁷ GVA or Gross Value Added is the value of the region's output less intermediate materials and services used in its production. Latest available data at NUTS III level is for 2006.

4.3.3 Economic Infrastructures: Access and Connectivity

As companies increasingly engage in activities such as internet or tele-sales, and customer service that involves a greater interaction with their client bases, ease of access through transport or telecommunications become of central importance. The diverse make-up of the Border Region, its cross-border relationships and potential opportunities, and its challenging, yet attractive, physical environment, underline the importance of connectivity in support of maximising the economic development potential of the Region.

ICT is a key enabler for the more remote delivery of services. A number of broadband improvement initiatives are currently being rolled-out across the country under the National Broadband Scheme, and these will improve the ICT capabilities of the Border Region. Of particular significance to the Border Region is Project Kelvin¹⁸, which will significantly boost broadband availability and capacity in the Region (see section 5.6 for further detail).

Significant progress has been achieved in terms of road access over recent years, and there is a clear understanding, North and South of the Border, of the main transport corridors that need to be developed (see Section 5.2.2 and Appendix 2 for further details). Further development of the key transport corridors traversing the Region must remain as a strategic priority, specifically in terms of intra-regional linkages and their development on an East-West basis, which improves access within and across the Central Border area.

The Region benefits from interconnection to the Northern Ireland electricity grid and further integration of the grids, North and South, is planned. The transmission network in the North-West requires significant reinforcement, which is essential if the significant un-tapped wind energy potential in this part of the Region is to be realised.

4.3.4 Quality of Life

International research shows that quality of life factors have become increasingly important in attracting and retaining a mobile workforce. The Border Region has much to offer in this regard, with lifestyle choices also significantly enhanced in recent years by the Peace Process. The area offers countryside living and a more relaxed pace of life, with good provision of community infrastructures (childcare, sports and leisure facilities). For the most part, physical developments are of a scale appropriate to their surrounds and this in turn results in a clean, safe and enjoyable environment for those living and/or working in the Region – as well as those visiting. House prices in the Region have consistently remained lower than the national average. For the entrepreneur/business owner, the costs of doing business in the Region are lower; and for the worker or resident, while this translates into lower salaries, it is in turn off-set by a lower-cost of living.

The Border Region offers a tranquil lifestyle not found in many other regions. The Region is home to a number of picturesque towns and villages with a strong, yet under-exploited, natural heritage. It also has strong natural cultural and recreational amenities including the Marble Arch Caves Global Geo-Park (Cavan/Fermanagh), Shannon/Erne Waterway (Leitrim/Cavan/Fermanagh), Ulster Canal (Fermanagh/Monaghan/Armagh/Tyrone) and the Cooley-Gullion-Mourne Mountain ranges. Such heritage is important in attracting potential residents as well as to the development of leisure activities. The Region

¹⁸ Project Kelvin is a major cross-border project initiated by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the North's Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. At a cost of €32m, it involves connecting a new submarine cable to an existing transatlantic cable 22 miles off the north coast of Ireland. The new cable has come ashore in Co Derry, and Hibernia Atlantic aims to complete the work by March 2010.

has an abundance of lakes and rivers offering a range of water-sport leisure activities while forest walks and sculpture parks are increasing in number.

4.3.5 Leadership and Strategic Capacity

The importance of local leadership in driving regional development is well recognised internationally, (Porter, 1998; Putnam, 2000; Skidmore, 2000¹⁹), and is a critical factor in progressing the development of key infrastructures, building critical mass, ensuring well planned urban development, and building 'clusters' of enterprise activity that serve to stimulate investment and innovation.

In Ireland there are a wide range of bodies and organisations seeking to promote economic development and business generally. The Border Region is a significantly busier, and more complex space, in this regard, with the added dimension of the border, together with the proliferation of financial supports emanating from the enhanced North-South Governmental relationships. For the most part, this is a distinct positive for the Region. Some strong initiatives are beginning to emerge which capitalise on location and the opportunities for cross-border cooperation – for example, the Newry-Dundalk Twin-City Region initiative, and the Northwest Now programme, (this latter initiative being a joint programme between Invest NI (Northern Ireland) and Industrial Development Agency (IDA) Ireland). However, the degree to which there is coherence and a clear definition of roles between these various agencies and programmes needs to be further investigated and understood.

The Border Region is structurally diverse; beyond the common thread that is the border with Northern Ireland, (which has significantly limited the development path of the Region to date). There are few existing and potential commonalities and relationships within the Region upon which an overall vision can be built. As the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) for Ireland and Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland have recognised, the future development of the Border areas, North and South, may be realised through building critical mass around the potentially strongest functional relationships traversing the border, in both a North/South and East/West direction.

4.4. Realising Future Potential: Sectoral Opportunities

This section considers the assets of the Region and how they could be harnessed to further develop the existing enterprise base, and capture future sectoral opportunities. The challenge over the next decade, faced by the entire country, is to continue to shift growth towards high value-added and export-oriented sectors and activities.

The emerging growth sectors outlined below were highlighted during the regionally based workshops and also informed by both employment trends and the existing enterprise base. The potential in each sector builds on the commonalities that exist both within, and beyond, the Region – where opportunities for generating critical mass and economies of scale can be optimised. For each sector, a suite of assets is highlighted that provides a platform for growth, through the attraction of investment from both foreign and indigenous companies, the stimulation of entrepreneurship, and the progression towards higher value activity and targeting international markets.

Rural economic diversification, both generally speaking and within the Border Region, has traditionally occurred as a result of direct and indirect state and E.U. intervention and subsidisation, together with changing consumer demands and internal and external markets. This has resulted in progressive increases in on- and off-farm employment. The employment generated through such diversification tends to be centred in indigenous micro-enterprises, employing between 1 and 10 people. Over the next decade,

¹⁹ Referenced articles are: Porter, M (1998) "Clusters and the New Economics of Competition," *Harvard Business Review*, November; Putnam, R (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Simon & Schuster; and Skidmore, D (2000) "Civil Society, Social Capital and Economic Development," *International Studies Association, 41st Annual Convention*, Los Angeles, CA.

future rural diversification must be centred on local asset-bases, with the emphasis being on harnessing the endogenous potentiality of the Region.

Existing and potential areas for future growth and development in the Border Region include:

- **Agri-Food Sector** – taking advantage of depth of capabilities, natural resources, and changing consumer demands
- **Internationally Traded Services (incl. Global Business Services)** – Strengthened by enhanced broadband capacity through Project Kelvin
- **Renewable Energy and Environmental products and services (Clean Tech)** – based on the natural resource base and on the existing regional capabilities in engineering and manufacturing and in R & D
- **Life Sciences**– based on existing company activity and strengthening R & D capabilities north and south of the border
- **Tourism** – based on historic strength, existing natural and cultural amenities and infrastructure, and exploiting un-tapped potential through product development

Irrespective of the current downturn in the economy, continued reliance on external funding or other interventions is no longer the overriding option. Rather, the continued growth and balanced development of the Border Region will depend heavily on the contribution that SMEs – particularly indigenous exporting and non-exporting – and new knowledge based micro-enterprises will make to the regional economy. In addition, there is growing potential for increased inter-business networking and collaboration across the Region. Micro-enterprise clustering, which can be applied to almost any industry or sector, and is already emerging in the furniture-making industries of County Monaghan and the arts and crafts sector in County Leitrim, has the potential to not only stimulate research and development, but also promote innovation and stimulate higher growth. It also has the potential to reduce business costs through the pooling of resources and the undertaking of joint training programmes.

4.4.1 Agri-Food Sector

Food Technology Centre - Sligo

St. Angela's Food Technology Centre was established in 1997 under Enterprise Ireland's Technology Centres Programme and is situated on the campus of St. Angela's College, Sligo. The Food Technology Centre's aim is to develop the very highest standards in all areas of food production and supply; catering to the needs of the food industry including food production and processing, hotels, restaurants, catering and retailers.

Some of the services provided by the centre include: product development, test kitchen, sensory analysis in a computerised lab, nutritional analysis, training courses, and food safety management consultancy.

The food sector makes the largest contribution to agency-supported employment in the Border Region, with almost 8,000 employed in these internationally trading companies. Combined with those directly involved in agricultural production and related locally traded businesses, the sector is of immense importance to the economy of the Border Region. It is expected that this will remain the case going forward²⁰.

The principal activities carried out in this sector are meat & poultry processing, dairy processing and marine related activities. These activities have

concentrated in different parts of the Region. For example, marine related activity is almost exclusively confined to the North-western coastal areas (that is, Donegal and Sligo), with some activity also in Co. Louth. The majority of the dairy and meat processing is concentrated in the North-East – and includes large employers such as: Rye Valley Foods (Monaghan), Carton Bros (Cavan), Liffey Meats (Cavan), Heinz (Louth), and McCarron's (Cavan).

²⁰ Recent research by Bord Bia has highlighted significant potential market opportunities for the Irish food sector - See <http://www.bordbia.ie/eventsnews/press/pages/BordBiaInNewDrivetoPromoteIrishFoodExportsinEurope.aspx> for further details.

The well-established food production and processing activities, particularly in the Central Border area, offers potential for further development, especially in terms of enhanced product development and processing activities and the production of higher value-add, specialist, locally produced - food products. Examples of emerging artisan food producers in the Region include Noodle House Organic Pasta (Sligo), Cannaboe Confectionery (Leitrim) and Corleggy Cheeses (Cavan).

The Food Hub – Drumshanbo

Drumshanbo Co. Leitrim is home to a world class state of the art food production facility called The Food Hub. The premises were originally home to the well known Lairds jam factory in the 1980s and was taken over by the Kepak Group during the 1990s.

Leitrim County Council took the opportunity to restore the premises as a state-of-the-art food specific enterprise centre. The Hub consists of 14 individual food business units offering world class food production facilities - not only unique to the area but as a one-of-its kind facility in the country.

Some developments have taken place in the Region to support the future development of food production and specialised food products; such as the Food Hub in Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim and the development of a Food Centre in St Angela's College, Sligo (which is a constituent college of National University of Ireland, (NUI) Galway).

4.4.1.1 Fishing and Marine Potential

Fishing and the marine sector are important elements of the Border Region's economy. Killybegs, Greencastle and Clogherhead are the most significant fishing ports in the Region; while aquaculture is important in counties Louth, Sligo and Donegal. An expansion of activity in the marine area would create opportunities for the further diversification of the Region's industry base, adding extra value to the Region's output, and better utilising a key natural resource and regional expertise.

Fisheries are, however, under extreme competitive pressure, and the industry is operating within tight profit margins, while facing downward pressure on quotas for important fish stocks. Aquaculture is a challenging industry with volatile demand and international competition, especially from non EU countries (for example, Chile) entering European markets in recent years. While efforts at national levels need to be made to ensure that the fishing industry operates at its full economic potential, (e.g. fleet efficiencies and quota negotiation), it will also be important to diversify marine activity into other areas, to maximise the usage of the sea as a natural resource and provide alternative employment in coastal areas. Some examples of innovative marine-based enterprises already exist in the area, and include firms operating in areas as diverse as surf schooling and packaged surf holidays, (Bundoran Surf School), to seaweed based cosmetics (Alargan) and innovative food products (Seaveg).

4.4.2 Internationally Traded Services (incl. Global Business Services)

The Border Region has established a strong services sector since 1998 – which has capitalised on improved accessibility, cheaper costs of doing business, and skills availability, with the North-East of the Region having a significant advantage due to its proximity to the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and Belfast. The existing company base supports further potential growth across the entire Region – specifically through growing competence in key areas such as insurance and credit facility related back office activities.

Drawing from the Forfás analysis²¹, there are a number of interesting facts in relation to the development of the International Services Sector in the Border Region:-

- a) The percentage of total agency supported employment in this sector has undergone a radical transformation in just over a decade - rising from just 4% to currently 22%, thus, highlighting the importance of this sector to the Region's overall economic development into the future;

²¹ Forfás (2009) regional Competitiveness Agendas: Realising Potential: Border

- b) 60% of the total employed in this sector in the Region are employed in Irish owned companies, with just under half of these employed in a small number of financial services companies such as Quinn Insurance. Overseas firms in the Region are primarily involved in ICT related services such as Maryland Bank National Association (MBNA) and Pramerica;
- c) The North-East of the Region is dominated by financial services, whilst in the North-West, ICT related services are predominant. The North-East, due to its proximity to Dublin, is proving attractive for overseas companies looking to establish European operations centres, or for Dublin based firms looking to expand, for example, Irish Financial Services (IFS) in Drogheda. North-Western locations have proven attractive for 'back office' activities such as customer support and claims processing, as well as software development (such as MBNA, Prumerica and Pacificare).

The third-level institutions in the Region, including the Institutes of Technology and the Colleges of Further Education, have already built strong relationships with internationally trading services companies, through tailoring their courses, (in finance and insurance, for example), and increasingly, R&D activity, to the specific needs of these companies. The Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) are also demonstrating research capabilities in areas of relevance: for example the Software Technology Research Centre in Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT)²²; the Centre for Design Innovation at IT Sligo; digital media at DKIT; and the WiSAR centre of excellence in wireless sensor technology in Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT). In Northern Ireland, the multi-campus University of Ulster offers additional knowledge and expertise through for example, the Computer Science and the Business and Management Research Institutes.

Specifically, opportunities exist for the development of 'clusters' of complimentary internationally traded services in the designated cross-border zones of the Letterkenny-(London) Derry Virtual Corridor, the Armagh-Monaghan Digital Corridor and the Newry-Dundalk Twin-City Region. The latter for example, has recently identified internationally traded services as an area of future growth – and to drive this initiative forward, the respective councils and business bodies from both jurisdictions are collaborating on how this 'hub' can be nurtured and turned into a reality.

The future development of the services sector in the Region will benefit from the enhanced broadband capability to be delivered through Project Kelvin. Potential will also be enhanced through continued focus on gateway development; as demonstrated by the recently announced ERDF-funded Gateway Fund Initiative. Further development of strategic alliances such as those mentioned above will also be important. Finally, a continued focus on developing skills appropriate to the requirements of a rapidly changing sector globally will be required²³.

4.4.3 Renewable Energy and Environmental Products and Services

The renewable energy sector, encompassing a broad range of energy related activities, is one which has shown strong growth in recent years. This has been driven principally by a growing demand for energy and a move to cleaner sources of energy production, as the costs of carbon and other polluting emissions from traditional fossil fuels are being priced into production processes.

²² Software quality engineering, spreadsheet engineering, and knowledge engineering/human-computer interaction

²³ See Forfás (2008) *Catching the Wave: A Services Strategy for Ireland* for an overview of key skills requirements for the services sector.

The renewable energy sector is one from which the entire Border Region, from East to West, has an opportunity to benefit, and this is outlined in **greater detail in Section 5.6**. Recent research reports – such as *Oceans of Opportunity – Harnessing Europe's Largest Energy Resource*²⁴ – point to the key role Ireland can play in meeting energy needs over the coming years in a sustainable manner. The Government's report, *Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal*, outlines as a key objective the importance of implementing “a ‘new green deal’, to move us away from fossil fuel-based energy production, through investment in renewable energy, promotion of the green enterprise sector, and the creation of ‘green-collar’ jobs” (2008: 4). This green economy has the potential to stimulate economic growth in rural areas; with the opportunities arising spanning across a wide range of sectors: such as, construction (through the building of carbon neutral properties), sustainable waste management, ecological-friendly transport systems and, renewable energies.

Sustainable Energy Ireland (Dundalk)

Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) has an office located in Dundalk, adjacent to Dundalk Institute of Technology (see below). This office is also leading the Irish element ('Dundalk 2020') of a pan-European project funded under Framework 6 - CONCERTO II which has selected three European towns of approximately 30,000 population to develop pilot sustainable energy zones.

Each of the CONCERTO II projects has a cross-border observer community, which in the case of Dundalk is the Newry & Mourne District Council. Under the Newry Dundalk Twin City initiative, the relevant stakeholders are seeking to deepen the links between Dundalk 2020 and Newry and develop sustainable energy zones on a cross-border basis.

Centre for Renewable Energy (CREDIT)

The Centre for Renewable Energy (CREDIT) was established in DKIT in June 2002. The Centre's mission is to assist with Ireland's transition to a renewable energy-based economy.

The centre aims to become a national focal point for renewable energy research and development and academic programmes. Its main areas of research activity are wind energy, energy storage and bio energy.

The development of the renewable energy sector in the Border Region will require significant public investment in a range of areas, not least in strengthening the local transmission network so that renewable energies can be harvested. The measures required to build the renewable energy sector in the Border Region will require significant physical development, often in scenic and/or designated conservation areas. Any such development will need to be sensitively undertaken in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. To minimise impacts to these sensitive environments, small-scale localised, and where possible, community driven schemes are preferable in environmental terms. Coupled with this is the need to find the most economical way of reducing the distance between the point of energy production and energy consumption. These are issues that will, however, only become clearer through a more detailed analysis of the Region's potential for producing energy from renewable sources, and hence the need for a detailed energy strategy for the Region.

In Dundalk, Ireland's first *Sustainable Energy Zone* has been designated - an initiative that helps place the Border Region to the forefront of efforts to improve sustainable energy practice. As part of this designation, Dundalk is showcasing some of the innovative technologies, policies and practices that will be needed in order to develop sustainable energy communities across Ireland. To date, energy-efficiency technologies have been installed in a range of buildings within Dundalk, so as to improve the usage of renewable energies and decrease carbon emissions.

The development of small scale renewable projects will involve informing and educating individuals and communities about what they can do to produce a portion of their electricity requirement, and facilitating such developments through the development of a national policy on grid access for small-scale producers. This will ensure that any additional energy produced can be sold into the national grid.

²⁴ Prepared by the European Wind Energy Association.

Increasing attention needs to be paid to the areas of harnessing energy, and its subsequent storage, in order to reduce costs to the country in generating power. Energies that can be stored include the renewables of hydro and wind. Much research is currently being carried out into the technological and planning aspects of such approaches, by both DKIT and the University of Ulster.

4.4.4 Life Sciences

The Border has a relatively small base of companies within the Life Sciences sector. These are located throughout the Region, and employ just fewer than 3,000 or 6% of the overall number employed in the sector nationally. The sector is dominated by multinational overseas investment, particularly in medical technologies and manufacturing activities. Companies operating in the life sciences sector, and located within the Region include, Abbott, Hospira, Zeus, Amcor, Becton Dickinson.

The presence of sector specific research centres in the Region such as those at Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT), Dundalk IT and Sligo IT and north of the border in University of Ulster – as well as at Altnaglevin Hospital, Derry – ,affords the Border Region exciting potential for growth, based on increased interaction between these existing research centres and the life sciences industry. Opportunities also exist to develop links with other HEIs within Ireland and beyond, with a key focus being placed on skills development and collaborative research.

The IDA Strategic Site at Mullagharlin, Dundalk, located just off the M1 motorway, is a 44 hectare (109 acre) land bank, being specifically targeted for utility intensive life sciences investments. IDA Ireland has received advance planning permission from Louth County Council to facilitate the potential establishment of two major bio-pharma facilities and related high quality office developments on the site.

While the Life Sciences sector in the Border Region is relatively small, the sector does play an important role in the regional economy. Continued improvements in connectivity infrastructures, particularly road (especially those facilitating air access) and telecommunications (broadband), are critical to any future growth in this sector. So too is utilising the Region's strong track record in engineering, as a basis for future development of advanced manufacturing for the medical devices sub-sector.

4.4.5 Tourism

Tourism is an established and important enterprise sector in the Border Region. It is the landscape on which this industry is largely based, that not only makes the area distinctive, but will play an important part in securing its future prosperity by supplementing the local economy. There are two main agencies involved in island-wide tourism promotion: Fáilte Ireland which develops the tourism product and promotes tourism to the domestic Irish market; and Tourism Ireland which promotes tourism on the island of Ireland to the international market.

In 2006, tourism generated revenue of €300 million in the 'North-west'. Fáilte Ireland aims to grow this figure to €400 million, based on their proposed strategy for the Region to 2010. Employment in the tourism or related sectors was estimated in 2007 to be above 28,600 across the Border Region (excluding Louth). While tourism is generally a low value activity, it is clearly an important employment creator for the Region.

At a regional level, the Border Region is subdivided by Failte Ireland for operational and marketing purposes between a 'North-West' Region, covering counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Monaghan and Cavan; and an 'East' Region that includes County Louth. In this context there is a challenge to market the Border Region as a single entity, with a wide array of attractions and activities for the visitor to see and do. A key tourism market for the North-West is Northern Ireland. Fáilte Ireland's current strategy seeks to develop and promote the North-West as an adventure holiday destination (which may not appeal to everyone), while the East Region is being promoted for its landscape and heritage. These individual

strategies should be enhanced by also highlighting the close proximity of alternative ‘things to do and places to see’ in the neighbouring regions.

Marble Arch Caves Global Geo-Park

This Geopark is located in the rugged mountainous uplands and gentle rolling lowlands of counties Fermanagh and Cavan. Taking in the world famous Marble Arch Caves, the Geopark boasts some of the finest natural landscapes in Ireland and offers a window into the area's 650 million year history. It is the world's first international inter-jurisdictional park.

The Geopark takes in numerous sites throughout Cavan and Fermanagh, which are open to the public. All of the sites provide for a variety of interests including, not only geology, but also archaeology, history, folklore, wildlife and activities such as cycling and walking.

While there are well established tourism products in the Region (for example, the Shannon Erne Waterway), and there has been a considerable amount of new development in terms of hotels, golf courses and leisure resorts, the tourism product is relatively underdeveloped and under-marketed. In the cross-Border Region of Castleblayney - Crossmaglen, there are over 30 golf courses within a one-hour radius of each other; a selling-point for the area not currently being exploited. There is also a perceived weakness of the Border Region's tourism product in terms of national heritage sites. Such sites can act as significant attractors to the Region in which they are sited. To address this, there is a need for the relevant agencies in the Region – including, where they exist, Heritage Officers within the Local Authorities - to work closely with the Office of Public Works (OPW) on developing these assets within the Region.

Glenveagh National Park

Glenveagh National Park lies in the heart of the Derryveagh Mountains in the north west of Donegal, and it covers over 16,000 acres of remote and beautiful wilderness. It is the major tourist attraction in County Donegal, and is recognised for the interior of the castle, the surrounding gardens and trails. An exciting new project has been the recent re-introduction of the Golden Eagle into the local habitat

Destination North-West Initiative

Destination North West is a cross-border tourism marketing project funded by the North West Region Cross Border Group through the EU INTERREG IIIA programme. Brilliant Ireland.com is the website dedicated to the Destination North West and Glens & Lakelands initiatives. It highlights the main tourism attractions in the Region in its recently published brochure.

On a more positive note, the story of the Northern Ireland Peace Process has contributed to a greatly enhanced perception of the Region; coupled with a significant improvement in the area's access. As a result of this, the numbers visiting the Border Region have improved greatly since the late 1990s, when the Peace Process came into effect. Through their contribution to the local economy, initiatives to promote tourism enterprise have the added benefit of improving the quality of life of a region's residents – which in turn can make a region more attractive to skilled labour and investment.

Green Box Tourism Project

The Green Box Tourism Project is a useful illustration of the possible options to diversify Ireland's tourism. The project launched in 2003 with the support of INTERREG, is centred on tourism development and marketing and forming the first integrated ecotourism destination.

The area of the Green box includes Counties Fermanagh, Leitrim, West Cavan, North Sligo, South Donegal and North West Monaghan.

An additional positive aspect of the Region's position, from the point of view of tourism development, arises somewhat paradoxically as a result of its underdevelopment in the past – the branding of the Region as an attractive tourism destination, within easy reach of Dublin, is a relatively new phenomenon. The ‘undiscovered’ nature of this destination is proving to be a selling point, as demonstrated by Fáilte Ireland's ‘Destination North-West’ media campaigns and the East Border Region's ‘Borderlands’ project.

As well as Fáilte Ireland's strategy, there are a number of initiatives aimed at the development of the tourism sector currently being implemented throughout the Border Region. Many of these initiatives have a strong cross-border element, especially since a number of attractions in the Region span the border such as; the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark (Cavan / Fermanagh); a Geopark being an area recognised by UNESCO to have an exceptional geological heritage.

4.4.5.1 Tourism and Connectivity

Although greatly improved over recent years, poor access to the Region, or perceptions of poor access, has hampered the development of tourism. As a large portion of visitors to the Border Region, in particular the North-West, are from Northern Ireland, access opportunities from there need to be improved. Such an access strategy should include road access, airport routes (including internal flights to regional airports) and public transport.

In general, the main strategic inter-regional road network linking the Region internally and with Dublin, remains a key priority for on-going development. At the same time, improved access and the various access options, (especially airports), need to be marketed to potential visitors. As well as large-scale infrastructural investments, access for the tourism market could also be improved through innovative initiatives such as the Rotterdam charter flights from Donegal Airport (see box).

Rotterdam Charter

An in-bound Charter air service between Donegal Airport and Rotterdam was launched last year and has proven to be very successful with high loadings being achieved on the route. Plans exist to continue the initiative.

As well as general access to the Border Region, consideration also needs to be given to intra-regional connectivity, (including public transport options), supporting the development and promotion of tourism routes, to help tourists navigate the area, especially with regard to the more remote locations tourists may wish to access. Options for improving accessibility to areas with poor or no public transport connections could include seasonal or 'tourist' bus services – through, for example, expanding the remit of the Rural Transport Scheme - and/or improved cycling facilities²⁵.

4.4.5.2 Product Development & Marketing

A greater level of 'packaging' is required of the tourism products within the Region. A joint approach needs to be taken to the tourism products, by stakeholders and tourism promoters alike, so as to ensure the successful exploitation and capture of particular market segments. The development and marketing of attractions North and South, in a combined fashion, will serve to improve the variety of the tourism product on offer.

The environment is a key factor and resource in the competitiveness of rural areas. Area branding based on aspects of the natural environment both strengthens cultural identity and gives local firms competitive advantage in marketing their produce. There are many examples of this throughout the Border Region, for example; the Green Box labelling system for ecotourism (see <http://www.greenbox.ie/quality-standards.php>).

4.5. Realising Future Potential: Enhancing the Business Environment

The territory that comprises the Border Region does have a common thread that gives it its name, i.e. the border with Northern Ireland, and this presents common challenges and opportunities for the Border area.

²⁵ Using the example of Castleblayney-Crossmaglen, travelling from one town to the other via public transport currently entails either travelling from Castleblayney to Dundalk, taking a connection to Newry and then getting a third bus to Crossmaglen; or travelling Castleblayney to Dundalk, disembarking at Cullaville and walking three miles!

As noted previously, there is a need to share experiences, learning and knowledge across the Region, arising from cross-border relationships and actions. Furthermore, there will be initiatives in certain areas, (such as entrepreneurship promotion, innovation, infrastructure, tourism and other enterprise sector development initiatives), that will benefit from cross-regional and cross-border collaborative approaches (for example, the TRANSFORM pilot programme), PROPEL enterprise incubation programmes promoted by Invest Northern Ireland (INI) and Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the Health Initiative, Co-Operation & Working Together (CAWT)²⁶.

PROPEL & Enterprise START

Enterprise Ireland has taken a proactive step in seeking to drive the development of scaleable businesses in the Border Region through their PROPEL ideas into business programme. The programme which will run for one year initially will be seeking to have created ten scalable businesses, with global potential, located within the Border counties by the end of the programme. The programme is also being run by INI in Northern Ireland.

The Region has many of the building blocks in place to attract investment from foreign and indigenous firms. To achieve Ireland's ambition as outlined in the 'Smart Economy', the business environment needs to continuously evolve to meet the changing needs of companies – to provide a dynamic environment that is supportive of early start-ups and entrepreneurial activities that stimulates company engagement in innovation and R&D, that ensures that companies have access to the high quality skills and supports they require and which works more closely with the Institutes of Technology within the Region.

4.5.1 Accelerated Gateway Development

The NSS designated three regional Gateways in the Border Region namely, Letterkenny, Sligo and Dundalk. The importance of building critical mass, focused on the Gateways as a base for stimulating and supporting enterprise development, is key to realising potential and is reinforced through the Settlement Strategy in Chapter 3. The NSS also stressed the importance of building cross-border inter-regional links, specifically emphasising the role of (London) Derry in the North-West and highlighting key transport corridors, linking the regional gateways North and South of the Border. Road infrastructure investment plans under the National Development Plan 2007-2013 and the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008 - 2018 (ISNI), have been aligned with the spatial strategies North and South, i.e., the RDS and NSS respectively.

An appreciation of the key importance of the regional gateways in the Border Region is reflected in the establishment of two key gateway initiatives on a cross-border basis: the Newry-Dundalk Twin City Region, (see further detail in the box), and the North West Gateway Initiative. A key characteristic of these two initiatives involving Letterkenny and Dundalk is the 'regional' approach being adopted. This is essentially a realisation that enhanced performance of the Gateways will rely on the relationships and linkages that can be made with other regional (and/or national) players, across a range of sectors.

Going forward, the wider central border area will require particular attention because of its disparate functional dynamics; westwards to the Sligo Gateway, cross-border, and in particular, the development of the 'Northern Cross', referred to in Chapter 3 (the Core Settlement Strategy), southwards towards the Midlands and eastwards to the Belfast-Dundalk-Dublin corridor. The importance of building critical mass - centred on the designated Gateways - as a base for stimulating and supporting enterprise development is a core element of the Regional Planning Guidelines.

²⁶ Cooperation And Working Together (CAWT) is a partnership between the Health and Social Care Services in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland, which facilitates cross border collaborative working in health and social care.

4.5.2 Leadership & Governance

While there is a high degree of clarity now in relation to strategic infrastructure priorities, (especially road improvement), both North and South, building a coherent enterprise development strategy for the Border Region remains challenging. It is made all the more formidable by the difficulty of establishing coherent leadership and governance mechanisms, across both a functionally diverse Region, and the aforementioned proliferation of networks and support agencies in place.

Development of the Gateways and cross-Border Regional linkages will require strong governance structures and leadership capabilities. Very positive developments are emerging in this regard and can be built upon. As evidenced by the emergence of the North West Gateway Initiative and the Newry-Dundalk Twin-City development framework, coalitions of relevant stakeholders are developing around focused agendas (and 'fuzzy' boundaries), rather than existing administrative configurations. The success of these collaborative initiatives necessitates co-operation on a cross-political/cross-administrative basis. As these initiatives progress, it will be important that they do not become too insular, and that there is openness to seeking partners and leveraging assets, within and beyond the Region. In addition, it is important that the groupings make space to share with each other the experiences and learning from the initiatives they progress, particularly in relation to cross-border collaborative actions.

Newry-Dundalk Twin City Region Initiative

The Newry-Dundalk Twin-City Initiative originates in a jointly commissioned study conducted by Colin Buchanan & Partners on behalf of Newry & Mourne District Council, Louth County Council and Dundalk Town Council in 2006. A wider steering group was subsequently established including representatives from the aforementioned Local Authorities; cross-border bodies (North South Ministerial Council (NSMC), InterTradelreland (ITI), and Centre for Cross-Border Studies), Chambers of Trade and Commerce in Newry & Dundalk, the business sector (Confederation of British Industry (CBI)), central government (Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) and Department of Regional Development (DRD)), and a research team from the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD). The remit of this grouping is to formulate a development strategy and to drive the process forward. Four specific cross-border projects for the Newry-Dundalk Twin City Region were advanced as a result of research carried out by the ICLRD in conjunction with the Steering Group:

- A Dundalk/Newry Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Energy
- A Newry-Dundalk cross-border international services zone
- A geo-tourism initiative encompassing the Mournes, Cooley, Slieve Gullion and Carlingford Lough areas
- A regeneration strategy for older areas within Newry and Dundalk.

In addition, a number of proposals were put forward regarding the strengthening of the co-ordination structures being progressed (including a Joint Senior Management Group; a Twin City Region Advisory Group (modelled on the Steering Committee) and Joint Technical Teams to implement the proposed projects).

4.5.3 Rural Development

As previously outlined, rural areas will play an important role as the location for a diverse range of activities relating to food production, renewable energy generation, maritime related enterprises, and tourism. They will also be a seed-bed for small knowledge based start-up enterprises. It is essential that there is a supportive infrastructure in place to facilitate these activities in rural settings, that key connectivity infrastructures (especially broadband) are provided, and that the landscape and quality of the environment is protected. These are key issues also requiring strong leadership and governance structures, and collaborative approaches across the entire Border Region.

4.5.4 Innovation and R&D

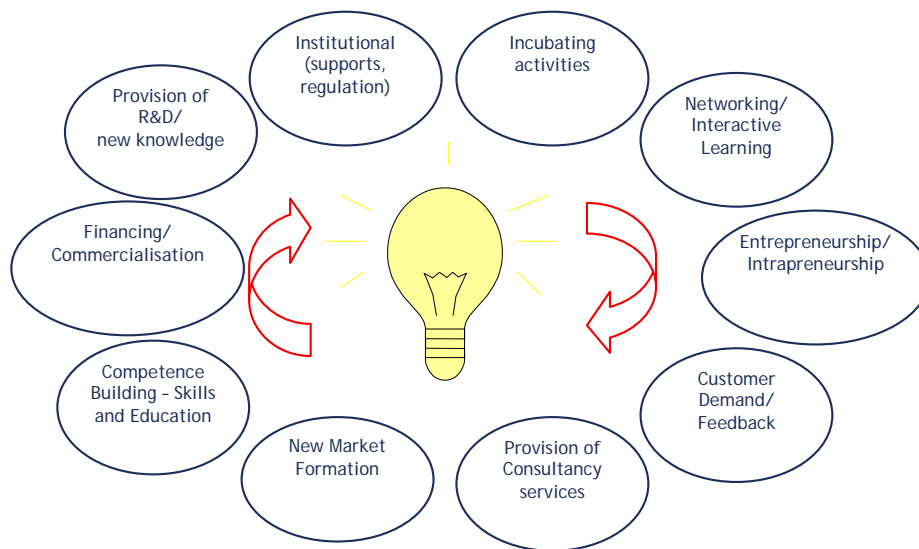
Innovation is about translating ideas into high-value products and services and is a key factor in driving regional competitiveness. There are many sources of innovation, including end customers, firms with complementary products and/or services, and research institutes.

The entire 'innovation system' involves a number of factors, each of which is important in its own right. Successful innovation 'on the ground' is based on the effective interaction between these elements and engagement by firms, Higher Education Institutions, Government Departments and Development Agencies. Regions do not (and should not) operate in isolation, but do so within the wider national and international context. Interactions at both national and international levels play an important role in the transfer of knowledge and the formation of networks – all of which is key to the generation of innovation.

Innovation Vouchers

In 2008, through collaboration with Invest Northern Ireland, the Enterprise Ireland innovation voucher scheme was extended on an all-island basis, introducing ten new 'knowledge providers' based in Northern Ireland as additional resources for companies North and South of the Border.

Figure 4.3 Activities that stimulate Innovation



The factors that influence the development, diffusion and use of innovation are not independent of each other. Rather

- Innovative thinking and creativity is stimulated in an environment that is dynamic, interactive and collaborative
- Enablers and supports provided by government, facilitate innovation and range from establishing the 'right' fiscal, Internet Protocol (IP) and regulatory environment, to supporting education and training, to providing funding for R&D initiatives and through to facilitating networks and 'on-the-ground' introductions and ease of access to technologies
- Government departments and agencies themselves can directly stimulate innovative capacity, by developing innovative ways of enhancing service delivery and engaging with the business community.

Realising the potential of the existing enterprise base will depend on the ability of firms to add value to the products and services they produce, as well as the processes they employ to create them. It will also rely on the Region's ability to stimulate entrepreneurship and promote entrepreneurial thinking. The capacity to innovate is at the heart of that ability, and the challenge presents itself for the regional actors to harness resources and existing assets in a collaborative and cohesive way, to continue to stimulate innovative activities, and in particular, engagement by SMEs²⁷.

²⁷ Small Medium Enterprises

While many 'building blocks' are in place in the Border Region in terms of incubation centres - research institutes, technology parks and business networks - the Region is showing some indicators of under-performance, for example; relatively low levels of expenditure on R&D within industry and the higher education institutes²⁸. The rate of High Potential Start Up (HPSU)²⁹ emergence within the Region has been relatively strong over the past two years, but in general, the Border Region has shown relatively low levels of activity in terms of new company formation; a trend highlighted by the most recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Report (2008)³⁰

North West Gateway Strategic Alliance	BMW Programme of Innovative Actions
<p>The North West Gateway Strategic Alliance project funded under the HEA Strategic Innovation Fund has completed a Scoping Study looking at opportunities to upgrade the higher education capacity in the North West through a strategic alliance between LYIT and University of Ulster. The project is moving to a second phase in which a blueprint for future development will be laid out.</p> <p>(A strategic review is also underway in IT Sligo as part of the HEA's future analysis of the IT sector).</p>	<p>The BMW Regional Assembly has implemented a range of pilot actions arising from their Regional Programme of Innovative Actions 2006-2008.</p> <p>The pilot actions included the roll out of Research and Intelligence Briefings, a Research Voucher Scheme, and a Food Technology Transfer programme (aimed at the Food Technology Centre at St Angela's Sligo and the Drumshanbo Food Hub in Co. Leitrim).</p>

Existing SMEs in the Region face serious challenges in maintaining competitiveness, particularly in the current period of volatile currency conditions and general economic downturn. Aside from regaining competitiveness and ensuring their survival in difficult trading conditions, so as to generate growth and increase the scale of their operations, existing SMEs and new entrepreneurs will need to look beyond traditional markets in the UK and Northern Ireland and into the wider eurozone, which presents additional challenges and requires new skill sets, including language proficiencies. Increased levels of innovation in product development and processes, as well as sales and marketing, will be key to successful outcomes in these highly competitive marketplaces.

The Lionra Network, which comprises the seven partners in Higher Education in the Border Midland and Western (BMW) Region, has recently announced a Collaborative Research and Innovation Strategy for the Region. The Strategy has been produced in response to the need for a co-ordinated approach to Research, Technological Development and Innovation (RTDI) across the BMW region. Its overall objective is to raise the research profile of the constituent colleges; the focus of which will be on addressing the socio-economic needs of the Region and responds to the expectations of the local economy

North-West Science & Technology Partnership	Cavan County Council Business Support Unit
<p>Under the auspices of InterTradelreland (ITI), the North West Science and Technology Partnership is a cross-border network formed between industry, academia and other stakeholders to promote, and strengthen science and technology based innovation and business in the North West.</p>	<p>Cavan County Council has developed a dedicated Business Support Unit which provides a one stop shop service for all business wishing to avail of the local authority services with a single point of contact for commercial users.</p>

Proximity to Northern Ireland is a dimension that may be an additional stimulant for innovative activity within existing firms, and a further stimulant for entrepreneurship in the Region (networking with other firms and customers, exploiting new market opportunities, leveraging expertise within research institutes etc). InterTradelreland's most recent Quarterly Business Monitor, covering the period April – June 2009³¹,

²⁸ Although the capabilities of IoTs in this regard is being enhanced through initiatives such as the Enterprise Ireland Applied Research Enhancement Programme

²⁹ High Potential Start Up

³⁰ Covering the year 2008 and published in May 2009.

³¹ Published in August 2009.

shows that an increasing number of companies engaging in cross-border activities and trade are benefiting from those links, be they formal or informal, and plan to develop their cross-border linkages over the coming year.

4.5.5 Entrepreneurship (and scaling-up)

As previously stated, over 70% of agency supported employment in the Border Region occurs in the indigenous sector, compared to approximately 50% nationally. As a percentage of total employment, the FDI sector accounts for only 4.5% of those employed in the Region, a significantly lower proportion than the 7.4% average for the State. As such, the indigenous sector is of immense importance to the Border economy. The challenge for the Region is to ensure that the cohort of indigenous companies is renewed and expanded with new business start-ups, and that new companies and SMEs are encouraged to scale up and internationalise.

Creating Entrepreneurial Graduates

The ACE Initiative (Accelerating Campus Entrepreneurship) is a collaborative initiative involving Dundalk IT (lead), IT Sligo, Cork IT, Blanchardstown IT and NUI Galway which aims to bring innovative approaches to entrepreneurship education so as to ensure students from non-business programmes take enterprise related modules.

As regards providing a supportive environment for new business start-ups, there are a number of factors that can influence where new companies establish. Local Authorities, agencies and education institutes in the Region can work together to ensure that all the elements are in place and working in a complementary and interactive way. These include:

4.5.5.1 Physical infrastructures

- The availability of competitively priced properties and attractive business and industrial parks, that accommodate mixed-use businesses in a strategic way, that recognises the different needs of business activities (e.g. office, industrial, warehousing);
- Serviced office/business locations that enable companies to access core support services such as reception, secretariat, accounting, Human Resources (HR), facilities management, etc.;
- Car parking and/or effective public transport networks;
- Broadband capacity and availability in business premises and in the home
- Quality of Life aspects – including housing infrastructures, travel to work times

4.5.5.2 'Softer factors'

- Access to regionally based skills;
- Ease of access to business management, development, mentoring support and training;
- Ease of access to harness the capabilities of HEIs and support to invest in in-firm innovation;
- Access to markets and to market intelligence;
- Facilitated networking, introductions and access to shared learning opportunities (e.g. through business networks, workshops, seminars).

The Region needs to ensure that it facilitates ease of access to the 'right' information at the right time and in the right way, to enable individuals to realise the potential of their business ideas.

4.5.6 Skills and Education

The skills development and deployment issues faced by the Border Region mirror those which are being experienced nationally, although because of a historic skills deficit, the challenge of supplying the skills required by enterprises in the Border Region will be greater than in many other parts of the State.

Of paramount importance will be the role of third level educational providers, in producing graduates with enterprise-focused skills that are oriented towards sectors which are growing, or have strong potential to grow, within the Region. An example of such industry focused education is the Higher Diploma in Financial Services Technologies developed by Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT), and the office administration course for banking and insurance offered by Cavan College.

Alongside the need to produce industry oriented graduates, will be the requirement to retrain workers whose skill sets have become redundant. Again, the IOTs and further education providers in the Region will have a key role to play in this regard, alongside FÁS, the national training and employment authority and other stakeholders. Initiatives such as the North West Cross-Border Workforce Development Forum can be important tools in identifying how the existing skills base can be re-oriented towards areas of growing skills demand within the region³². Because of the historic deficit and particular skills challenges for the Border Region, such a forum, if successful, could be established in other parts of the Region.

The retention of existing skills within the Region will also be a key concern. Efforts should be made to encourage professionals who have been made unemployed within the Region, to attempt to reapply their skills within the locale in an entrepreneurial fashion.

4.5.7 Connectivity Infrastructure

The Border Region, with the exception of Louth, is perceived to have relatively poor transport infrastructure. In many instances the perception matches reality. There have, however, been major improvements in access to the North-West in recent years, with a number of road projects and air services having come on stream, (intra-regional rail services do not exist in the Border Region, with the exception of Carrick-on-Shannon to Sligo and Dundalk to Drogheda). Looking forward, a number of areas remain to be improved; chief among these is intra-regional connectivity. Each of the Region's transport elements - road, air and public transport – must be considered in unison to provide the optimum access and connectivity mix for the Region, and to improve its competitiveness. The strategic investment priorities for the Regions infrastructure are outlined in greater detail in Chapter 5 and are fundamental to the Region realising its economic potential.

4.6. Policy Framework

There are many actions that can be taken at a regional level to address a number of the opportunities and challenges identified in this regional economic strategy, while addressing other issues will require a national response. It is incumbent upon the regional actors to consider how they can best take advantage of national initiatives, and their delivery locally.

³² The forum is made up of representatives from business, higher education and local government. For further information, see http://www.delni.gov.uk/workforce_development_forum_final_report_pdf.pdf

Accelerated Gateway & Hub Development

- ESP1** Build on existing collaborative cross-regional (and cross-border where relevant) approaches to Gateway and Hub development and continue to prioritise investment in key settlements of the Region

Regional Governance

- ESP2** Promote and support elected representatives and council officials to actively participate in short workshops and seminars (and where relevant, training programmes) on regional and local development, the role of planning in facilitating growth, translating EU Directives into local policy, and the urban-rural inter-relationship to name but four areas.

Sectoral Opportunities

- ESP3** Develop small sectorally focused teams within the Region to further explore specific opportunities identified in relevant sectors. Existing initiatives should be considered by the sector teams to explore potential synergies and opportunities for knowledge sharing (for example the NW Business & Technology Zone and the Dundalk-Newry Twin City International Traded Services Zone). Emphasis should be placed on the development of indigenous industry and, in this regard, agencies such as Enterprise Ireland and Invest NI should be involved in any such teams.
- ESP4** Develop a strategy to facilitate and promote the nurturing of micro-enterprise clustering within the Region. This should be carried out in association with the third level education institutes.
- ESP5** Develop the potential of Eco-Tourism in the Region so that the relatively unspoilt landscape remains intact and is developed in an environmentally sustainable manner
- ESP6** Promote and support the development of flagship projects. These projects are significant regional tourist resources, and have potential as economic drivers within the local economy. Such projects might include the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark, the Shannon/Erne Waterway, the Cooley/Mourne and Gullion geological sites and the re-opening of the Ulster Canal.
- ESP7** Develop a Renewable Energy Strategy, based on both large and small scale projects, with specific targets and support for farmers, in the development of small-scale community-based and cooperatively owned projects, in order to maximise the potential for rural diversification, which make best use of the various forms of renewable energy such as wind, solar, bio-mass, biofuel.

Infrastructure

- ESP8** Develop all transport infrastructure and water and waste water services in line with those priorities identified in Chapter 5, so that key urban centres develop critical mass and improved connectivity that facilitates them in becoming the key engines for growth in the region
- ESP9** Upgrade electricity transmission network in accordance with priorities identified in Chapter 5 to secure energy supply to existing users; provide sufficient supply to additional users and facilitate connection of renewable energy sources to the grid.
- ESP10** Planning Authorities shall facilitate the provision, improvement and development of telecommunications networks in the region to ensure the competitiveness and economic development of the Region.

Skills

- ESP11** Promote co-operation between the HEI and local industry in the development of courses relevant to regional enterprise.

ESP12 Develop the template of North West Cross Border Workforce Development Forum for replication in other areas of the Region, for the purposes of the identification of local skills needs and workforce development solutions.

ESP13 Identify and implement innovative skills retention measures.

Retailing

ESP14 Direct new retail floor space into Gateways and Hubs and those centres selected for additional population growth. Future provision of significant retail developments within the Border Region should be consistent with the policies and recommendations of the DEHLG Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities

4.7 Development Plan Implications

Local Authorities should have regard to the sectoral analysis carried out in this chapter, and make provision for economic and employment developments that are appropriate to each sector. In particular, development plans should reflect the degree of concentration and dispersal required by the different sectors as outlined above. The large-scale land and infrastructure needs of major investment, including foreign direct investments, should be considered and provided, for when development plans and the strategies for those areas requiring special coordinated approaches are being drawn up. The provision of sufficient serviced zoned industrial and commercial lands must be considered here, but must be evidence based, and follow the sequential approach as laid out in the DEHLG Development Plans Guidance.

With the changing structure of agriculture, the need for diversification and complementary rural enterprise activities will be evident. Planning Authorities should make provision for small-scale on- farm rural enterprises and enterprise development in the smaller towns and villages, particularly to accommodate the types of distributed enterprise sectors outlined in this chapter. .

Planning authorities should also make provision for alternative uses of agricultural land including afforestation and renewable energy. To this end, a Renewable Energy Strategy for the Region should be developed to highlight the important and emerging areas as discussed here and further outlined in Chapter 5. The strategy should also outline common criteria that would be used by Planning Authorities in making decisions on such proposals and, ideally, would include a regional map of areas considered suitable for such developments, though any such designations in areas that are, or contain European Sites should be subject to Habitat Directive Assessments being carried out.

In addition, the creation of opportunities for the establishment of enterprises based on the processing of the natural produce of an area should be supported by the development plans and policies of Local Authorities.

Major enterprise and industrial development will require the provision of waste-water facilities. The major centres identified for enterprise and industrial growth have, or will require, waste-water treatment systems that discharge to river systems. Many of these systems contain European Sites that would be vulnerable to inadequately treated waste-water discharges. Therefore, policies for the development of such enterprises and industry in such areas must be contingent on, and be stated to be contingent on, the provision of waste-water treatment systems with a capacity to produce waste water discharges of a standard that will not impact negatively on downstream European Sites.

Chapter 5 Infrastructure Strategy

5.1 Introduction

Achieving spatial balance by developing the potential of areas of this Region will depend on enhancing capacity for the movement of people, goods, energy and information between places. Improvements in terms of time and cost can reduce the disadvantages of distance, which is a characteristic of this Region.

In order to achieve the strategic goals and objectives of these Guidelines, and in particular the Core Settlement and Regional Economic Strategy, the physical networks of infrastructure such as roads, public transport, energy, communications and water services, are of particular importance to the RPGs, since they themselves have a spatial impact, and also influence the location, timing and extent of future development. Other infrastructure, such as water services and waste, social infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, relate to particular locations, and are also needed to support balanced regional development.

A notable feature of the most successful regions in Europe, is that they possess highly developed, well-integrated infrastructure, that supports efficient and effective movement of people and services, i.e. good public and private transport and energy and communications networks. This infrastructure converges at strategic points to drive dynamic and sustainable development. It is at these strategic points that this Region must capitalise on the availability, and future provision of services, which are generally found in our Gateways and Hubs and strategic towns across the Region.

The objective for this Region must be to build on the substantial progress made in the development of our infrastructure, particularly in recent years, and establish frameworks for the development of enhanced transport, energy and communications networks over the next 15 – 20 years, bearing in mind that these networks will be serving the Region for decades to come. The RPGs offer a twelve year framework, within which the opportunity exists to identify and outline the key areas for development of this Regions infrastructure, in the medium to long term.

Prevailing macro economic and budgetary conditions will influence the rate at which progress is made in delivering infrastructure in this Region, particularly given the recent downturn in the national economy. Strategic planning and co-ordination, of both state and private sector infrastructure, will be essential to underpin the effectiveness of any initiatives to deliver elements of the different networks. It will now be increasingly important for each region and county, to identify and prioritise the critical infrastructure required to drive forward the local economy, especially in light of the tighter fiscal environment in which we now must operate. The main networks of infrastructure are defined in the NSS will be addressed in this section and are as follows:-

Transport -	including roads, public transport [rail and bus] air and sea;
Water Services -	water and waste water services & capacity;
Energy -	including electricity and gas transmission/distribution;
Communications –	including broadband access and telecommunications generally.

Within this Infrastructure Strategy, it is critical that in identifying and outlining key infrastructure projects for this Region, that the Regional Authority does not usurp the position of a Local Authority or An Bord Pleanála, whose function it is to deal with planning applications and strategic infrastructure planning applications respectively. Policy and objectives shall comply with Section 23 (4) (a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as outlined above.

The future provision of infrastructure and services are essential to the future development of the Border Region. Although this infrastructure is essential for the growth of the Region, it is important that it is

delivered in an efficient, and more importantly, environmentally, sensitive way. The delivery of all new infrastructure should be assessed under all relevant EU Directives and the following policy will apply.

Infrastructure Policy

INFP1 In assessing all plans and projects, Local Authorities must comply with Article 6 of Habitats Directive and have regard to the relevant conservation objectives, qualifying interest and threats to the site integrity of a Natura 2000 site.

This Chapter must be read in conjunction with the Spatial Infrastructure Strategy Map. It may be viewed at the end of the Chapter.

5.2 Sustainable Transport Strategy

5.2.1 Introduction

In January 2009 the Minister for Transport published “*Smartertravel - A Sustainable Transport Future*”, setting out a new transport policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020. It sets ambitious targets for modal shift, a reduction in transport emissions and easing of congestion, and sets out a range of measures designed to:

- Encourage smarter travel
- Deliver alternative ways of travelling
- Improve the efficiency of motorised transport
- Ensure integrated policy delivery

Connectivity between the Border Region and Northern Ireland is considered critical to its future development along with connectivity to other regions in Ireland. Integration with the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (RDSNI) is a fundamental consideration in the development of strategies for the Region.

In general, despite some significant infrastructural improvements in recent years, there remain transport infrastructure deficits within the Region that require future investment. The list of needs are long, and it must be recognised that sufficient funding is unlikely to be available, within the life of these Guidelines, in order to carry out all of the works necessary to bring the transport infrastructure in the Region up to the standard envisaged in the NSS and NDP.

In these circumstances it is essential that transport objectives are focused on areas where the need is greatest, where national policies can be supported and enhanced, and where the returns on investments can be maximised.

The NSS states that in order to achieve a regional balance, strategies should be aimed at achieving a critical mass in Gateways, followed by Hubs and other strategic important urban centres. Good transportation links with other Gateways, Regions and International Access Hubs are key to achieving this critical mass. Also freedom of movement within the Gateways, with particular emphasis on public transport, is important.

Major improvements in transportation infrastructure tend to take place over a prolonged periods of time, and in the short/medium term, the Region will have to rely heavily on its existing infrastructure. It is, therefore, particularly important that strategies aimed at protecting the integrity of existing infrastructure are developed.

In light of the above considerations, the Sustainable Transport Strategy for the Border Region as set out in this section seeks to:-

- establish investment priorities that will enhance the accessibility of the Gateways;
- identify particular infrastructural bottlenecks/ weaknesses within the Gateways and set out strategies to address them;
- establish a hierarchy of Public Transport needs and identify strategies to address them;
- establish strategies to assist in the development of Ports and Airports in the Region;
- identify strategies to protect existing infrastructure.

5.2.2 Roads

Seven key towns within the Border Region have been defined as having a key role in the development of the Region, as outlined in the Settlement Strategy in Chapter 3. It is important that the existing routes between these key urban settlements are developed so that each can realize their potential.

The NSS identifies Ireland's future transport network in terms of:-

- strategic radial corridors;
- strategic links;
- strategic international access points.

International access hubs serving the Region are Belfast/Larne, Dublin and to a lesser extent the Port of Drogheda. It is noted that under present national proposals, all national primary routes which make up the strategic radial routes, are being upgraded to motorway/dual carriageway standard, except those serving the Central and Western parts of the Border Region. It is considered that this situation will leave these areas at a significant competitive disadvantage to the remainder of the country, further exacerbating the already substantial problems in this regard. It is considered that high quality access to the Region is vital and the provision of motorway access to the North West and West of the Region in the short to medium term is a priority.

5.2.2.1 Strategic Radial Corridors

Northern Radial Route (M1, A1/M1): Links Dublin with Belfast via Drogheda and Dundalk and is the primary access route for the eastern part of the Region. This route is included in the Major Interurban roads network and has seen substantial improvement in recent years. This route is also included as a Key Transport Corridor in the RDSNI and provides access to the three international access hubs serving the Region. This route has already been developed to a high standard and further improvements to this route are seen as a low priority for the Region.

Northwestern Radial Route (N2, A5): Links Dublin with Letterkenny/Derry via Ardee, Monaghan, Omagh and Strabane and is the primary access route to the Northwest of the region. This route is also included as a Key Transport Corridor in the RDSNI. This route has seen significant investment in recent years. The priorities for this route are:-

- N2 Monaghan to the border with Northern Ireland;
- The N14 from Letterkenny to the border with Northern Ireland;
- The A5 in Northern Ireland provides essential access to the Letterkenny/Derry Gateway. Funding for this route is being provided by the Irish Government. It is essential that this funding continues.

Central Radial Route (N3/M3/A509): Links Dublin with the Hub Town of Cavan via Navan and Kells and onward to Enniskillen. This is the primary access route to the central part of the Region. This route from Dublin to the Cavan county boundary has seen substantial investment in recent years. Further

improvements to the route from Endenburt to Cavan By pass are necessary as a medium/long term priority for the Region.

Western Radial Route (M4/N4): Links Dublin with Sligo via the linked Gateway of Athlone/Tullamore/Mullingar, Longford and Carrick-on-Shannon and is the primary access route to the west of the Region. This route has seen significant investment in recent years in areas outside of the Region, however, two significant substandard sections remain and their improvement is a priority for this route:-

- N4 Carrick-on-Shannon Bypass
- N4 Collooney – Castlebaldwin
- Upgrading of N4 from Carrick-on-Shannon to Castlebaldwin {from single carriageway to 2+2} this however is located in the Western Region [Co Roscommon]

5.2.2.2 Strategic Links

Atlantic Corridor (N13/N15/N17): Links the Gateways of Letterkenny/ Derry, Sligo and Galway. This route has seen limited investment in recent years and as a result, in many locations, the quality of the route falls far short of that necessary to provide good interconnectivity between the Gateways. The priorities for this route within the Region are:-

- N17 Tubbercurry to Collooney
- N15 Sligo to Leitrim County Boundary
- N15/N13 Ballybofey/ Stranorlar Bypass

West/North Central Corridor (N16/A4): Links the Gateway of Sligo and the Gateway of Enniskillen in Northern Ireland. The Sligo to Enniskillen route also provides access to the international access point of Belfast/Larne and links to the Key Transport Corridor of Enniskillen/ Dungannon/ Craigavon/ Belfast, as identified in the RDS. Improvements to this route in recent years have been limited to short isolated sections. The route requires substantial investment as a matter of priority. Key priority for this route is:-

- N16 Sligo to Enniskillen (including Manorhamilton Bypass and the southern Bypass at Enniskillen (outside the Border Region))

Midlands Corridor (A3/N54/N55): Links the City of Armagh to the Hubs of Monaghan and Cavan, which continues onto the linked Gateway of Athlone/Tullamore/Mullingar. This link is also a critical north/south route for freight transport both intra and inter-regional

N53/N2 Dundalk - Monaghan: Links the Gateway of Dundalk to the Hub town of Monaghan via Castleblayney

R178/R192/R188 – Dundalk – Cavan: Links the Gateway of Dundalk to the Hub town of Cavan via Carrickmacross, Shercock and Cootehill

Cavan – Carrick-on-Shannon (R209 / R202 / R199 / R198): Links the Hub of Cavan with the Regional Strategic Town of Carrick-on-Shannon. Carrick-on-Shannon is then linked to the Gateway of Sligo via the N4. This remaining link completes the Strategic Links between the key settlements in the Border Region which aim to improve connectivity and accessibility of the key urban centres.

Roads Policy

INFP2 Facilitate the development, of those sections of the Strategic Radial Corridors and Strategic Links identified above, as being of priority importance for the Region;

5.2.2.3 Gateway Roads Priorities

Sligo Gateway: The opening of the Sligo Inner Relief road has assisted in alleviating traffic congestion within the town, however, the problem remains, particularly at peak times. The limited number of crossings of the Garavogue River forces traffic to use the existing town centre crossings. The Eastern Garavogue Bridge and approach road is an immediate priority for the Sligo Gateway. Advance planning and design for an outer bypass of the town should be progressed during the life of these Guidelines.

Letterkenny/ Derry Gateway: Existing road links between Letterkenny and Derry are expected to cater adequately for demand in the short term, however, planning and design for capacity improvements should be progressed during the life of these Guidelines. Traffic congestion in Letterkenny is particularly problematic at peak times. The proposed N56 Letterkenny Relief Road is an immediate priority for the Letterkenny/ Derry Gateway to reduce this congestion.

Dundalk Gateway: Traffic Congestion within the town centre remains a significant problem affecting the development of the Gateway. The provision of the Western Infrastructural Route is an immediate priority for the Dundalk Gateway to reduce this congestion.

Gateways Policy

INFP3 Facilitate and support the improvements identified to address particular infrastructural bottlenecks/ weaknesses within the Gateways.

5.2.2.4 Protection of Existing Roads Infrastructure

National primary, national secondary and regional roads, identified above, are of critical importance for the movement of goods and services within and outside the Region. Given the scarcity of funding to build new roads and improve existing roads, it is likely that the Region will be relying heavily on many of its existing roads for the foreseeable future. It is vital therefore that the carrying capacity and travelling times of key routes is not compromised by new development. To this end, the control measures contained in the National Roads Authority (NRA's) *'Policy Statement on Development Management and Access to National Roads'* should be implemented in relation to these Strategic Radial Corridors and Strategic Links .

Local Authorities working in collaboration with other stakeholders have a key role to play in bringing Ireland's road safety record in line with 'best practice' countries throughout the World

Roads Policy

INFP4 Protect the carrying capacity of all Strategic Radial Corridors and Strategic Links through the restriction of new accesses and intensification of existing accesses.

5.2.3 Sustainable Transport Modes

For the purposes of these Guidelines Public Transport is subdivided into the following sub-groups;

- Bus
- Rail

Integrated Land Use and Transportation Studies (ILUTS) help to identify specific transportation strategies within a sustainable transport framework. ILUTS studies should be carried out as an immediate priority for all key settlements in the Region, where this has not already been done. Priority should be afforded to

strategies that enhance the attractiveness of sustainable transport modes within urban centres, particularly strategies that reprioritise traffic movements to favour public transport modes.

Plans should be prepared to retrofit areas towards creating sustainable neighbourhoods, so that walking and cycling can be the best options for local trips. Local Authorities should also ensure that adequate provision is made within the urban centres for dedicated taxi ranks and bus stops.

5.2.3.1 Bus Services

Bus services currently provide the primary form of public transport within the Region. Private bus and minibus operators provide extensive services in many parts of the Region. The Regional Authority acknowledges the importance of services provided under the Rural Transport Programme, and supports the continued expansion of these services.

The National Spatial Strategy reiterates national policy of giving increased focus to public transport within cities and towns and in more rural areas. The Regional Authority supports the development of bus services and related infrastructure in the Region. Integration of road, rail, bus and minibus modes at key locations within the Region, with integrated ticketing is a primary objective. The development of Park and Ride facilities at key public transport nodes, particularly within the Gateways, is seen as a priority for the Region.

Bus Services Policy

- INFP5** Support the expansion of rural transport services under the Rural Transport Programme;
- INFP6** Promote the use of ILUTS for all key settlements within the Region with particular emphasis on refocusing transport strategies to favour public transport modes;
- INFP7** Promote the integration of road, rail, bus and other sustainable modes at key locations within the Region, with the development of Park and Ride facilities being a primary objective;
- INFP8** Explore with other relevant public, private and community organisations, a range of innovative rural transport proposals including, rural park and ride schemes, rural carpooling and car-sharing schemes, and rural bus schemes.

5.2.3.2 Rail Services

In order for rail to become a viable alternative to road travel for the movement of both passengers and freight, existing rail lines will need to be substantially improved and new lines will need to be added. Experience on the Sligo – Dublin route has shown that where improvements are made, passenger numbers will increase in response.

At present the Dundalk Gateway is reasonably well served through its location on the main Dublin – Belfast line. The Sligo Gateway has a rail link to Dublin and as a result of significant investment in both track improvements and rolling stock, passenger numbers have increased by 40% over a two year period. The Letterkenny Gateway does not have a rail link but as outlined in Section 1.8.2, there are studies on-going with regard to the development of rail in the North West.

It is acknowledged that new rail links involve a large state investment with long delivery periods, and are feasible only as a medium/long term objective. The Western Rail Corridor from Athenry to Sligo, however, is already in place and the works required to bring this line back into service are relatively minor. The re-opening of this line is seen as a long term priority for the Region.

Another inter-regional issue is the development of the Clonsilla – Navan Rail line which is considered a significant priority for the Border Region, albeit that it lies outside the remit of the Border Regional Authority. Its development will provide a public transport alternative to Dublin bound traffic, which could be

accommodated through park and ride facilities in Navan. A longer term priority for this Region would be an extension of the Navan Rail line into Kingscourt in Cavan and beyond.

Rail Policy

INFP 9	Support the provision of a rail link between the Letterkenny/Derry linked Gateway and examine the potential of a rail link from Letterkenny to Sligo;
INFP10	Promote the re-opening of the Western Rail Corridor from Athenry to Sligo;
INFP11	Identify disused transport corridors worthy of protection for future sustainable uses;
INFP12	New development should not compromise the expansion of rail and waterway corridors within the Region

5.2.4 Cycling and Walking

It is acknowledged that cycling/walking infrastructure within the Region is limited and in its present form, is unlikely to encourage any significant modal shift. The rural character of the Region presents significant challenges in this regard and substantial investment is required.

The Border Regional Authority supports the government's smartertravel policy and the National Cycling Policy Framework, and will aim to encourage greater shift to cycling/ walking through the promotion of the strategies outlined in those documents.

Cycling and Walking Policy

INFP13	Promote and support cycling and walking within the Region, particularly within urban centres.
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5.2.5 Ports and Airports / International Access

As an island nation, good quality access to ports and airports is vital to the country's economy, as is the quality of the ports and airports themselves. At a national level, the ports of Dublin, Belfast and Larne together with Dublin, Belfast and Shannon airports serve as the main international access points for the Region. Access to these international hubs from this Region is via the strategic radial corridors and linking routes outlined in section 5.2.2 of these Guidelines, further emphasising the importance of these routes to the Region.

The Region is also served by a number of other ports and airports which, while on a smaller scale than those international access points noted above, are equally vital to both the accessibility and the economic and social life of the Region.

Development of existing ports and airports will be critical to the development of the Region. However, given that most ports, and some airports, are located within, or close to Natura 2000 sites, their future expansion can only be carried out if there are no significant impacts on these sites. It is likely that the development of most ports or airports will require strategic plans, or will be subject to a planning application, to either the Local Authority or An Bord Pleanála through the Planning and Development Strategic Infrastructure Act 2006, all of which will require a Habitats Directive Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

5.2.5.1 Ports

All ports within the Region are a significant asset and provide for the efficient movement of goods for import and export. There is an issue, however, on the eastern seaboard, in that a greater understanding of the role and function of each port needs to be established and outlined in a cohesive strategy. The Border

Regional Authority considers it necessary that a ports strategy is developed for all ports on the island of Ireland, and in particular, for the entire eastern seaboard of the island.

The port of Drogheda remains a significant contributor to the overall economic activity in the Region. Road access to the port remains problematic and development of the Drogheda Port Access Road is a priority for the port.

Greenore is an excellent deep water port that may have future potential for increased commercial activity. Dundalk Port currently provides a limited freight service, however, it is likely that its future existence will depend on alternative uses which include amenities and recreation. Sligo Port has significant potential along the western seaboard, but all options and proposed land uses should be considered with respect to its future existence.

Killybegs, Greencastle, and Clogherhead are the most significant fishing ports in the Region and their importance and development in to the local economy is discussed further in section 4.4.1.1 of the Guidelines.

Ports Policy

INFP14	Support the provision of adequate port facilities for commercial, fishing and amenity purposes within the Region subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive;
INFP15	Support the development of the Drogheda Port Access Route;

5.2.5.2 Airports

Dublin, Belfast and Shannon airports provide international air access to the Border Region. The West and Northwest of the Region is relatively well served by airports which include City of Derry Airport, Sligo Airport and Donegal Airport. These services are considered vital to the overall accessibility of the West and Northwest of the Region.

Good quality access to the airports is important and improvements to the quality of the airport access routes, particularly for both Sligo and Donegal Airports, is a priority for the Regional Authority.

Airports Policy

INFP16	Promote and support the on-going operation and development of all regional airports;
INFP17	Support the improvement of existing access routes to the regional airports.

5.3 Water Services

For the purposes of this section, the provision of water services is taken to include the provision of water supplies, and the provision of urban waste water treatment facilities required to treat dirty water. These two key components of water services are inextricably linked and yet are two distinctly different processes. The supply of good quality water is essential for life on earth and must, therefore, be protected. Our water supply comes from surface and ground water sources which are affected by quantity and quality of waste water discharges. The future development of our towns and villages are contingent upon there being the necessary water supplies and waste water treatment capacity to accommodate their growth. In the absence of sufficient water supply and waste water treatment capacity, towns and villages cannot grow due to the potential impact on water sources. This is also reinforced through the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and associated River Basin Management Plans (RPMPs), which should be read in conjunction with these Guidelines.

The 2008 Forfas 'Assessment of Water and Wastewater Services for Enterprise' report recommends prioritisation of investment in Gateways and Hubs, to ensure that these locations can accommodate future enterprise developments and population growth needs.

Given the new economic circumstances and the rolling programmes of investment in water services, Local Authorities must now prioritise projects that will maximise return to the exchequer and facilitate the growth and development of the key settlement centres within the Region. The emphasis within this section will, therefore, be on the key settlements within the Region which includes the Gateways and Hubs, Carrick-on-Shannon and Drogheda. It is essential that water services investment and the development of these key centres is prioritised, to facilitate their future growth so that they together, can provide the stimulus for the development of the Region. This approach is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and Local Authorities are advised to take cognisance of these recommendations when preparing their Needs Assessments.

Cognisance must also be taken from European Court of Justice (ECJ) judgements, environmental and public health concerns and the Programme of Measures detailed in River Basin Management Plans produced in accordance with the Water Framework Directive. This will help address infrastructural deficiencies that are presently causing water-bodies to fail the requirements of the Directive.

The economic cost of providing water and wastewater services is now well recognised. In these harder times, expenditure on production and delivery will need to be carefully programmed and managed, with focus on realistic likely demand.

5.3.1 Challenges for Water Services in the Border Region

- To ensure that there is an adequate water supply to meet existing and future domestic, industry and tourism demands in compliance with national and EU drinking water standards and relevant directives;
- To provide secondary treatment of wastewater in compliance with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive;
- Support measures that will Minimise unaccounted for water in distribution systems, conserve use and protect water resources;
- Support measures that address deficiencies in respect of compliance with the Water Framework Directive;
- Support the programme of Measures detailed in proposed River Basin Management Plans which reflects realistic achievable targets.

5.3.2 Guiding Principles for Water Services

The following priorities are considered central to the future development of water services in the Region:-

1. Water Conservation measures which meet environmental and economic goals. Water conservation must be the main objective in Local Authorities work programmes as it will generate spare capacity within existing networks and treatment plants. All water conservation measures should be considered, including rain water harvesting. Only recently, have the benefits been recognised, that mains water supplied from the tap has become a much more precious (and restricted) commodity.

2. Environmental Works required must respond to:

- European Court of Justice-judgements - The quality of water intended for human consumption and wastewater treatment from agglomerates and private facilities were the subject of judgements against Ireland by the ECJ over the past 10 years. Failure to comply with measures necessary to conform may lead to further court rulings including recurring lump sum fines or penalties;

- Environmental/Public Health Objectives-arising from regulations and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports dealing with drinking water standards, wastewater treatment, authorisation of wastewater discharges and bathing water standards;
- Compliance with the Water Framework Directive.

3. Economic Objectives

- Work to support the overall strategic and sustainable development of Gateways and Hubs and other key urban settlements under the National Spatial Strategy as well as strategically located developing areas;
- Works to support employment creation in line with the objectives set out in 'Building Ireland's Smart Economy - A Framework for Sustainable Economic Revival';
- Future growth should be directed towards specific locations with existing spare infrastructural capacity or with the potential for development at minimum cost;
- The provision of water services in support towns and villages to maintain regional balance and to assist in the promotion the rural economy.

The Water Services Act 2007 introduced a revised legislative code to govern the provision of water services in Ireland. This gives good impetus to Local Authorities to put the water utilities at the core of its planning and service delivery. A quality charter for the consumers should be developed with publication of results of water quality analysis. They need to be promoted as a quality service branded as a distinct utility. The preparation of Water Services Strategic Plans will afford better planning and delivery of the service.

5.3.3 Measures to Meet the Challenges of the Changed Economic Environment

'Getting fit Again' – The Short Term Priorities to Restore Competitiveness Report from Forfas in June 2009, indicates further additional measures are needed to restore competitiveness in Ireland. Driving cost competitiveness can best be served in the water utilities sector, by focusing on the asset that is already available, tackling wastage within the system, scaling back on perceived demands and using engineering solutions to drive programmes of work that are affordable. It is critical that Local Authorities review their existing water services investment programme, and future priorities must be directed towards programmes that provide immediate impact.

The following is a list of priorities that will have to be considered by Local Authorities so that Water Sections make the most of existing resources, and yet provides a high quality and efficient service to the end user.

1. Water Services Investment Programme:

Circular L 6/09 Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2012(WSIP) Needs Assessment 2009, issued to Local Authorities in July 2009, sets out a new approach for delivery of water services, with particular emphasis on specific environmental and economic benefits. This policy places existing urban centres at the heart of Water Services investment.

Local Authorities must now focus on what strategic additional water utility works are required within key settlements, to assist the Region to become more competitive. It is important that those key settlements identified within these Guidelines, and targeted for growth, have the capacity to absorb further growth without any detrimental impact on the environment.

Realistic ambition, with designs reflective of real demands, will have to be put in place. Initiation of greater co-operation between water authorities in the Region is necessary, to benefit from economies of scale, existing infrastructure provisions and geographic suitability.

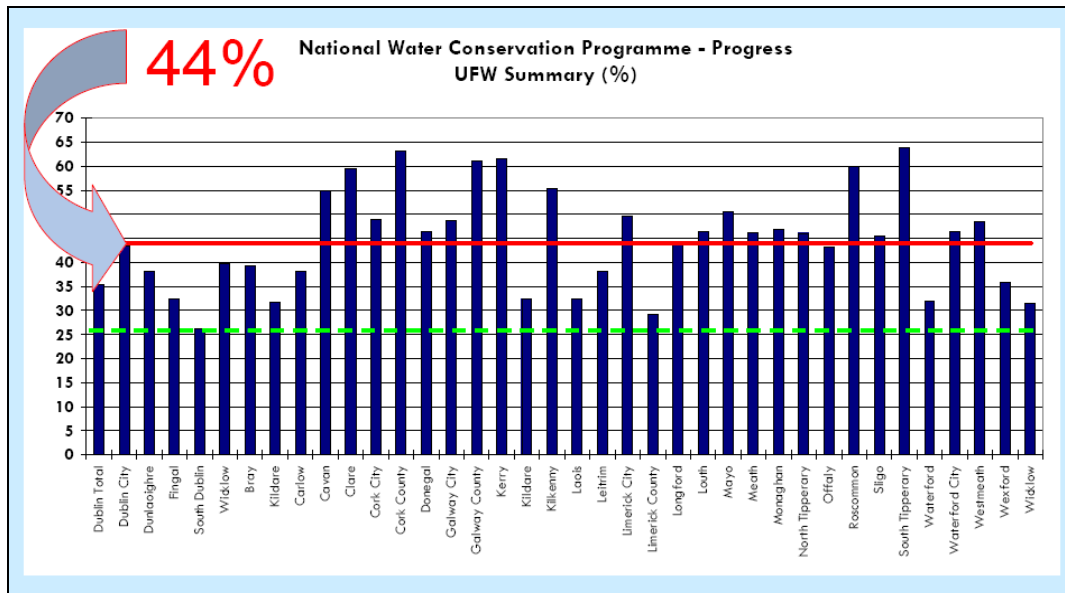
2. The EPA Report on Drinking Water –Remedial Action List

The 2007/2008 Report details measures that need to be addressed to improve water quality. A Remedial Action List (RAL) detailed in the report must be taken into account and where economically reasonable, or where a serious threat to water quality exists, the RAL must be implemented. Section 6.4.1 of this report provides a summary of the EPA report of drinking water status in each county.

3. Active Leakage Control -Water Conservation:

Water Conservation will deliver real savings in the short term. Water conservation and network management is now an integral component of the Water Services Investment Programme, and is a key to the sustainable use of water resources. Apart from environmental gains, the delivery of additional water supply through leakage control is a viable alternative to capital infrastructure provision, especially given the significantly tighter fiscal environment in which we must now all operate. Water conservation also protects capital investment in the networks and reduces operational costs. **Unaccounted For Water (UFW)** is high throughout Ireland and is a significant problem within the Border Region as demonstrated in the diagram below. The diagram shows that Leitrim (37%) is closest to a target of 25% which is considered a reasonable target for UFW.

Figure 5.1 Water Loss in Local Authorities in Ireland



4. Water Metering

All Local Authorities in this Region have now identified the non - domestic users, and have established operational billing systems for the recovery of the costs of the delivery of potable water, and the treatment of wastewater. This policy must be rigorously pursued to capture all users for transparency, fairness and equity. The non-domestic sector must now be charged the full economic cost of water supply and wastewater services on the basis of their metered usage. This is now proving to be a significant water conservation measure and it ensures compliance with the Polluter Pays Principle.

5. Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna and River Basin Management Plans

Cognisance must now be taken of important flora and fauna, as designated in Natura 2000 sites, as well as Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) and Ramsar sites, due to the potential impacts on them from water abstraction, construction works and wastewater treatment. The SEA Directive and Habitats Directive address these concerns and are dealt with in the Environmental Report and the Habitats Directive

Assessment Report, which are provided in parallel with these Guidelines. Directing growth to service centres where spare capacity exists, and where environmental impacts are monitored and controlled, will provide a structured approach to aid strategic environmental protection. Impact risk assessment is a key element of the River Basin Management Plans. Upgrade or operational improvements which have been identified in the RBMPs should receive priority in the Water Service Investment Programme, as a contributor to water quality problems will always need to be given priority. Consultation with Environmental Authorities is a prerequisite.

6. Drinking Water Incident Response Plans (DWIRP)

In accordance with Circular L4/09, all Local Authorities are required to prepare an incidence response plan and to appoint a DWIRP Manager, to help minimise the effects of potential emergencies. This plan should be put in place at an early date to ensure a rapid response to an incident and to minimise any effects.

5.3.4 Priority Water Services Projects in the Border Region

In accordance with Circular L6/09 and the Water Services Investment Programme 2010 – 2012 Needs Assessment 2009, the Border Regional Authority will support the planning and development of the projects in each local authority within the Region and outlined in Table 5.1

Table 5.1 Priority Projects from Assessment of Needs 2009

County/ Settlement	Priority Projects from Assessment of Needs 2009
Donegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water Conservation Programme - Letterkenny Sewerage Scheme - Letterkenny Water Supply Scheme - Lough Mourne/Letterkenny Water Supply Scheme - Bridgend Sewerage Scheme.
Cavan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water Conservation Programme - Cavan and Cootehill Regional Water Supply Scheme. Stage 2 - Cavan Sewerage Scheme inc. Sludge Management. - Swellan, Latt Area and Drumalee Sewerage Scheme
Monaghan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co. Monaghan Water Conservation Programme - Monaghan Town Sewerage Scheme-Advance Works - Castleblayney Sewerage Scheme
Louth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water Conservation –Network Management - Dundalk Water Supply-Cavanhill Upgrade - Dundalk South and West Sewerage Scheme Phase 1 - South Drogheda Water Supply Scheme - Drogheda Sewerage Network Improvements
Leitrim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County Leitrim Water Conservation Project - Carrick-on-Shannon Sewerage improvement Scheme -including Satellite Dewatering - South Leitrim Regional Water Supply Scheme - UV Equipment Carrick on Shannon Water Treatment Plant
Sligo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County Sligo Water Conservation & Network Management Project. - Sligo and Environs Water Supply Scheme Stage 2 - Sligo Sewerage Scheme(Network Improvements) - Sligo & Environs Water Supply Scheme Stage 3

Policy for Water Services

INFP18	Local Authorities in the Border Region will provide Water Services in the most environmentally friendly, efficient, safe, and economical way possible, in accordance with Circular PD 7/09 and any subsequent DEHLG and EPA Guidelines and relevant EU Directives;
INFP19	The provision of water and sewerage facilities in settlements and rural areas of the Region must be considered and consistent with the settlement framework for population growth laid out in Chapter 3 of these Guidelines, as well as the investment priorities outlined in table 5.1;
INFP20	Proposals for new or increased water abstraction from surface and groundwater sources shall be appropriately assessed for its potential impact upon Natura 2000 sites in-situ and ex-situ
INFP21	Proposals for new or increased waste water discharge to surface or ground water shall be appropriately assessed for its potential impact upon Natura 2000 sites in-situ and ex-situ
INFP22	For all other settlements, (in addition to the seven key settlements), and all rural and commercial development, Local Authorities must comply with the provisions of the Habitats Directive

Water Services Strategic Objectives

INFO1	Local Authorities must aim to reduce UFW to 25% within the life time of the Guidelines;
INFO2	Water conservation must be a priority through rehabilitation and reinforcement of existing water networks;
INFO3	Surface water should be separated from waste water. Local Authorities should promote SUDS, where possible,
INFO4	Local Authorities should promote rain water harvesting and other water conservation measures;
INFO5	All drinking water supply sources should be protected and managed appropriately through the development plan process;
INFO6	All waters receiving discharges should be protected and managed in accordance with the River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures

5.4. Energy Infrastructure

The world's energy industry is changing significantly to counter the declining stocks of fossil fuels and to limit the production of harmful greenhouse gasses. Like many other regions throughout Ireland and the rest of Europe, the Border Region must respond to these challenges to ensure that it will have a modern and efficient infrastructure as we continue to grow and develop in the 21st century.

For the purposes of this section, Energy Infrastructure will include a number of key sectors, but it does not purport to be an exhaustive list nor seek to address all areas of Energy Infrastructure.

- Gas Network;
- Electricity Transmission Network/Grid; and
- Renewable Energy and Green Infrastructure

5.4.1 Gas Network

Gas is not currently a major energy source in the Border Region. The gas transmission network does not extend into counties Leitrim, Sligo and Donegal and, therefore, natural gas is not available within these areas. A new cross country transmission pipeline would be required for Bord Gáis to service these

counties. It is stated by Bord Gáis that an extension of the Transmission Gas Network is not viable at this time, but will be reviewed in the future to assess demand for such services.

However, a major development on the eastern coast, was the recent granting of planning permission for a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant at Toomes, County Louth. Following construction, the plant will generate essential additional energy capacity, providing enough electricity to power approximately 135,000 homes. This plant will be a major benefit to the Region as an alternative energy source.

5.4.2 Electricity Transmission Network

Electricity is a fundamental component of life in the modern world. Ireland, like many countries, faces the challenge of providing the platform on which we will continue to support reliable and affordable electricity services in the coming decades. The transmission network plays an important role in transporting power from the variety of generation sources, both conventional and renewable, to the towns and villages, for onward distribution to every home, farm and business in the Region and across the country.

Demand for electricity has grown steadily since the early days of a national electricity supply. Electricity is a safe, versatile and economic form of energy, traditionally favoured by industrial, commercial and domestic customers. A well established relationship exists between economic growth and electricity consumption.

Through the NDP and other strategic plans, this Region has broadly developed in line with demand for electricity in recent years, however; there is growing recognition that we need to move away from the old system of 'predict and provide'. The transmission network forms the backbone of our power supply, and it is critical that it is developed to ensure that we have the necessary infrastructure to attract business and accommodate economic growth and the future development of our local economy.

The body responsible for developing the transmission network in Ireland is EirGrid the Transmission System Operator (TSO). Their role is to ensure that there is adequate network capacity to carry power from new generation stations, and to ensure a reliable supply to meet growing demand for electricity. Local Authorities must consider the development of the grid in all development proposals, to ensure that the grid is not compromised in any way by the proposals. This forms part of the role of the Regional and Local Authorities as the custodians over the Grid, both as a regional and national asset that delivers efficient and secure transport of power to the Border Region, and the state at large.

5.4.2.1 Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland – The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020

The White Paper sets out the Government's Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020 to deliver a sustainable energy future for Ireland. The document emphasises the fact that security of energy supply is crucial for the economy and society, and that the country needs robust electricity networks and electricity generating capacity, to ensure consistent supply to consumers and all sectors of the economy. Figure 5.2 provides a summary of how the transmission network contributes to the economy of the Border Region

Figure 5.2 Benefits of the Transmission Network



The White Paper indicates that the Government's overriding policy objective is to ensure that energy is consistently available at competitive prices with minimal risk of supply disruption". The Paper also states that the underpinning strategic goals are detailed as follows:

- Ensuring that electricity supply consistently meets demand;
- Delivering electricity and gas to homes and businesses over efficient, reliable and secure networks;
- Being prepared for energy disruptions

The White Paper further emphasises that "the availability of reliable and secure and competitively priced electricity supply must be assured at all times" and highlights the fact that electricity "is a vital ingredient in the competitiveness of Irish industry and Ireland's long term economic and social development". The Government indicates that to deliver a secure and uninterrupted energy supply at a competitive cost will be underpinned by the following actions:

- Ensuring the delivery of the second North/South electricity interconnector by 2011 which will more than double the existing cross border electricity transfer capacity to over 680MW;
- Ensuring that the strategic network development approach is underpinned by coordinated local, regional and national approaches to issues, which balance local interests with the national imperative to deliver strategic energy infrastructure, which brings reliability and consistency of supply. This approach will be supported by the arrangements provided for in the Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Act 2006.

5.4.2.2 National Spatial Strategy

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS), emphasises that a feature of the most mature and successful economies is that they possess highly developed, well integrated infrastructure that supports movement, i.e. public and private transport, and energy and communications networks. This infrastructure converges at strategic points to drive dynamic and sustainable development.

Section 3.7 of the NSS states *“physical networks of infrastructure such as roads, public transport, energy and communications are of particular relevance to the NSS, since they themselves have a spatial impact and also influence the location, timing and extent of development”*.

The NSS sets out the prime considerations in terms of spatial policies relating to energy as:-

- Developing energy infrastructure on an all-island basis to the practical and mutual benefit of both the Republic and Northern Ireland;
- Strengthening energy network in the West, North West, Border and North Eastern areas in particular;
- Enhancing both the robustness and choice of energy supplies across the regions, through improvements to the national grids for electricity and gas.

The NSS also emphasises the significance of planning policy at regional and local level, particularly in respect to written statements in County and City Development Plans supporting the timely commissioning of transmission infrastructure.

5.4.2.3 Border Region

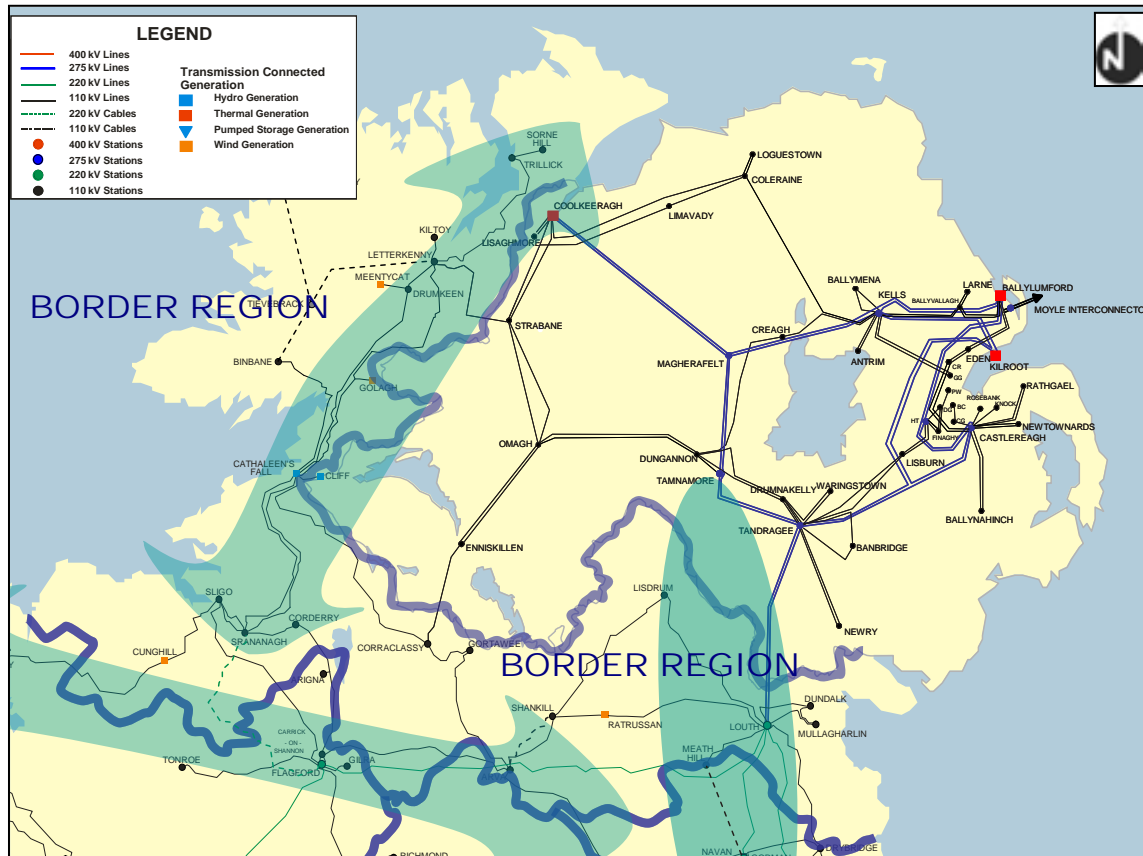
On the 01 November 2007, a single electricity market began trading, incorporating the whole island power system. However, until the second large scale North – South transmission link is completed, there is a transmission constraint between the two jurisdictions on this island, which can constrain the electricity market from delivering the most economic generation to the consumer. This constraint will be alleviated following the completion of the second North – South interconnector. The need for linkage is important for the two jurisdictions but also from the European perspective, where EU Directives indicate the need for higher integration between countries for delivery and security of supply. The Border Region forms this important link between the two jurisdictions, therefore, the importance of the future development of the transmission network in this Region cannot be underestimated, with respect to the future development of the islands electricity market and the larger European market.

There are a number of issues that need to be addressed for the long-term strategic development of the electricity transmission infrastructure in the Border Regional Authority area. These issues include:

- The advent of significant amounts of new generation, in particular generation from renewable sources, that is expected to materialise throughout both the Border Region itself and the West Region;
- The requirement to provide enhanced electrical connections between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland;
- Security of supply throughout the Region.

These issues are further illustrated by Map 5.1 below which provides an indicative representation of the strategic transmission potential, trends, flows, demands, needs, directions etc., based on the known priorities and parameters in September 2009. The elliptical and linear arrows (coloured magenta) on the map, provide an indicative representation of strategic thinking in the Region in relation to the potential flow of energy, (between, demand/load centres, generators and the system at large), and the potential need for transmission planning in the Border Region.

Map 5.1 Indicative Map of Transmission Network Strengthening required within the Border Region



5.4.2.4 Existing Network

The transmission network in the North West of the Region, (mainly Donegal), is predominately at 110 kV, with very little 220 kV and no 400 kV networks available. There are two 110 kV circuits linking the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland transmission systems; Letterkenny to Strabane and Corraclassy-Enniskillen. These provide standby support between relatively weak parts of the two systems.

Sligo is supplied predominantly by the existing 110kV network which is fed from a 220kV bulk supply point at Flagford near Carrick on Shannon. A new 220kV line is presently being constructed from Flagford to a new 220kV station located approximately 12km south of Sligo town. This will provide additional reinforcement to the North West Region.

The Central Border Region which includes Counties Leitrim, Cavan and Monaghan is backboned by the existing 110kV network which is fed from 220kV bulk supply points at Flagford 220kV station and Louth 220kV station (located near Louth village).

To the east of the Region, County Louth is supplied from Louth 220kV station and a number of 110kV stations, which are linked into the meshed transmission grid, located throughout the county.

5.4.2.5 Key Developments in Transmission Network in Border Region Post 2004

The following key projects have been completed in the Border Region since the adoption of the 2004 Guidelines:-

- Completion of Srananagh 220kV station, located in east Sligo approximately 12km from Sligo town, and the linking into this station of the existing Cathleen's Fall – Sligo 110kV line;

- Corderry – Sligo 110kV Line and the construction of a new 110kV line between Srananagh and Sligo.

5.4.2.6 Planned Developments for the Transmission Network

As previously outlined, there is a well established relationship between economic growth and electricity consumption. As part of the economic recovery package, it is essential that this Region has a modern efficient transmission network that will allow it to compete with other regions in Ireland and throughout Europe, so that potential investors and employers are attracted to this Region. In order to provide this level of service, a number of key projects have been identified as critical to the future development of this Region. These are:

- Extension of the 220 kV network into Sligo;
- A 110 kV line reinforcement of the grid between Killybegs (Binbane station) and Letterkenny and Ballaghadreen (Tonroe station) and Castlebar;
- Further integration of the Donegal and Northern Ireland networks;
- A new 400 kV circuit is required from Woodland in Meath to Kingscourt in Cavan;
- A North-South Interconnector (400 kV) is required connecting Kingscourt in Cavan to Turleenan in Tyrone;
- Strengthening of power circuits between the North West region and the North East Region facilitating power flows;
- Reinforcement of 110 kV networks supplying Cavan and Monaghan;
- Upgrading about 240 km of the existing transmission network.

Where the above proposed projects have not gone through the full rigors of environmental assessment, they must be subject to the necessary environmental assessments required, to ensure protection of the natural environment prior to routes being finalised and agreed. Eirgrid are currently carrying out the first national Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in the history of the state on their Grid25 Strategy, and a series of regional environmental constraints studies on all proposed projects in parallel with Habitats Directive Assessment, under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. The mitigation measures that will emerge from the SEA process, will be an undertaking to put in place both regional constraints studies and procedures, to ensure that environmental considerations are part of all project and development activities. The purpose of such assessments is to ensure that the chosen route for the line is the most acceptable in environmental, economic and social terms.

5.4.2.7 ESB Infrastructural Projects in Border Region

In addition to the development of the transmission network, ESB Networks have set out a range of projects that are likely to be required within the counties of the Border Region, during the course of the next seven to ten years. These may be viewed on ESB Networks website. These projects are required to ensure a safe, reliable and adequate electricity supply in the Region. It should be noted, while they have been identified as being required, they will all be subject to a detailed ESB Networks internal appraisal process and relevant environmental assessments, before being granted the necessary approvals to proceed.

Energy Policy

- INFP23** Development plans should facilitate the provision of energy networks in principle, provided that it can be demonstrated that –
- the development is required in order to facilitate the provision or retention of significant economic or social infrastructure;

- the route proposed has been identified with due consideration for social, cultural and environmental impacts to include Habitats Directive Assessment; where required;
- the design is such that it will achieve least environmental impact consistent with not incurring excessive cost;
- where impacts are inevitable mitigation features have been included;
- where it can be shown the proposed development is consistent with international best practice with regard to materials and technologies that will ensure a safe, secure, reliable, economic and efficient and high quality network.

In considering facilities of this nature that traverse a number of counties, or that traverse one county in order to serve another, Planning Authorities should consider the proposal in light of the criteria outlined above. They should also treat the proposal as if it were required to service a development within the Planning Authority's own area of jurisdiction.

In the case of strategic infrastructure development under the PDA Act 2000-2006, it is important that planning authorities engage in early consultation and discussion with the TSO, on planned bulk transmission infrastructure projects as part of their roles as either competent authority or prescribed body.

5.5 Renewable Energy in the Border Region

The development of more sustainable, competitive, diverse and secure supplies of renewable energy generation to support economic and social development is a key priority for the Region. Considerable potential exists for the exploitation of renewable energy generation, particularly wind (including off shore), wave and tidal energy, along the western seaboard. Significant dividends can accrue from developing an appropriate renewable energy mix, such as combinations of wind, wave and tidal, to ensure consistency of supply.

The Border Region strongly supports the national targets for renewable energy and reducing energy consumption, and seeks to contribute to achieving these targets through the development of sustainable energy policies and practices. Such policies seek to:-

- ensure security of energy supply in support of social and economic development;
- develop sustainable supplies of energy at a cost that does not affect competitiveness;
- maximise the use of alternative energy technologies through an appropriate mix of renewable energy sources to ensure consistency of supply;
- promote cross border cooperation on energy matters;
- promote energy conservation through reduced consumption and increased efficiency;
- assist the development of regional, indigenous, sustainable energy enterprises;
- promote, develop and assist cross-border renewable energy initiatives

The Border Regional Authority, in partnership with Local Authorities, will develop an integrated Regional Energy Strategy on renewable energy generation, identifying an optimal mix of renewable energy sources and proposed locations for development, to ensure consistent and complementary development across the Border Region. The proposed strategy will align and comply with national and international policy directives, in particular, the EU Habitats and Birds Directive.

It is considered appropriate that a Regional Energy Strategy should include, and Local Authorities within the Region prioritise the following sectors:-

5.5.1. Wind Energy

The Border Region is ideally located to make significant contributions, through wind energy, to the revised targets for renewable energy generation (RES-E) of 40% with resulting economic benefits.

Local Authorities will provide landscape sensitivity analysis, in support of the regional strategy on renewable energy generation, to further refine locations suitable for development. All wind farm applications will be assessed on the full range of criteria identified in the Wind Farm Development Guidelines, published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

5.5.2. Wave and Tidal Energy

Local Authorities will promote and support the development of wave and tidal energy in appropriate locations, provided they are compliant with the appropriate planning and environment criteria and international directives. Tidal energy, though variable, is highly predictable. Tidal energy initiatives, including modelling and assessments, will be supported to encourage and facilitate the development of new technologies. Future development of this sector is likely to have economic benefits.

5.5.3 Hydro Energy

Local Authorities support the development of hydro energy in appropriate streams and rivers provided they are compliant with the appropriate planning and environment criteria and international directives.

5.5.4 Bio Energy

Local Authorities will support the implementation of the Bioenergy Action Plan for Ireland. Local Authorities will, on an ongoing basis, review policies in light of ongoing national and EU policy developments.

5.5.5 Renewable Energy Technology for Thermal Heat Generation

Local Authorities will encourage the use of renewable energy technology such as solar water heating, heat pumps and biomass boilers for the generation of thermal energy for use in heating systems. The enforcement of current and future Building Regulations Standards will support the installation of renewable energy technology in houses and building developments.

5.5.6 Micro Renewable Energy Technology

Local Authorities will encourage the development of Micro Renewable electrical generation technology such as Wind Turbines, Photo Voltaic, Micro Combined Heat and Power Plants.

5.5.7 Building Energy Directive

Local Authorities will support the implementation of aspects of the Building Energy Directive and Energy Labelling where applicable within their own building portfolio, and through obligations under Planning and Building Control.

5.5.8 National Energy Efficiency Action Plan

Local Authorities will implement aspects of the 'National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020' where applicable, and will take action to reduce energy consumption by 33% for 2020. Progress towards achieving this target will be assessed in 2011 and 2014.

5.5.9 Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future

Local Authorities will support the implementation of the ‘Smarter Travel-A Sustainable Transport Future’ to achieve reductions in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector.

5.5.10 Energy Agencies

Local Authorities will continue to support the work of the Local/Regional and National Energy Agencies.

Renewable Energy Policy

INFP24	Promote and support an optimal mix of renewable energy generation within the Region
INFP25	The BRA will prepare an Energy Strategy during the life of these Guidelines. Local authorities shall comply with the proposed integrated regional energy strategy on energy conservation and renewable energy generation
INFP26	Local Authorities should support and promote a move away from fossil-fuel energy production through investment in renewable energy and the creation of more ‘green collar jobs’

Renewable Energy Strategic Objectives

INFO7	Provide landscape sensitivity analysis, in support of the regional strategy on renewable energy generation, to further refine locations suitable for development;
INFO8	Develop a balanced portfolio of renewable technologies;
INFO9	Establish measures, targets and timeframes to reduce energy consumption and increase energy efficiency in line with national targets;
INFO10	Support and facilitate greater penetration of renewable technologies at residential, commercial and power generation levels, providing such initiatives are compliant with planning and environment criteria and international directives;
INFO11	Local Authorities will ensure that strategic goals for reducing energy demand and energy related emissions will contribute in a major way to achieving regional and national climate change targets.

5.6 Telecommunications

5.6.1 Introduction

Communication infrastructure networks have become a key economic and social infrastructure. The network infrastructure supports all economic sectors, provides universal access to public services, is crucial to the national and international exchange of goods and services, and acts as a main catalyst in changing economic interrelationships through rapid technological change. The rapid and continuous development of Information Communication Technologies (ICT), and the exponential growth in the use of the Internet as an increasingly important access gateway to international trade in goods and services, social networking interaction and the emerging convergence of main stream media broadcasting and mobile communication applications, are generating an ever growing demand from business, educational, media broadcasting and residential users for higher access speeds, more capacity and greater reliability and resilience. The provision of ubiquitous open access to high speed, high capacity broadband digital networks, is recognised in the Government's *“Framework for Sustainable Renewal Building Ireland's Smart Economy”*, as a key enabling infrastructure for the knowledge-intensive services and activities, on which future prosperity will increasingly depend.

The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) estimates that by 2025, a large proportion of Ireland's services will be traded over digital networks. Therefore, the significant importance of continuing to develop, improve, expand and extend the availability of high capacity high speed broadband digital networks, throughout the Region, to underpin economic growth and employment generation opportunities, cannot be underestimated.

Recent years have seen considerable progress achieved through national and EU co-funded projects, in addressing the broadband core network and international connectivity deficits, through the implementation of the Metropolitan Area Networks Schemes (MANS) 1 & 2.

Significant additional progress throughout the Border Region is further anticipated through the unfolding deployment of the "Kelvin Project" initiative, which is designed to bring direct international connectivity to 13 towns and cities, including Armagh, Ballymena, Belfast, Coleraine, Derry, Omagh, Portadown, Strabane, Letterkenny, Monaghan, Castleblayney, Dundalk and Drogheda, and via a connection to a trans-Atlantic submarine fibre optic cable that extends to terrestrial fibre optic cable networks connected to multiple international Points of Presence (PoPs) throughout Canada, USA, UK and mainland Europe on over 24,000 kilometres of network. This joint venture project between Department Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) (Northern Ireland), Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) (Republic of Ireland), and Hibernia Atlantic, seeks to provide world class international connectivity aimed at providing an attractive alternative location option to global companies, such as leading financial houses, exchange markets, service providers and media companies, who require super fast, high capacity, competitively priced resilient low latency bandwidth that avoids traditionally congested routes, such as around New York and London.

The potential significance for the Border Region of additional high-speed resilient infrastructure development beyond, and complementary to the Kelvin initiative, has been documented in initial feasibility work and is an issue which has gained considerable regional political interest and support North and South. This is an important consideration in exploring resources for complementary infrastructure development, capable of ensuring irreversible growth towards future competitiveness. Such additional complementary investment would ensure effective connectivity between evidenced and predicted growth areas of the Eastern Corridor, and the Atlantic Arc, and unlock their potential while providing a conclusively strong central connectivity on the island

5.6.2 State and EU funded broadband provision initiatives

In order to address poor broadband coverage, provision and speeds within the Region, State and EU funded initiative schemes such as the County & Group Broadband Scheme, BMW Small Communities Scheme and the Community Network Services (CNS) Project in Donegal, have been successfully implemented and found to be relatively effective, in extending the availability of broadband services to rural and remote communities throughout the Region, and have gone a long way in bridging the digital divide. The schemes are, to the most part, reliant on fixed wireless technologies, and while geographical coverage is extensive, there are inherent limitations entailed in the use of this type of technology that prevents 100% coverage.

The National Broadband Scheme (NBS) has been recently launched by DCENR to address the very remote rural communities, not previously included in state funded initiatives. This scheme will not, however, address areas where no broadband services exist in previously funded areas, or where there is no availability of suitable telephone line services in existing broadband enabled telephone exchange areas. Some areas are to be found in major towns and villages throughout the Region, and very often within relatively short distances of broadband enabled telephone exchanges due to poor line quality, shared carrier line provision and or excessive distance from the exchange. However, monetary limitations on the amount of funding and the limited scope in the level of service provision sought may act in the future to

curtail the ability of these schemes to adapt and satisfy the growing demands for higher speeds and capacity, particularly to support knowledge-based or media intensive service enterprises.

5.6.3 Land Based Telephony

Land based telephony is still by far the most utilised and available access to communication networks for traditional telephony, fax and broadband services. There has been a significant reduction over recent years in the level of investment in improving and upgrading the existing network, which has resulted in the quality, availability and level of services lagging behind our EU partners. This is particularly noticeable with regard to broadband, especially when comparisons are made with Northern Ireland where 100% broadband coverage is reputed to be available, and where faster higher services are readily available at much more competitive prices. Land based telephony provides the "last mile" connection to a significant majority of residential and business users, and connection issues continue to frustrate and hamper the roll out of essential broadband access to many households and SMEs. National efforts are urgently required to address these issues, by way of upgrading existing services or providing alternative access to communication services, through the provision of extensive publically owned access ducts and co-location facilities. Otherwise the anticipated progression to Next Generation Networks broadband services, on which the Government's future economic growth policies are substantially predicated, will be frustrated and doomed to lag behind our competitors.

5.6.4 Mobile Telephony

There has, and continues to be extensive development of mobile telephony services throughout the Region which is fast approaching 100% coverage. Mobile telephony is rapidly evolving to provide an extensive range of additional services in addition to the traditional voice services. The provision of mobile broadband service has been rapidly deployed throughout the Region, with extensive 3G coverage now available in all major towns and their immediate environs. The National Broadband Scheme (NBS) will be largely made available through mobile telephone network facilities and will result in improved services, in remote rural areas not previously adequately covered.

Telecommunications Policy

INFP27	Development Plans and Local Area Plans should facilitate open access to high speed and high capacity broadband digital networks that will enable the development of a smart economy within the Region
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Telecommunications Strategic Objectives

INFO12	Support and promote the repair and upgrading of the existing telephone network including the provision of improved broadband enabled individual line services to all subscribers;
INFO13	Support and promote the provision of open access vendor neutral ducting in all new developments;
INFO14	Support and promote the network enabling of all new build residential properties and the provision of open access co-located communication service connection and access facilities;
INFO15	Support the provision and inclusion of publically owned open access ducting in all public infrastructural projects;
INFO16	Support and promote the carrying out of integrated regionally planned telecommunication access provision to identify the existing deficiencies and inadequacies to address the servicing of future needs;

INFO17	Support and promote the extension of the availability of access to the MANS to small business and residential users through the provision improved access and lower connection and use costs;
INFO18	Support and facilitate the development of the National Broadband Scheme

5.7 Waste Management

The six counties in the Border Region are divided into different regions for the purposes of waste management services. There are three operational Waste Management Plans within the Border Regional Authority area, and all waste management facilities within the Region are outlined in Appendix 4. The Waste Management Plans operating within the Region are as follows:

5.7.1 North East Waste Management Plan

The North East Waste Management Region comprises of Cavan, Monaghan Louth and Meath Local Authorities. County Meath lies within the Mid East Regional Authority.

5.7.2 Connacht Waste Management Plan

The Connacht Waste Management Region comprises of six Local Authorities of County Galway and City Council as well as Leitrim, Mayo, Sligo and Roscommon County Councils.

Sligo and Leitrim are the only Local Authorities that fall within the remit of the Border Regional Authority. The remaining four Local Authorities are within the remit of the West Regional Authority.

5.7.3 Donegal Waste Management Plan

County Donegal is a stand alone region for the purposes of Waste Management Planning. The existing Donegal Waste Management Plan covers the period up to 2010. It is the intention of Donegal County Council to review the existing waste management plan in 2010.

All three waste management plans envisage the provision of a range of waste minimisation and waste disposal facilities. Waste Management Plans take precedence over County and Town Development Plans. It is important that these strategies are regularly reviewed and that they are both implemented and updated in line with changing technology and best practice.

The priorities for waste management in the Region can be summarised under the various headings outlined below.

5.7.4 Biological Treatment & Collection

It is the aim of all Waste Management Plans in the Region to develop biological treatment capacity for organic waste, sufficient to meet EU and National requirements. EU policy is driven by the landfill Directive and National Policy is governed by the National Biodegradable Waste Strategy.

In the North East Waste Management Plan, priority will be given to the diversion of municipal organic waste from landfill over the next waste plan period, through the introduction of 'brown bins' in areas of population of 1500 or more. The private waste collection companies will be required to implement this roll out, and will be monitored and regulated through the waste permitting system.

5.7.5 Sludge Management Planning

Sludge management planning and the implementation of Sludge Management Plans are of critical importance to all Regions. It is also important to highlight the fact that the management of public water and waste-water services is in a state of flux, with regard to acceptable management and maintenance models, and the extent to which it is relevant in terms of service contracts, their size and duration.

A myriad of discrete solutions along traditional functional boundaries is not necessarily the most sustainable solution with regard to the economies of scale, exclusivity, nor environmental considerations. Viable solutions in the context of the Water Framework Directive and other regulatory drivers, are more likely to be along catchment and regional lines than a series of localised isolated solutions.

The Connacht Region is characterised by the diversity of Local Authority size and nature. Geographically diversity is illustrated between Galway City and County, whereas population size diversity is typified by those of Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon (population < 60,000) and the Counties of Mayo and Galway (populations > 110,000).

5.7.6 Energy Recovery / Thermal Treatment

There is a requirement to provide an energy recovery / thermal treatment facility to service all areas within the Region in line with EU and National Policy. This is set out in each of the existing Waste Management Plans.

The only plans for an Energy Recovery / Thermal Treatment facility in The North East Region is at Carranstown Co.Meath – outside the Border Regional Area

The projected capacity requirement for a plant in the Connacht Region is in the order of c175,000.

5.7.7 Landfill Capacity

Landfill will continue to have a role in waste management throughout the Region and the country at large. This will diminish in time as sufficient Biological and Thermal treatment capacity within the Region develops, but there will always be a need for landfill capacity.

There is currently adequate landfill capacity in the North East Region with all three Border counties maintaining active landfills. Donegal County Council is running out of landfill capacity and must investigate future waste management options through the review of the Donegal Waste Management Plan.

5.7.8 Pre-Treatment

In the short to medium term, it will be necessary to address the issue of residual waste treatment in the absence of alternative options such as energy recovery / thermal treatment for both plans. There is an urgent requirement to reduce the biodegradable content of waste, prior to landfill, throughout the Border Region.

Waste Management Policy

INFP28	Facilitate the provision of waste management facilities identified as necessary in Regional Waste Management Plans through the planning system subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive
INFP29	Local Authorities within the Region should explore and develop waste management practices on an inter regional and on a cross border basis

5.8 Development Plan Implications

Key Requirements Emerging from SEA/HDA – See Appendices 5 & 6

Where a specific infrastructure proposal is outlined or considered within these Guidelines that may impact negatively on a site within the Natura 2000 Network, such a proposal must be assessed in accordance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, and specifically policies INFP1, ENVP4 and ENVP5 in these Guidelines. If adverse effects are likely, or in cases of doubt, the derogation steps of Article 6(4) will apply, but only in a case in which there are **Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) requiring a project to proceed, there are no less damaging alternative solutions, and compensatory measures have been identified that can be put in place.** It does not appear however, that any infrastructure proposal identified in these Guidelines or supported in these Guidelines, and that is not already in progress, is likely to fall into such a category.

Sustainable Transport Modes

Development Plans should be developed in unison with Integrated Land Use and Transportation Studies (ILUTS) for all key urban settlements within the Region.

Roads

Development Plans should make provision for the development of the Strategic Radial Corridors and Strategic Links identified in the guidelines. Integration of these routes with other transport modes is crucial, as part of a balanced transportation strategy.

Development Plans should also provide for the protection of the safety and capacity of the region's road network as identified in this document. The degree of protection afforded to any route should reflect its role and function, and not merely its designation.

Rail & Bus

Development Plans should support and accommodate the development of a rail link between the linked Gateway of Letterkenny/Derry and the longer term priority of the development of a rail link from Sligo to Letterkenny. New development must not compromise the expansion of existing rail corridors/lines within the Region.

Development Plans should make provision for bus corridors and the provision of bus facilities particularly within key settlements. Such provision should also be included in new road design. In major residential areas, planning permissions should make allowance for the accommodation of bus services along major distributor routes.

Ports and Airports

Development Plans should make provision for the appropriate development of Ports and Airports, where, they are compliant with all national plans and strategies and where relevant environmental assessments have been carried out.

Cycling and Walking

Throughout the Region, but particularly within the key settlements, a cycle and pedestrian network should be part established and developed in line with the Governments Smarter Travel Policy Document.

Water Services

Development Plans must incorporate all relevant land use issues outlined in the River Basin Management Plans within its jurisdiction. Development Plan and Development Management Sections must also incorporate details of Circular L6/09 in the provision of water services.

The provision of water and sewerage treatment facilities in all key settlements must be considered in conjunction with the priority projects as identified in Table 5.1. and the tables outlined in Appendix 3 and 4 of the Habitats Directive Assessment Report. The provision of these services must also be in line with the Assessment of Needs 2009 and the subsequent Water Services Investment Programme 2010 – 2012.

Major population growth and all forms of development will require the provision of water and waste-water facilities. The major centres identified for growth have, or will require, waste-water treatment systems that discharge to river systems. Many of these systems contain European Sites that would be vulnerable to inadequately treated waste-water discharges. Therefore, all policies and objectives in Development Plans that promote and accommodate development must be contingent on, and be stated to be contingent on, the provision of waste-water treatment systems with a capacity to produce waste water discharges of a standard that will not impact negatively on Natura 2000 sites.

Energy Infrastructure

Development Plans should facilitate the provision of all energy networks in compliance with policy INFP23 and all national plans and guidance.

In considering facilities of this nature that traverse a number of counties, or that traverse one county in order to serve another, Planning Authorities should consider the proposal in light of the policy outlined above. They should also treat the proposal as if it were required to service a development within the Planning Authority's own area of jurisdiction.

Renewable Energy

It is not the function of these Guidelines to set precise requirements for the provision of Renewable Energy. However, in general, favourable consideration should be given to such proposals provided that –

- the impact of the development on the landscape has been given due consideration in accordance with all National Guidelines on wind energy development or other such guidelines relating to renewable energy development;
- connection to the National grid has been taken into account and appropriate consent has been or is likely to be acquired.

In addition, Development Plans should identify the areas within which renewable energy proposals may be given favourable consideration subject to relevant environmental assessments. A common approach should be adopted between adjoining counties in making Development Plans so that the region, at large, benefits from such development. The development of a Renewable Energy Strategy for the Region will enhance the development of this sector.

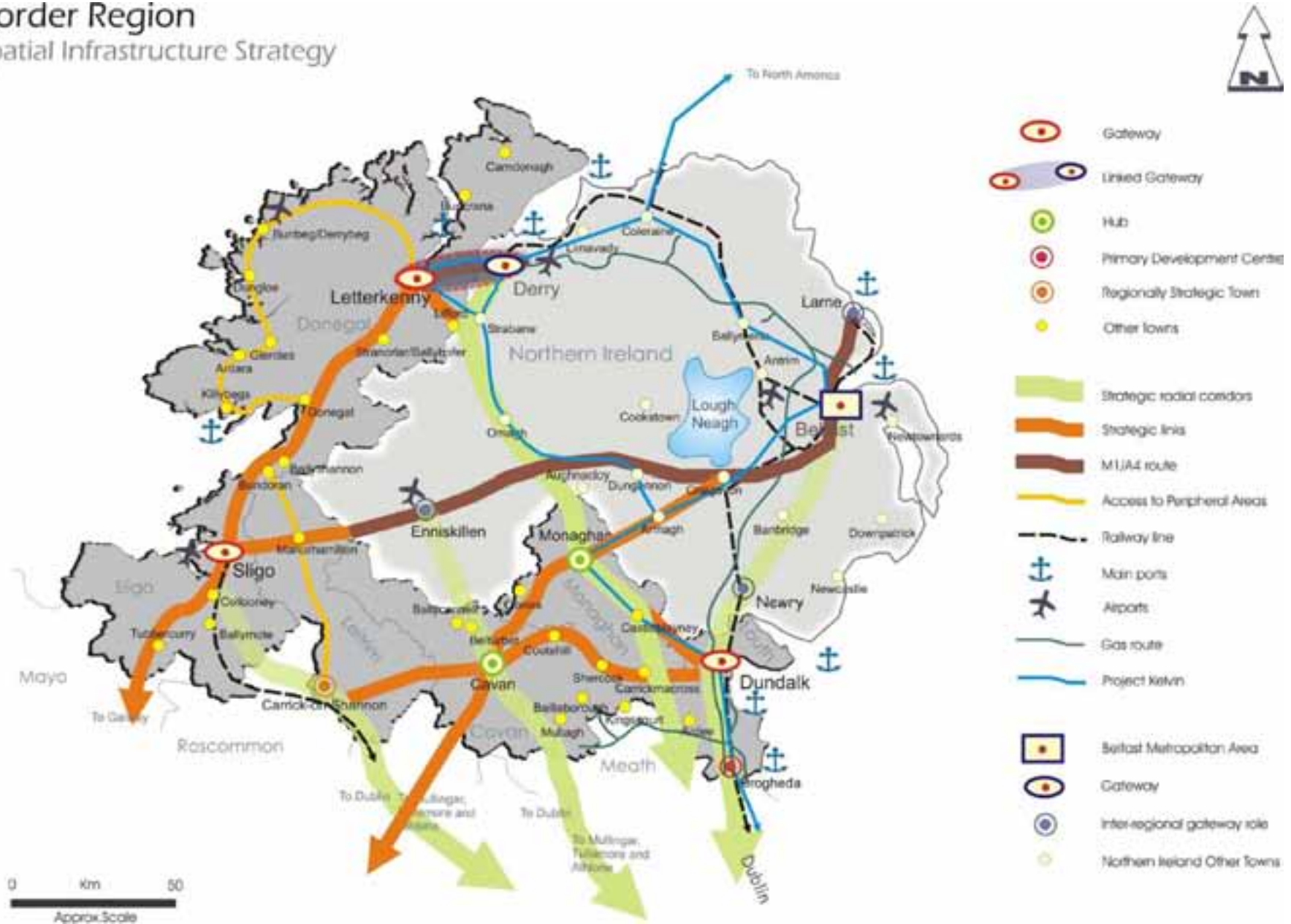
Telecommunications

Development Plans should facilitate the development of telecommunications within the Region. New development should not comprise existing networks. Sharing of services and sites should be encouraged and accommodated. Policies and objectives of Development Plans should incorporate all social, cultural, economic and environmental considerations in the accommodation of such facilities.

Waste Management

Development Plans must take account of all Waste Management Strategies, within and adjoining the Region. Plans should facilitate the provision of all types of waste facilities and should also make provision for changes in technology and new approaches to waste management.

Map 5.2 Spatial Infrastructure Strategy
Border Region
Spatial Infrastructure Strategy



Chapter 6 Environment and Amenities

6.1 Introduction

The environment within which we live must be protected, for present and future generations. The importance of a quality environment is one which is taken for granted in many regards, especially in the Border Region, where we are fortunate to enjoy many pristine aspects to our environment. The Border Region is well endowed with a rich and diverse range of man-made and natural resources, which must be protected and managed within the RPGs. Protection of the environment for future generations must be a cornerstone of the Guidelines.

At a time of rapid social and cultural change, the global environment has been under significant threat. Climate change is a serious threat to the environment in which we live. Our lifestyle choices, which are based on our environment, will be affected at many different levels throughout our society. While it may appear that many of the changes, required to counteract these issues, may be abstract and at a scale beyond this Region, there are many ways in which we, at a local level, can contribute to change. A key objective of these guidelines will, therefore, be to contribute to reducing the impact of global warming and climate change.

The more significant environmental issues which have been identified as part of the Strategic Environmental Appraisal include; settlement patterns, water quality, biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage, built heritage, transport, agriculture, tourism, afforestation, energy resources, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, flood risk, waste management and coastal management.

Achieving a good quality of life for the people who live, work or visit the Region, is considered to be a key objective of the Guidelines. Securing economic development and social equity, together with preserving and enhancing the urban and rural character of the Region, are closely associated with environmental issues. This section of the Guidelines will aim to identify the key environmental resources and issues in the Region and will set out a strategy for the protection and enhancement of the environment into the future.

The environment generally encompasses all natural resources and built structures. There are many policies, frameworks and programmes in place to deal with environmental matters, and these Guidelines do not attempt to reinvent these, but to draw on the frameworks already in place, and emphasise the issues which are most pertinent to this Region. New development brings with it a need for supporting infrastructure. Key environmental issues that arise include; water supply, treatment of waste water and transportation. Increased population growth in the Region is likely to give rise to an increase in car use, particularly where public transport and rail freight is not readily available. This can lead to negative impacts in terms of carbon emissions, air quality and human health.

The policy framework and objectives of the Regional Planning Guidelines may impact on the built and natural heritage of the Region, by identifying development opportunities, in areas which could influence the setting and intrinsic value of environmentally sensitive sites. Such sites within the Border Region include the network of Natura 2000 sites, catchment areas for Freshwater Pearl Mussel, and scenic landscapes including upland, coastal and waterway corridor landscapes. Environmental impacts may also arise in terms of increased access to sites of cultural and natural heritage, including archaeological landscapes and scenic landscapes. Many of the environmental issues referred to in this Chapter, have an inter-county, cross Regional and cross Border dimension. It is considered important that there is, where appropriate, a high level of co-operation, integration, and consistency in the approach, by all Authorities and Agencies concerned with the management of the Environment, particularly at the making of County and Local Area Development Plans.

The key aim of the Guidelines is to provide a good quality of life for the Regions population, through ensuring high quality residential, recreational and working environments, and improving water quality. The following is a list of those priority areas for the environment and heritage over the coming years:

- the continued protection, management and enhancement of natural heritage, built heritage and environmental resources;
- a revised approach to policy and objective formulation structured around compliance with existing and emerging European and national legislation, including flood protection measures, biodiversity management, improving water quality status and the identification and management of coastal management zones;
- continued development and promotion of areas of heritage value which have importance to the Region, county or locality, including sourcing appropriate resources and development of management plans, for long term and sustainable investment and monitoring;
- ensuring that council boundaries do not result in fragmentation of policy implementation;
- re-assessment of the way in which open spaces are managed, linked and developed, and the potential for integrating additional functions in that reassessment.

This Chapter should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Spatial Strategy Map available at the end of this section.

6.2 Climate Change

Climate change is among the greatest challenges of our time. The debate is no longer about whether climate change is happening; we now know that it is. The recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), reinforces our understanding of the scale of action required. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a global priority and requires committed international action and cooperation. As a global community we need to reach a collective view on how to share the burden of the challenges ahead. The transition to a low-carbon world is unavoidable.

According to the IPCC, warming of the climate system is unequivocal (IPCC, 2007). The current scientific consensus is that most of the warming observed since the mid 20th century is very likely due to observed increases in atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases. In the absence of strict greenhouse gas emissions controls, continued emissions at, or above current rates, will result in further warming of the climate system over the present century, with consequent changes in precipitation patterns, sea level and the frequency of occurrence of extreme events. Even if emissions of greenhouse gases were stabilised at year 2000 levels, continued warming of the climate system would be expected (IPCC, 2007). Significant uncertainties still exist at projecting the regional impacts of climate change - such uncertainties require adaptive decision making strategies where robustness, as opposed to optimisation, is central in the decision making process.

The economic cost associated with inaction, is likely to significantly outweigh the cost associated with strong, early action to reduce emissions through mitigation (Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, 2006). Early transition to a low carbon economy will reap benefits through increased security of energy supply and stability of price.

6.2.1 National Obligations

Ireland's contribution to the EU legally binding emissions targets, established under the Kyoto Protocol, is to limit its growth in greenhouse gas emissions to 13% (+13%) above 1990 levels, over the 2008-2012 commitment period. As part of the EU Commission's Energy and Climate Package, two binding targets are currently set for Ireland:

- To deliver a 20% reduction, relative to 2005 levels, in greenhouse gas emissions – this target is to be reached by 2020 and excludes the sectors covered by the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)
- To increase the use of renewable energy sources, such as wind and wave power, to 16%

6.2.2 National Climate Change Strategy 2007– 2012

The National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 builds on measures established under the first National Climate Change Strategy (2000), and provides a framework for achieving emissions reductions. Its purpose is:

- to show clearly the measures by which Ireland will meet its 2008-2012 Kyoto Protocol commitment; and
- to show how these measures position us for the post-2012 period, and to identify the areas in which further measures are being researched and developed;
- to take a long term view, having regard to likely future commitments and the economic imperative for action, and,
- the promotion of sustainable development including the integration of climate change considerations into all policy areas.

Significant uncertainties exist with regards to projecting climate change at the local and regional scale. Therefore, robust adaptation strategies are required to reduce Ireland's vulnerability to climate change. Adaptation will also enhance the potential to capture any positive return from projected changes in the climate system.

Over the course of the present century, temperatures are projected to increase in all seasons across Ireland. These findings are consistent across results from a number of national climate modelling centres. Models suggest an increase in precipitation during the winter months in Ireland, with reductions in precipitation projected to occur during the summer months. Changes in precipitation intensity, with a tendency towards more intense precipitation events are likely. Changes in extremes, while less certain, are also likely. If realised, such projections are likely to increase flood risk during both winter and summer months, and this trend was very much apparent in November 2009 when the west coast of Ireland experienced unprecedented flood levels. Sea level is also projected to rise by 0.18 – 0.59 metres by 2090-2099, relative to 1980-1999 levels. (IPCC, 2007). These projections do not include uncertainties in climate-carbon feedbacks, nor do they include the full effects of changes in ice sheet flow. As a result, larger values of future sea level rise cannot be excluded (IPCC, 2007). In coastal communities, extreme water levels associated with Atlantic depressions, coupled with rising sea levels, may result in increased vulnerability to flooding over the present century.

Local Authorities are empowered to implement adaptation initiatives in relation to their development plans. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 - 2007, planning authorities can regulate, restrict or control development, in areas at risk of flooding. Planning authorities should provide for the integration of climate change considerations, including uncertainties in climate projections, into development plans. Chapter 8 of these Guidelines outlines a Regional Flood Risk Appraisal (RFRA) for the Region, and provides detailed guidance and direction for Local Authorities in dealing with flood risk in County and Town Development Plans.

Climate Change Policy

ENVP1	Support the Implementation of National Climate Strategy 2007-2012;
ENVP2	Manage population growth through the proper planning and sustainable development of the Region;
ENVP3	Reduce demands on non – renewable resources and promote the use of sustainable resources

Climate Change Strategic Objective

ENVO1	Expand the use of geological and soil mapping, to inform planning decisions relating to settlement, flooding, food production value and carbon sequestration, to identify prime agricultural lands (for food production), degraded/contaminated lands (which may have implications for water quality, health, fauna), and those which are essential for habitat protection, or have geological significance
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6.3 Natural Heritage

6.3.1 Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety and number of every living thing on earth. This includes humans, animals, birds, plants and all the other small creatures. Biodiversity is important for its economic, medicinal, social and environmental value to humans, and also for its value in itself. Throughout the island of Ireland there has been a decline in many of the native species through habitat loss, competition, development and agriculture. It is important that we help preserve and encourage biodiversity both for present and future generations.

There are many impacts on the biodiversity of an area, all of which are experienced in this Region. Developments associated with agricultural activities, wind-farms, afforestation, urban development and certain infrastructural works within, or close to, areas of ecologically sensitive sites, must be carefully planned and managed. Wastewater discharges, runoff from agriculture, leachate from landfills and contaminated sites, and nutrient input from forestry, can all have detrimental effects on water quality, resulting in subsequent impacts to biodiversity. Certain development works on shorelines and floodplains, and the associated infilling of wetlands, are a potential environmental problem within the Region. Invasive non-native plant and animal species are one of the greatest threats to the biodiversity of the Region.

6.3.2 National Obligations

The National Biodiversity Plan sets out a 5 year action plan, which calls for the full and effective integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into all sectors. This is translated in local biodiversity strategies. There are a number of measures of protection and designations for our natural heritage and biodiversity. Natura 2000 Sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's), and Special Protection Areas (SPA's). The principle legal framework for the conservation of wildlife is contained in the European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the Wildlife Act 1976, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and part XIII of the Planning and Development Act 2000- 2007. The objectives of this European and national legislation are to provide for the protection and conservation of the flora and fauna in the habitats in which they occur. Notwithstanding the need to manage a wide range of habitats and species of acknowledged importance, it is considered that the management of Natura 2000 sites and Natural Heritage Areas located within the Region is of primary importance.

SACs are the prime wildlife areas in Ireland that are also considered extremely important in a European context. Their selection and designation occurs through the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), which was transposed into Irish law in the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997. The directive lists certain habitats and species for which Ireland must designate SACs for their protection. Irish species that must be afforded protection include, salmon, bottle-nosed dolphin, otter and Killarney fern. Some habitats are deemed 'priority' and have greater requirements for designation of sites and protection.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are sites that are internationally important for birds, and the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) is the primary mechanism for their designation. The Directive provides for listed rare and vulnerable species like the Whooper Swan, Peregrine Falcon and Corncrake. It also provides for

regularly occurring migratory species such as geese and waders, as well as wetlands of international importance for migratory birds.

Areas that are important nationally have been proposed as Natural Heritage Areas (NHA). Under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000), NHAs will be legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed. Some NHAs are also designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or as Special Protection Areas (SPAs). All European and National designations are outlined in the Environmental Spatial Strategy, which may be viewed at the end of this Chapter.

6.3.3 Regional Implications

The policies and objectives of the Regional Planning Guidelines will be assessed through a Habitats Directive Assessment, under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, to ensure that in the implementation of the Guidelines, there will be no negative impact on the network of Natura 2000 sites, both within and directly adjoining the Border Region.

Natural Heritage Policy

ENVP4	All development plans and projects within the Border Region which would be likely, (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects), to give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts, on the integrity on any Natura 2000 sites, having regard to their conservation objectives, shall not be permitted on the basis of these guidelines unless imperative reasons of overriding public interest can be established, and there are no feasible alternative solutions
ENVP5	All development plans and projects within the Border Region shall conserve and protect the ecological integrity of designated sites of international and national importance, and sites proposed for designation, in particular, European sites (including Natura 2000 sites), and Ramsar sites, NHAs and statutory reserves.
ENVP6	Local Authorities shall implement the National Biodiversity Plan, through the preparation and adoption of local biodiversity action plans as part of integrated local heritage plans, as the conservation of biodiversity is an essential component of sustainable development.

Natural Heritage Strategic Objectives

ENVO2	Continued development and renewal of Local Authority Heritage Plans in each Council area, working with all key stakeholders to identify and deliver a range of actions and programmes, to support heritage in the Council area;
ENVO3	Development and delivery of Bio-Diversity Action Plans in each Council area;
ENVO4	To protect important individual or groups of trees, through greater use of Tree Preservation Orders and the undertaking of an inventory of the Council area where funding allows
ENVO5	Through development plans, identify and protect ecological networks linking protected and designated important sites within each council area, in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive

6.4 Landscape

Landscape and ecology represent significant resources that each generation is charged with conserving and safeguarding for future generations. Most Local Authorities in the Border Region have undertaken landscape character assessments. Some of these policy frameworks focus primarily on the natural

landscape, while others deal extensively with both the natural and human-made environments, and the interaction and dynamics between them. By cataloguing and valorising the wealth of heritage artefacts and amenities in each community, such frameworks or plans can serve to involve local communities in promoting sustainable approaches to settlement and the strengthening of social capital. Specifically, Village Design Statements (VDSs), as promoted by the Heritage Council in Ireland, represent a useful tool in promoting conservation and optimising the development potential of the natural and built heritage.

Existing pressures on landscape are primarily related to impacts on sensitive views, resulting from the cumulative impacts arising from inappropriate siting and design of development works. Throughout the Region there is inconsistency in the application and implementation of planning policy. The cumulative impact of insensitive development has a significant impact on the visual amenity and rural character of the Region. This issue clearly has a cross border and inter-county dimension. Anecdotal evidence suggests that more stringent controls on one-off housing within Northern Ireland, has led to increased development pressure in some rural areas of this Region, particularly evident in Donegal. Pressures on our landscape also come from other forms of development, in addition to one-off housing in the countryside.

There is a lack of uniformity between counties within, and adjoining the Region in terms of the approach to the designation of landscapes and protected views, which tends to lead to inconsistency in their management. A more uniform inter-county and cross border approach to the management of landscapes and protected views, would better secure their integrity and provide for the better management. The Border Region is well positioned to play a leading role in the promotion of ecological and landscape conservation.

Mixed species in forestry plantations, with an emphasis on native hardwoods, will enhance the natural landscape, promote biodiversity and absorb toxins from the atmosphere. Local Authorities and the forestry service need to enforce such best practice going forward. The preservation of bog-lands is important not just from a landscape and cultural heritage perspective, but also because they represent very significant carbon sinks, and have, therefore, a vital role to play in redressing climate change. This is most relevant in County Donegal, which contains Ireland's largest tracts of both Atlantic Blanket Bog and Mountain Blanket Bog. Areas of North Leitrim, such as Thur Mountain and parts of West Cavan, have already been identified by the National Parks and Wildlife Service as being significant ecologically, and these locations have to be priority in conservation terms.

Landscape Policy

ENVP7	Protect and manage the landscape of the Region;
ENVP8	Local Authorities shall collaborate with adjoining planning authorities so that all development plan policies are consistent in the protection and management of landscape

Landscape Strategic Objectives

ENVO6	Adopt policies and measures in County Development Plans to protect, manage and plan landscapes through the provision of Landscape Classification and Character Assessments, in accordance with adopted European (and contemporary National) Landscape Guidance Documents such as 'Guidelines for the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention, February 2008'
ENVO7	Inclusion of policies in Development Plans to protect important views and prospects and special amenity areas to facilitate passive enjoyment of the heritage of the landscape.

6.5 Water

Water is a resource that is often taken for granted. Scarcity and misuse of fresh water pose a serious and growing threat to sustainable development, and protection of the environment. Human health and welfare, food security, industrial development and the ecosystems on which they depend, are all at risk, unless water resources are managed more effectively in the present decade, and beyond, than they have been in the past. Effective management of water resources demands a holistic approach, linking social and economic development with protection of natural ecosystems.

The main pressures on surface and groundwater quality within the Region are point and diffuse, physical modifications, climate change and other local issues. Point and diffuse sources include wastewater from urban and rural developments. Water bodies that depend on a small catchment are particularly vulnerable to pollution and as such the protection of water quality is of significant importance. Inputs of nutrients, namely phosphorous and nitrogen, present one of the most significant risks to water quality within the Region. The protection of sources of drinking water, the protection of bathing waters and the protection of fishing stocks, is of particular concern and must be a priority within the Region. The protection and improvement of water quality crosses a number of environmental topic areas including health and biodiversity, and is a major environmental concern. The integration of the aims and objectives of the River Basin District Management Plans into the RPG's is a key consideration in terms of securing good water quality standards within the Region. Through the Programmes of Measures (POMs) in River Basin Management Plans, the Water Framework Directive will impose significant requirements for the protection of water bodies within the Region. It marks a new departure in the area of water resource management and aims to manage water resource quality in an integrated way. This will require a considerable amount of co-ordination of the activities of local Planning Authorities.

Responsibility for the implementation of river basin management plans lies with the EPA and Local Authorities. However, other public authorities are required to exercise their functions in accordance with the adopted river basin management plans. This will impact on several core public authority functions, including spatial and land use planning, transportation, energy demands, conservation measures for Natura 2000 sites, water service strategic planning (such as the water service investment programme and rural water programmes), pollution reduction plans/programmes, waste management, tourism and recreation. This raises new challenges in relation to plan and policy development and implementation.

The formulation of planning policy, in all development plans and local area plans, is now obligated to ensure that any development is managed through provision of adequate wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure, and that planned growth matches the ability to service such increases. The provision of adequate wastewater, foul drainage and surface water infrastructure, in advance of increased loading from development, is essential to complying with the Water Framework Directive. Additionally, avoidance and controlling of particular types of development in certain locations may also be necessary though Plan policy and objectives. Development management sections within Local Authorities must place emphasis on SuDS and water conservation measures, flood risk assessment, surface water run off, attenuation and use of permeable materials in all new developments.

Aquifers provide another major source of water within the Region. This resource is and has been demonstrated to be vulnerable to pollution and excessive abstraction. It is important that aquifers are protected against these threats, and that a common approach to their protection is developed within the Region. In addition, as some major aquifers cross county and regional boundaries, it is important that impacts of developments in one county or region have regard to the impacts on the aquifer in other counties or regions. Local Authorities should therefore, develop agreed protocols for the protection of aquifers and should also develop common policies for cross boundary aquifers. Waste discharges from municipal wastewater treatment plants and certain agricultural activities, particularly slurry spreading and afforestation, is a significant pressure on water quality and hence public health.

The cumulative impact of one-off housing in the countryside and rural housing clusters that are served by wastewater treatment systems, are a significant risk to water quality. This is an issue that applies across the Region. Additional homes mean the spread of urban areas and an increase in rural housing, with the associated threat of water pollution from a proliferation of wastewater treatment plants. This is of particular concern where ground conditions are poor and where rural housing is located within environmentally sensitive areas. Development should be located where the necessary sewage infrastructure is available, or can be provided at affordable cost and without environmental harm

Water Policy

ENVP9	To ensure alignment between the core objectives of the Water Framework Directive, (including River Basin Management Plans and POMS and Fresh Water Pearl Mussel Sub-Basin Management Plans pertaining to the Border Region) and other related plans such as County Development Plans and related Local Area Plans; Habitat and Species Protection Plans under the Habitats Directive, Water Services Investment Programme, Nitrates Action Programme; and Flood Management Plans.
ENVP10	Local Authorities shall prioritise, and aim to comply with, the recommendations set out in the EPA Report 2009, Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland for Population Equivalents Greater than 500 Persons – A Report for the Years 2006 and 2007
ENVP11	Local Authorities shall prioritise, and aim to comply with, the recommendations set in the EPA Report 2009, The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland – A Report for the Years 2007 and 2008.

Water Strategic Objectives

ENVO8	Local Authorities must incorporate the issues from the River Basin Management Plans and all action measures set out in Shell Fish Water Protection Measures within their jurisdiction, into the plan making process, so that the implications of development on water quality is a key driver in identification of suitable locations for new development;
ENVO9	Development Management objectives and guidance places strong emphasis on the need for Sustainable Drainage Systems and water management to reduce both flood risk, overflows and the washing of pollutants from surface areas into receiving waters;
ENVO10	Areas of good and poor ecological status in the River Basin Management Plans should be identified in all Development Plans and specific policies developed to protect their status, including restrictions on types of development which impact on water quality;
ENVO11	Include ground water protection measures in Development and Local Area Plans in accordance with consultation with the DEHLG, EPA, Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) and any other relevant licensing bodies;
ENVO12	Plans and projects that have the potential to negatively impact on Natura 2000 sites will be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA), in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and in accordance with best practice and guidance

6.6 Built Heritage

6.6.1 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeology is the study of past societies, through the material remains left by those societies and the evidence of their environment. All remains and objects and any other traces of humankind from past times are considered elements of the archaeological heritage. The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, requires that appropriate consideration is given to archaeological issues at all stages of the planning and development process. This is also reflected in national legislation. Local

Authorities need to incorporate measures to manage and protect archaeological heritage through Development Plans.

The core objective of the National Heritage Plan (NHP) (2002) is to protect our heritage. Specifically in regard to archaeological heritage, the 'Framework and Principles for the protection of the archaeological heritage' document (1999), sets out the archaeological policies and principles that should be applied by all bodies, when undertaking or authorising development.

Any monuments that are National Monuments in State ownership or guardianship, and monuments subject to Preservation Orders, should be identified and zones of visual amenity defined for them.

An issue for rural areas has been the ongoing and gradual decline in archaeological monuments in the countryside and degradation of field monuments. This is an issue that should be examined regarding both policies and actions of County Development and Heritage Plans, to both improve protection and develop new management strategies to ensure their preservation.

6.6.2 Architectural Heritage

Built Heritage covers the area of 'tangible' Heritage which previous generations of Irish people have made, built and handed down to us. Products, such as Stately Homes, Historic Houses, pre-Christian / Celtic / Medieval Sites & Attractions and Gardens are all included within this area, in addition to the more modern centres for interpreting these sites, such as Heritage Centres, Museums, Historic Towns & Interpretive Centres. The built environment, and its architecture, can have aesthetic merits, cultural significance, civic or social importance and provide a timeline of history. Policies and objectives to protect and enhance protected structures, conservation areas and their settings, vistas and important viewpoints should be protected in all County Development Plans and Local Area Plans. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) list of buildings should be used as a resource to identify structures worthy of being placed on the Record of Protected Structures.

The Designation of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's), has created a legislative tool to enable places to be recognised and valued. Improved protection for ACA'S and for individual vernacular buildings, can be achieved through proper appraisals to identify and explain their particular qualities/character, and such appraisal results can input into policies to promote and strengthen that character in plans and design frameworks. In considering ACA policies, it is important to consider the cumulative impact of development and the incremental damage caused by in-appropriate development. The sympathetic maintenance, adaptation and re-use, should continue to be promoted and supported by Local Authorities, through publication of guides, running of courses and policy direction. A degree of flexibility, particularly in relation to reuse, of disused/underutilised buildings that are protected structures or of merit, should be applied regarding the manner in which it is redeveloped.

It is also important to continue to strengthen the built heritage policies and objectives for rural and isolated sites. Councils can play an active role in supporting recognition of vernacular building patterns, materials and built forms.

Changes to agricultural practice and the rural economy, has seen many traditional building and smaller houses fall into disuse. Their loss as a testament to the history, hard work, skills of rural communities of the past, and of their core value as vernacular buildings in the landscape, needs to be avoided and opportunities for their preservation sought.

Built Heritage Policy

ENVP12	To ensure that all aspects of the built heritage including archaeological, industrial, and architectural heritage, are suitably protected, enhanced, sensitively reused/ integrated into new development works and incorporated in development plans, records of protected structures, heritage plans and site specific projects & developments.
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Built Heritage Strategic Objectives

ENVO13	Protect all national sites and monuments identified on the national record and also all other archaeological sites that emerge through investigative or construction works through the development plan and management process and in cooperation with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government;
ENVO14	Adopt development plan policies and objectives to manage, protect, enhance, and/or sensitively integrate, where appropriate, all areas of heritage, as defined within the Heritage Act;
ENVO15	Carry out thematic heritage audits, in order to inform policy and decision making in the planning process and where appropriate, inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures;
ENVO16	Continue to protect through development plan policy and development management decisions, Architectural Conservation Areas, protected structures and vernacular buildings;
ENVO17	Promote, where appropriate, settlement identity through traditional plot sizes, street patterns, street furniture and building scales in the development of towns, villages and clusters;
ENVO18	Continue to provide Local Authority grant assistance to individuals in relation to specific conservation projects, where practical;
ENVO19	Where appropriate, promote sensitive retrofitting of the established building stock;
ENVO20	Improve the appearance and character of areas with particular townscape character by actively protecting their distinctive identities;
ENVO21	Seek protection, enhancement and sensitive integration/re-use, as may be appropriate of heritage transport corridors, including rail, road and water corridors, to ensure their long term future and their role in relation to access provision, tourism development, biodiversity space and development buffers;
ENVO22	Undertake research to identify key historic landscapes within Council areas which merit protection and support through policies and objectives in Development Plans.

6.7 Amenities and Recreation

The importance of recreation and the amenities necessary to provide a good quality of life should not be underestimated. The Regional Planning Guidelines must facilitate access to opportunities for recreational activities, both outdoor and indoor, including cultural and sporting activities. Access to the countryside should be encouraged and accommodated, through a collaborative approach that respects the rights of landowners and their property and the desire of those wishing to enjoy the healthy pursuit of walking, rambling and mountain climbing.

A number of long-distance walking routes exist throughout the Region. These long-distance walks, together with local walks, provide important access networks, which are an important recreational resource and should be protected. In addition, where potential routes exist they should be protected and enhanced. Development plans should include policies to protect the integrity of these routes, and should take the impact of any proposed development on these routes into account when considering applications for permission for developments in their vicinity.

Although the Border Region is rich in natural resources and is predominantly rural, with a low population density, there is a lack of structured amenities in our towns, villages and countryside, especially following the level of development we have experienced in recent years. It is now critical that County and Town Development Plans ensure that areas are retrofitted for amenities at local level. Any new regional facilities should generally be provided within the Gateways, Hubs and regionally significant towns. Specific sites should be reserved for these regional facilities through the County Development Plans.

There are a number of particular needs which should be addressed at local level and they include:

- Extending and enhancing the open space network;
- the enhancing of the setting of features of heritage interest;
- improved access to the up-lands, coast, river valleys, canals and other areas of natural amenity;
- Securing the reclamation of derelict and contaminated land;
- providing a setting for sporting facilities;
- provision of formal open space in urban and rural areas;
- improving access to the countryside for informal recreation such as cycling, walking and horse riding.

The Regional Planning Guidelines support these local level initiatives and in addition, particular regional objectives, which are set out below.

Recreation and Amenities Policy

ENVP13	To protect and enhance the natural environment and to recognise the economic, social, environmental and physical value and benefits of green spaces in County, Town and Local Area Plans
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Recreation and Amenities Strategic Objectives

ENVO23	Support the co-ordination of development and design guidelines and development control standards within the Region (Cross-border co-operation will also be required on this issue).
ENVO24	Ensure that the future provision of residential developments, or mixed use schemes with a residential element, should be consistent with the DEHLG Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas.
ENVO25	Support the retrofit of recreation, amenities and facilities in our towns, villages and rural areas;
ENVO26	Encourage the promotion of natural wildlife spaces/corridors within existing urban areas;
EVNO27	Support and promote an inter-regional and collaborative approach to the development of access to the countryside;
ENVO28	Development Plans and Local Area Plans should support and protect the rights of landowners and rights of way throughout the Region

6.8 Coastal Management

Marine environments globally experience increasing pressure from population growth along the coast; infrastructural and recreational development; the necessary building of flood defences and pollution from agricultural and industrial activities in-land.

Within the defined coastal zone, the emphasis will be on the need to: respect the changing physical nature of the coastline. For example,

- the risks of erosion and land instability and changes to the intertidal zone,
- the risk of flooding and the need to protect coast through sea defences;
- to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and seascape and its biodiversity, historic and archaeological features;
- to restrict the development of undeveloped sections of the coastal zone to essential marine and coastal activities, and only where such development would not compromise environmental protection objectives.

Coastal Zone Management is an innovative approach involving maximum public participation in the preparation of the plan, working for consensus with the local community and employing conflict resolution techniques. A regional approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is supported by the NSS and recommended by the EU. A formal ICZM strategy has not been developed in this country. However, there are on-going activities that are exploring mechanisms to implement the principles of ICZM in Ireland - most notably through involvement in EU research projects such as - COREPOINT, ENCORA and SPICOSA.

The aim of the European Union's ambitious Marine Strategy Framework Directive (adopted in June 2008), is to protect more effectively the marine environment across Europe. It aims to achieve good environmental status of the EU's marine waters by 2021 and to protect the resource base, upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive constitutes the vital environmental component of the Union's future maritime policy, designed to achieve the full economic potential of oceans and seas, in harmony with the marine environment. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive establishes European Marine Regions on the basis of geographical and environmental criteria. Each Member State - cooperating with other Member States and non-EU countries within a marine region - are required to develop strategies for their marine waters.

The east coast of Ireland is relatively low lying. One of the main flooding concerns is the potential effects on low lying coastal habitats and areas, as rising sea levels, more severe storms and tidal surges, place these areas at significant risk. Regardless of the uncertainty surrounding the accuracy of climate and sea level change, an increase in the scale and frequency of surge events will potentially lead to damage to coastal habitats such as dunes, wetlands and estuaries. In addition to coastal flooding and loss of coastline, saline inundation can have negative affects on agricultural land, result in the degradation of habitats and the loss of species. Coastal erosion and flooding can lead to loss of coastal archaeology and sites of architectural or tourism importance. Precautionary approaches should be taken including the creation of buffer zones to restrict development within areas of high risk erosion, predicted sea level increase or high coastal flooding risk, and a full exploration of the issues through the preparation of Coastal Zone Management Plans with Local Authorities, state bodies and communities working together.

Coastal Policy

ENVP14 Promote and support the development of Integrated Coastal Zone Management with all coastal Local Authorities in the Border Region so that future Development Plans may be guided in relation to the management of coastal areas

Coastal Strategic Objectives

ENVO29 Incorporate coastal zone management into relevant County, Town and Local Area Plans
ENVO30 Development plans should respect and accommodate the changing physical nature of the coastline including the risks of erosion and land instability, changes to the intertidal zone, the risk from flooding

ENVO31	Ensure the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and seascape, biodiversity, historic and archaeological features and restrict the development of the undeveloped sections of the coastal zone
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Cross Border Collaboration in Environmental Management

ENVP15	Planning Authorities shall consult and seek to collaborate with the Northern Ireland Environmental Agency so that Development Plans adopt a joint approach towards the management of the environment and the provision of infrastructure, community services and facilities.
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6.9 Development Plan Implications

Key Requirements Emerging from SEA/HDA – See Appendices 5 & 6

As previously noted in these Guidelines, the requirements of the Habitats Directive will be critical in protecting the Natura 2000 Network within the Region. While all Natura 2000 sites are of key importance, a number have particular importance as they contain species that are of particular relevance as indicators of environmental quality.

A key species in this regard, are Fresh Water Pearl Mussel sites which are outlined in Table 4.21 of the Habitats Directive Assessment Report. All Local authorities, and in particular, Donegal County Council, must take particular care that activities permitted within their areas do not pose a threat to species such as the Pearl Mussel, whether they are in-situ or ex-situ. Where a potential or negative impact is identified, the development must be mitigated or, where that is not possible, must not be proceed unless the procedure relating to developments of Overriding National Importance has been completed.

The Water Framework Directive will impose significant requirements for the protection of water bodies. This will require a considerable co-ordination between local authorities. The region is covered by five different River Basin Districts therefore careful co-ordination between Planning Authorities will be required, in order to meet the Requirements of the Directive.

Climate Change

Climate change is increasingly having an influence on our lives in terms of our weather i.e. more frequent and intense rainfall events at different times of the year, resulting in flash flooding. Development Plans must incorporate climate change into environmental policies and objectives and mitigate against its impact, both on the environment and on our lives.

Natural Heritage

(see also Key Requirements Emerging from SEA/HDA above)

Development Plans should incorporate policies and objectives that protects biodiversity of the Region and all National Designations such as pNHAs, Ramsar sites and statutory reserves.

Landscape

Development Plans should incorporate policies and objectives which protect and manage the landscape of the Region, both within, and outside their jurisdiction. Planning Authorities shall collaborate with adjoining authorities in this regard.

A common approach to landscape management should be adopted throughout the Region. This approach should –

- Ensure that the quality and character of landscape areas are identified;

- Ensure a common designation and description for areas that require protection;
- Ensure that common policies are applied to areas that require protection.

This approach should also identify the nature and scale of development that would be permitted within areas of different designations.

Water

(See also Water Services Section in Chapter 5 and Development Plan Implications)

Development Plans must be consistent with the policies and objectives outlined in these Guidelines. Having regard to the Water Framework Directive, Local Authorities should ensure that common approaches are taken to the protection of surface and ground water. These approaches should ensure, inter alia, that –

- The impact of development on water bodies outside the jurisdiction of the individual authorities are considered when decisions on discharges and water extraction are being made;
- Development do not interfere with the attainment of the standards required by the Water Framework Directive;
- Joint actions are taken to positively address the attainment of the standards required by the Water Framework Directive
- Common approaches to the management of the impacts of land drainage are adopted.

When the River Basin Management Plans are operational, the requirements of those plans will apply to the Regional Planning Guidelines and associated development plans.

Built Heritage

Development Plans should include common approaches to the conservation of protected structures and to the implementation of the Protected Structure elements of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Local Authorities shall collaborate with each other and with the GSI in identifying and protecting geological sites of importance – see GSI submission in Environmental Report

Amenities and Recreation

Local Authorities should ensure that Development Plans make adequate provision of zoned lands to provide and accommodate for, both formal and informal open space, and amenities that will provide a better quality of life for the population of this Region. This will involve revisiting existing zoning objectives, where excessive lands have been zoned for residential purposes. This process should ensure that existing and new residential developments provide high quality residential environments and more sustainable settlements. Plans should also incorporate the list of particular recreational needs as identified in this section of Chapter 7.

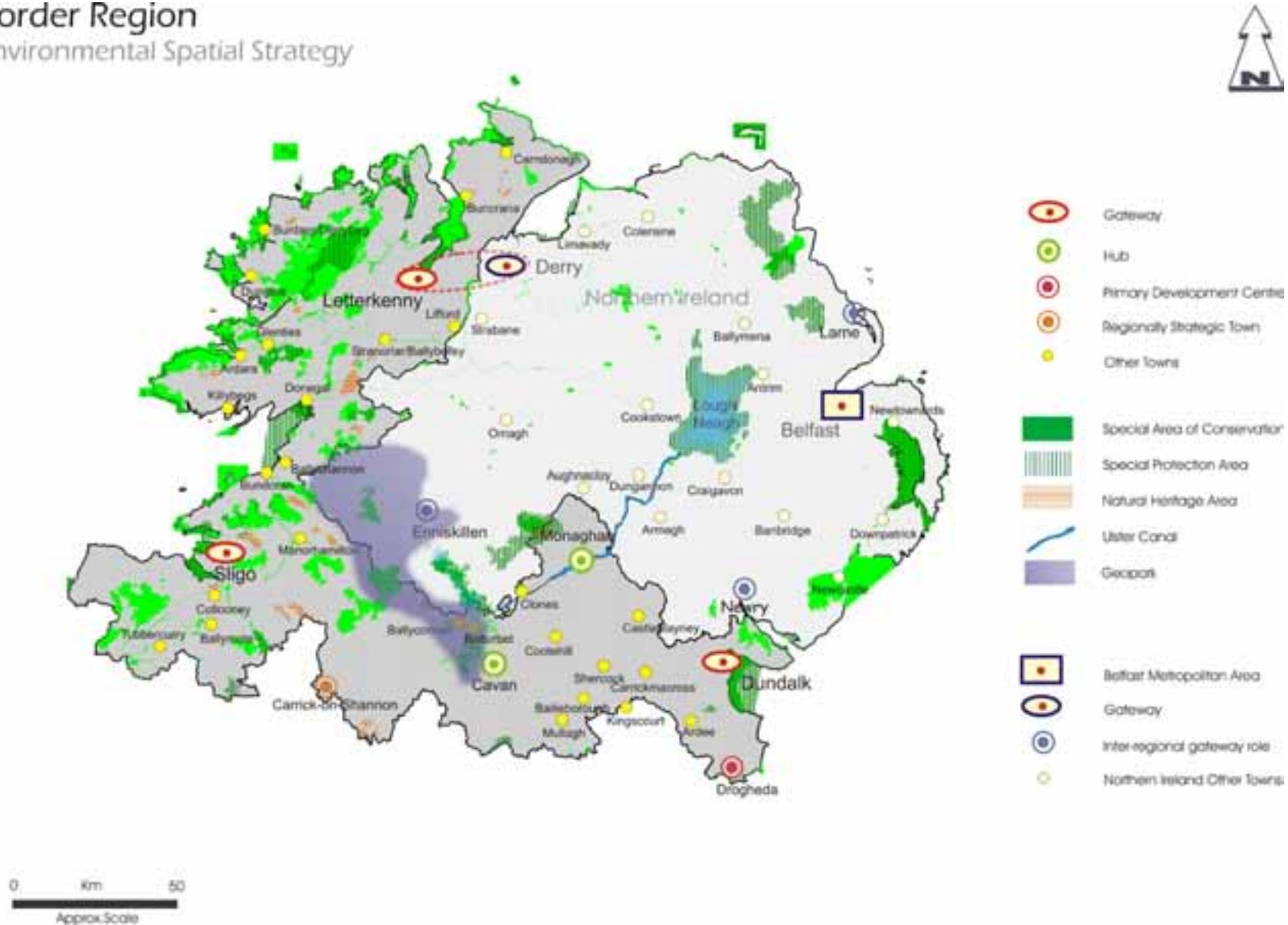
Coastal Management

Coastal Management is becoming increasingly important due to climate change and the threat to our coasts from rising sea levels. The Border Region includes coastal communities on either side of the island. Coastal management is therefore critical to the future development of these communities and should be incorporated into all relevant Development Plans in accordance with the policies and objectives outlined in this Chapter and all national guidance on coastal management.

Map 6.1 Environmental Spatial Strategy

Border Region

Environmental Spatial Strategy



Chapter 7 Social Infrastructure and Community Development

7.1 Introduction

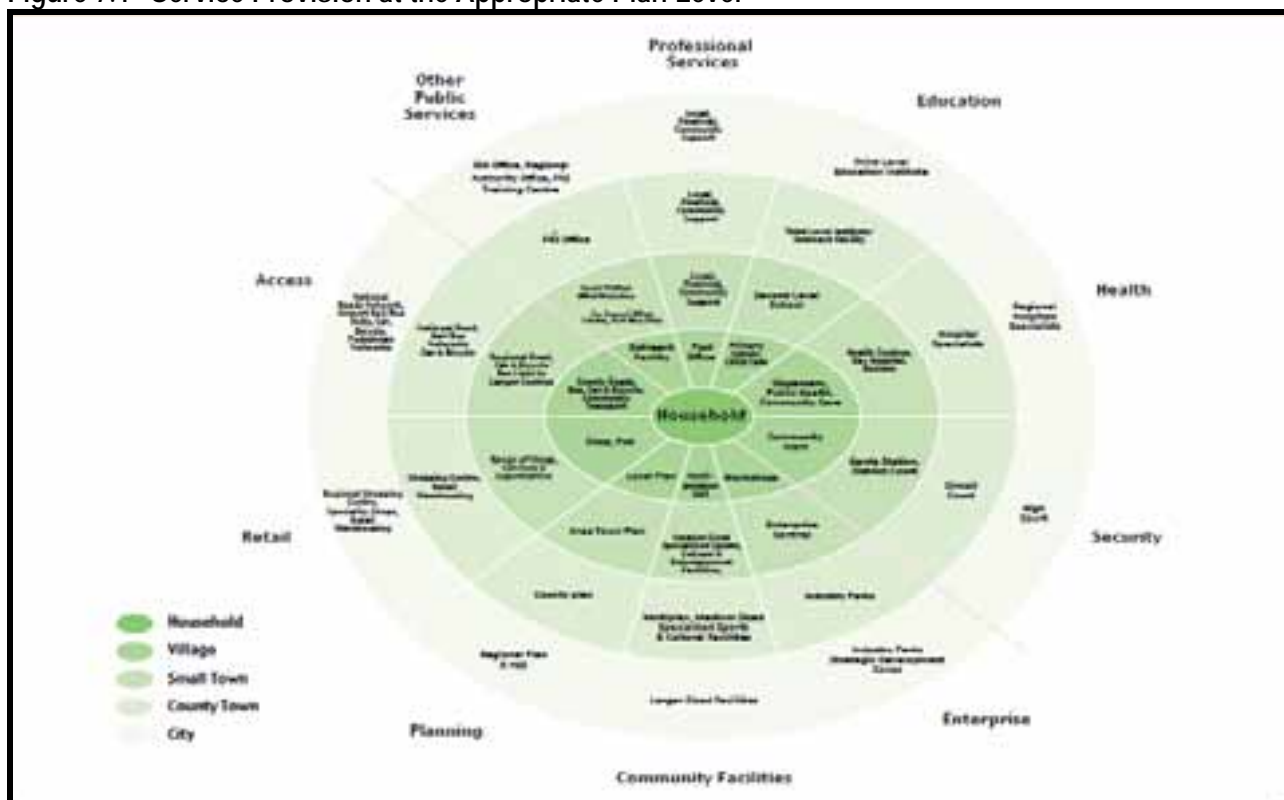
Ensuring that the Border Region is an attractive place to live and work, providing a high quality of life, is one of the core objectives of the Regional Planning Guidelines. To this end people are attracted to communities and towns where there is a vibrant social and cultural life, coupled with broad employment opportunities and a wide range of services including education, healthcare, childcare facilities, transport systems and ready access to entertainment and amenity facilities. More and more in recent years, the provision of social infrastructure has been recognised as key to achieving this aim. Social infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, services and facilities such as healthcare, education, leisure & recreation, arts & culture, childcare and community facilities.

The responsibility for provision of social infrastructure lies with various government departments, public bodies and local agencies as does the policy development and strategic planning for the provision of same. At national spatial planning level, the NSS outlines a hierarchy of access to social infrastructure, which clearly identifies the higher level spatial planning role of the Regional Planning Guidelines. Figure 7.1 is an extract from the NSS and is based on a model provided by South Tipperary County Development Board. It outlines the patterns of service provision that are likely to be appropriate at different levels within a settlement hierarchy. The diagram highlights that the role of the RPGs is very much at the strategic level, and should provide a framework for the future provision of services within respective counties with a Region. The NSS goes on to state that:

“The enhancement of quality of life, through integrating the provision of social infrastructure with policies that affect where people live and work, is dependent on the fact that different types of infrastructure are appropriate to different points within the urban and rural structure. For example, if hospitals or third level educational establishments are to support specialist, high-quality functions, they need to attain a certain threshold of size. Given this, such functions will tend to develop in larger settlements. For smaller communities to function well there is a need to sustain strong community infrastructures, such as a multipurpose hall, primary school, post office and local shop or pub.

There is a strong relationship between settlement size and the levels of service that can be supported. However, through good quality roads, public transport, information about services and appropriate outreach provision of services, improved accessibility can be secured to a wider range of services.” (NSS)

Figure 7.1 Service Provision at the Appropriate Plan Level



Source: National Spatial Strategy

7.2 Social Infrastructure

The policies relating to the provision of social infrastructure within the Border Region are manifold covering the various government departments, public bodies and agencies who are service providers at local, regional and national level. As outlined in the introduction, the NSS broadly sets out a range of services and facilities contributing to the social infrastructure in cities, towns and the rural area within the country, and acknowledges the strong relationship between settlement size and the levels of service that can be supported. In addition to the NSS and the NDP, County Development Plans, national strategy documents such as National Health Strategy “Quality & Fairness”, government department statements of strategy, the Annual Service Plans of the Regional Health Authorities (Health Service Executive (HSE) – West and HSE Dublin – North East) and the Strategic Plans for Institutes of Technology (Dundalk, Sligo and Letterkenny), are also considered significant documents in this area. Also, given the location of the Region, it imperative that the all policy development take due regard of the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland, ‘Shaping our Future’.

The NSS broadly sets out a range of services and facilities contributing to the attractiveness of various cities, towns and the rural area within the country, and acknowledges the strong relationship between settlement size and the levels of service that can be supported. This could be summarised as follows:

- Within larger urban areas, internationally mobile labour with 'in-demand' skills, are often attracted to cities and larger towns, where there is a vibrant social and cultural life, coupled with broad employment opportunities and a wide range of services including education, healthcare, childcare facilities, transport systems and ready access to entertainment and amenity facilities.
- People are often attracted to medium sized towns by the more rural way of life, with its emphasis on the importance of community. Places that offer a good range of services, such as a choice of primary and secondary schooling, retailing, employment, social and sporting facilities and access to the national transport network, contribute to the attractiveness of a town.

- People are attracted to rural areas by the strong sense of community, which is often preferred to the immediate availability of the facilities provided in larger towns, and the high quality natural environment. However, the NSS emphasises the importance of establishing and supporting a viable network of rural services.

The Regional Authority considers it critical that key social, cultural, community and recreational infrastructure are put in place, in order to facilitate and support a growing population and as part of shaping the Regions' competitiveness, along with making places attractive for people to live. In particular, the peripheral and rural areas, along with the Gaeltacht area will require special attention, in order to ensure that the provision of appropriate levels of services is accessible to all.

In order to provide a balanced sustainable environment to cater for growth, the most necessary social infrastructure will include health care, education and training, community development, leisure facilities and cultural facilities. The provision of these services is usually delivered by a large number of local agencies and Government Departments. The role of the County Development Boards in co-ordinating integrated social, cultural and economic development, is also significant at County level and inter-regional levels. The Regional Authority's policy and objectives with regard to some of the most important social infrastructure is laid out in the following sections. However, there are a number of cross-cutting themes and principles that are at the heart of the Authority's overall policy on all social infrastructure and community development as follows:-

- ensure that the Border Region is an attractive place to live and work and supports and promotes vibrant and sustainable communities;
- ensure equality of access for all improving the lives of people living in disadvantaged areas and building social capital;
- ensure critical physical infrastructure is in place, in particular, a quality road network, public transport and high speed broadband;
- maintain and further enhance existing links and co-operation with the Government Departments, public agencies and private providers ;
- promote a co-ordinated approach to the delivery and provision of services through inter-agency liaison and co-operation with statutory and other relevant organisations;
- promote inter-regional and cross-border co-operation in the provision of all services and facilities; and to
- ensure provision of all services and facilities in a cost-effective and sustainable manner

7.3 Healthcare

The Regional Health Authorities (HSE – West and HSE Dublin – North East) have responsibility for the administration and provision of health services within the Region. Their Annual Service Plans articulate a service vision, identifying the requirements and deliverables for each year, and referring to community interagency dependencies. The principles and themes underpinning the service plans are articulated in the 2001 National Health Strategy "Quality & Fairness". The strategy outlined four key principles in the delivery of health services; equity and fairness, a people-centred service; quality of care; and clear accountability. It also outlined a number of specific actions which are part of the continuing rationalisation of the health sector including:

- Primary care services to undergo major development to deliver an integrated community-based service accessible to all on a round-the-clock basis;
- Acute hospital care to be developed and reformed, through the creation of extra hospital beds and a range of other measures.

- Continuing care services to undergo a sustained expansion for people with disabilities and older people.
- National treatment protocols to ensure that all patients receive a uniformly high quality of care.
- The planning and funding of acute hospital services will be reformed.
- Funding to be more directly linked to service levels, with much greater transparency in the planning, funding and delivery of services

The increasing emphasis on national centres of excellence, and rationalisation of existing services and facilities within the Health Sector, is of ongoing concern for the rural population. Whilst it is recognised that critical mass is required in certain specialised medical services, the move towards national centres of excellence must be balanced, while ensuring that provision of same does not, in reality, further remove such services from the user. It is therefore critical that these changes are consolidated and supported by the necessary physical infrastructure, (roads, local health centres etc.), and services (air & road ambulance coverage, public transport, outreach services etc.), to ensure that all health services remain equally accessible to all within the Region.

For many living in the Border Region the nearest hospital or service provision is actually based in Northern Ireland, and not in either of the HSE Regional Health Authority areas that cover this Region. In recent times there has been more of an acknowledgement at a national level, of the importance of the cross-border aspect to provision of services, demonstrated by initiatives such as the National Treatment Purchase Fund, which allows for some services to be accessed in Northern Ireland, or CAWT which provides a shared GP Service programme.

7.4 Community Development

In the Community Development Support Programme of the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the definition of community development is; *'about promoting positive social change in society in favour of those who benefit least from national and global social and economic developments....seek(ing) to challenge the causes of poverty/disadvantage and to offer new opportunities for those lacking choice, power and resources'*. The social inclusion aspect of Community Development is dealt with under a separate heading later in this chapter. However, increased access to choice, power and resources are also dependent on access to two other critical factors at a local level:

- good quality community facilities and provision of services;
- an active and vibrant community and voluntary sector

The provision of community facilities and the maintenance of key services locally, are critical to ensuring that communities and neighbourhoods within the Region, are places that offer a good quality of life and are attractive places to live and work. The basic services include local shops, post offices, public houses, and places of worship, but the additional provision of childcare facilities, sports and leisure centres, arts and cultural centres and activities, youth clubs, libraries and local halls, are all facilities which can clearly indicate the vibrancy and sustainability of a community. It is important to recognise the significant contribution which community services make to urban and rural life

The integration of these into the development of settlements, will require a proactive approach in development plans, and will require continued attention from County Development Boards and the range of Agencies responsible for the delivery of particular services. Rural and peripheral communities can become vulnerable at the loss of any critical service, and in this regard, specific policies and objectives should be adopted at the local level to ensure that these are sustained.

It is widely recognised that an active community & voluntary sector at a local level increases the representation, support, advocacy and leadership that is available to a community, thus increasing capacity

and social cohesion within the community. Therefore, it is essential that the existing supports that exist across the public sector (e.g. provision of Community Fora via County Development Boards, the Community Development Support Programme of the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs etc.), be maintained and enhanced.

7.5 Primary and Secondary Education

Provision of a high-quality education not only enables individuals to achieve their full potential and participate fully as members of society; it is also a key driver of social, cultural and economic development, assisting national and international competitiveness. It is important that the highest quality of education can be accessed by everyone across the Region, in order that maximum participation can be achieved, and strong links can be forged with industry and enterprise. The future provision of schools in this Region must be considered by all relevant parties under 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System – A code of Practice for Planning Authorities', the Department of Education and Science and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government' Guidelines issued in July 2008. This document is part of a wider package of initiatives designed to facilitate the provision of schools, particularly primary schools, and schools related infrastructure, within the planning system, coupled with new mechanisms for site identification and acquisitions.

This participation in the education system begins at primary level and continues into post graduate, research and lifelong learning opportunities. Educational attainment levels are an important indicator of the level of social and economic development. Currently the Region has one of the lowest levels of educational attainment and second highest level of early school leavers of all regions in Ireland. To this end, it is essential to the provision of Primary and Secondary Education, that all programmes such as the Department of Education's *DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) Programme* targeting educational disadvantage, be continued within Region.

7.6 Higher Education

A workforce with a high level of skills and knowledge base is a critical factor in the development and competitiveness of any Region. A highly skilled workforce is dependent on the provision of a quality and accessible higher level education sector, along with the availability of vocational training, lifelong learning and up skilling opportunities. Currently Dundalk Institute of Technology, the Institute of Technology, Sligo and Letterkenny Institute of Technology are the main providers of third level education in the Region. Third level provision is consolidated by St Angela's College, Sligo as well as by the presence of a strong Post Leaving Certificate sector in the Region. The further development of third level education is a priority for the Region, in particular, where there are absences of facilities, the central border area being most disadvantaged.

For success in the knowledge based economy, availability of a wide choice of high quality and level of qualifications is essential, as are strong third level linkages with industry and state of the art Research & Development, innovation and business incubation facilities.

Access to Research and Development funding is a key issue, and disparities in the funding streams available to Institutes of Technology and University remain. The Institutes of Technology in the Region should have the same access to Research and Development funding as Universities. This is of particular relevance in the Border Region because of the absence in the Region of a University, and this funding issue raises the requirement for University Status. This funding is essential to support and develop R&D, innovation, technology transfer and the facilitation of further academic and industrial links.

Provision of high quality third level education, as close to the user as possible, is considered important in the provision of sustainable services. This can be achieved in a number of ways; enhancement and

broadening the outreach programmes currently available in the Region; improved provision of e-learning, distance learning and life long learning opportunities; improved linkages with industry and incentives for industry to provide on-the-job training and up skilling and to engage in the R&D process with the third level sector. Increasing interaction and linkages between the third level sector and industry is seen as a key component in improving graduate retention within the Region. The provision of third level education through outreach programmes and e-learning opportunities is dependent on access to high quality broadband in the Region.

Enhancement and development of the existing links between the Region's third level sector and the third level providers in Northern Ireland, is also seen as critical to ensuring access to the third level education, particularly in the central border area.

7.7 Leisure Facilities

The provision of accessible local leisure, sports & recreation facilities is an important aspect in creating a region that is an attractive place to live and work. Leisure facilities from leisure centres, sports facilities, recreational parks and playgrounds, to cinema and entertainment facilities, not only provide a better quality of life through the enhancement of the social choices available to people, but can also impact on the health of the population by offering wider sporting and fitness options in the community. People are attracted to areas where there is a vibrant social and cultural life, and it is important that the availability of appropriate leisure, sports and recreational facilities is addressed through the local authority planning process. The Regional Authority considers it important that recreation, amenity and leisure facilities are provided in parallel with the growth of a town or village, and that these facilities mirror the role and function of the settlement within which they serve.

7.8 Cultural Facilities

The importance of promoting and sustaining cultural development in all of its various forms is recognised, including the Arts, Libraries, Museums and Archives, and Archaeology. Culture is very important in enriching the quality of life of communities across the Border Region, and the Region itself is rich in cultural heritage. The promotion of cultural heritage is not only an indigenous interest, but is also a key tourism asset for the Region. The effective management and sustainable development of such a resource is a key issue in the Region.

The unique heritage and culture of the Gaeltacht is an additional cultural asset to the North West part of the Region, given the unique way of life and importance of the Irish language. The Region boasts a wide variety of cultural events and festivals, with a local, inter-regional and national focus.

7.9 Social Inclusion

Social exclusion is defined as '*cumulative marginalisation: from production (unemployment), from consumption (income poverty), from social networks (community, family and neighbours) from decision-making and from an adequate quality of life*' in the Partnership Agreement 2000. Social exclusion is the process whereby certain individuals, groups or communities are pushed to the edge of society and cannot participate, not only because of poverty, but also other issues such as inadequate education or underdeveloped life-skills. Some of those who are most vulnerable to social exclusion and/or poverty include; travellers; migrants and members of ethnic minorities; homeless people; unemployed people; lone parent families and families with large numbers of children; the ill and persons with disabilities; the elderly; and persons living in areas of urban or rural disadvantage.

Social exclusion and poverty are closely linked, although not all who are poor are socially excluded, and not all those who are socially excluded are poor. According to the *"New Measures of Deprivation: An Inter-*

temporal and Spatial Analysis of Data from the Census of Population, 1991, 1996, 2002 and 2006" (Trutz Haase & Jonathan Pratschke, 2008) the Border Region is the most disadvantaged Region in Ireland therefore, tackling of deprivation, social exclusion and poverty within the Region is of the utmost importance.

Social inclusion has been mainstreamed across all government and public body policy development in the last number of years. This has been done through embedding the issue into all major strategic documents, in particular, the *'National Action Plan (NAP) for Social Inclusion 2007-2016, the social inclusion elements of Towards 2016'*, the NDP and *Ireland's report to the EU on National Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NSSPI)*. As well as the National Office for Social Inclusion, most Government Departments and Public Bodies now have Social Inclusion Units, whose remit is to assist in the mainstreaming of best practice of Social Inclusion, into the day to day provision of public services across all sectors.

At a more functional level, Local Authorities play an important role in facilitating and supporting the Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development (RAPID) projects and other projects such as Ceantair Laga Árd Riachtanais (CLÁR), and should continue to do so through the involvement of all relevant staff, in particular RAPID co-ordinators. Areas designated as RAPID areas should continue to be supported by all agencies. Regeneration of those areas is essential if we are to build a fair and inclusive society.

The government's National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 highlights a number of high level goals which are aimed at making a decisive impact on poverty;

Ensuring children reach their true potential;

- Supporting working age people and people with disabilities, through activation measures and the provision of services to increase employment and participation;
- Providing the type of supports that enable older people to maintain a comfortable and high-quality standard of living;
- Building viable and sustainable communities, improving the lives of people living in disadvantaged areas and building social capital.

The Regional Planning Guidelines incorporates these goals and will promote social inclusion throughout the Region and through its relevant planning authorities

7.10 An Gaeltacht

The second largest of the seven separate Gaeltacht Areas in the Country is located in Donegal, mainly along the coast, in the west of the county. The importance of the protection and the development of the Gaeltacht area as a place for speaking Irish, and for the conservation of this unique part of our culture, have been recognised in the NSS and must be supported in the regional context. The Donegal Gaeltacht represents 25 per cent of the total Gaeltacht population in the country and has a population of 23,783 (Census 2006).

Whilst the Gaeltacht has many strengths such as its very distinct and traditional culture, and its location and proximity to areas of outstanding beauty, it also currently faces many challenges, not least the existing infrastructural and economic deficiencies. The Gaeltacht currently contains peripheral and disadvantaged areas, and the fact that the remaining Irish-speaking communities are facing serious difficulties, the key challenge is to maintain the critical linguistic sustainability threshold (findings of the "Comprehensive Linguistic Study of the Use of Irish in the Gaeltacht:" 2007). The peripherality of the Gaeltacht within the Region also results in added connectivity problems. A lack of amenities, educational provision, and

employment opportunities has inhibited it in reaching its full potential. The economic drivers which support the Gaeltacht have been under pressure in recent times.

A number of principles that can be applied with regard to developing the potential of the Gaeltacht areas include:

- The facilitation of permanent residential development, subject to good practice in terms of design, location and protection of the environment and landscape.
- The strengthening of villages and towns to be supported via the provision of services and encouraging investment in tourism supports e.g. visitor accommodation
- The creation of more attractive conditions to support investment in rural development opportunities such as provision of broadband.

Social Infrastructure and Community Development Policy

- SIP1** All areas of Social Infrastructure and Community Development shall be incorporated and integrated into all Development Plans and Development Management of planning authorities throughout the Region
- SIP2** Development plans shall facilitate the provision of social infrastructure and community development through the zoning of sufficient and appropriate lands in accordance with DEHLG Guidelines

Social Infrastructure and Community Development Strategic Objectives

The relevant authorities within the Border Region should:

- SIO1** Identify deficiencies in social infrastructure and plan for the future development of all services in an equitable and fair way, through County Development Plans and related strategies of the local authority;
- SIO2** Where appropriate, consider the future provision of social infrastructure on a cross border basis;
- SIO3** Within appropriate settlements, provide adequate zoned lands to accommodate the future provision and development of social infrastructure;
- SIO4** Identify appropriate sites within settlements for the provision of future social infrastructure;
- SIO5** Ensure that Social Infrastructure and community services are adequately accommodated within new residential schemes and are consistent with DEHLG Guidelines;
- SIO6** Ensure that the necessary infrastructure is available, or is currently being planned for to accommodate local services within the community;
- SIO7** Support and accommodate the development of existing services in line with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area;
- SIO8** Access to all and social inclusion must be at the core of all local authority planning and decision making;
- SIO9** Facilitate the development of ICT services through the local authority planning system, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area;
- SIO10** Promote the social, physical and economic development of Gaeltacht areas

7.11 Development Plan Implications

Local Authorities should ensure that Development Plans include adequate provision of zoned development lands for all elements of social infrastructure and community development as outlined in this Chapter. This provision must also incorporate the needs and requirements of all social infrastructure providers and in compliance with all national plans and guidance.

Chapter 8 Regional Flood Risk Appraisal

8.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out a Regional Flood Risk Appraisal (RFRA) for the Border Region. Flooding from rivers and coastal waters is a natural phenomenon that cannot be entirely prevented or protected against. Flooding occurs when the capacity of a watercourse to convey water through an area is exceeded, or in coastal areas, when sea water encroaches on land due to failure of coastal defences, exceptional climatic or other factors. Flooding from the sea and from rivers is probably best known, but prolonged and intense rainfall can also cause sewer flooding, and flooding to arise from overland flow and ponding in hollows.

The man-made environment can exacerbate the consequences of flooding, through development in a flood plain which places property and people at risk, or by building in areas where existing drainage infrastructure is deficient or inadequate. Flooding may impact on the economy, social well-being, public health and the environment. The impact on individuals and communities can be significant in terms of personal suffering and financial loss and, even where flooding has natural causes, it can have damaging effects on the environment.

Also of relevance is consideration of the consequences of climate change which is impacting on sea levels, the nature and pattern of rainfall events and weather patterns generally. Climate change is outlined in greater detail in Chapter 6. Whilst the exact impacts of climate change are not known, it is widely agreed that climate change will result in higher risk of flooding both inland and at coastal locations, through the raising of sea levels and the occurrence of more intense rainfall events. It is important, therefore, that this issue is addressed within the RPGs as decisions on the direction of future growth within the Border Region may increase flood risk. Also it is important that the RPGs highlight the need for developing policy and actions, and encourage co-operation across Councils and other Agencies, as the impact of flood and water movement in many places crosses Council, National and Agency boundaries.

8.2 DEHLG Consultation Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities – The Planning System and Flood Risk Management

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Office of Public Works (OPW) published *Planning Guidelines: The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*, in November 2009. An accompanying document entitled 'Technical Appendices' outlines the scale at which it is appropriate to carry out flood risk assessment (Section 1.4). The Guidelines recommend a clear and transparent assessment of flood risk at all stages in the planning process, and set out that regional flood risk appraisal and management policy recommendations are necessary to set a policy framework for County Development Plans and Local Area Plans.

The precautionary approach should be adopted in carrying out Flood Risk Assessments and the following key guiding principles should be followed in all instances:-

- **Avoidance of development in areas at risk of flooding by not permitting development in flood risk areas unless fully justified and capability exists to manage risk without impacting elsewhere;**
- **Application of a sequential approach to flood risk management based on**
 - a) avoidance,
 - b) reduction
 - c) mitigation of flood risk in assessing suitability of locations for development;

- **The incorporation of flood risk assessment into the process of making decisions on planning applications and planning appeals.**

Having regard to the DEHLG Guidelines, this section sets out the key policy recommendations to avoid and manage flood risk within the Border Region. Regional Flood Risk Appraisal therefore includes:-

- the identification of appropriate policy responses for priority areas, including areas that transcend administrative boundaries and where there appears to be significant flood risk;
- Requirements on foot of the guidelines for co-operation, implementation and co-ordination of more detailed area level strategic flood risk assessment in Development plans.

In the overall context of implementing the Floods Directive, flood risk appraisal and management strategies, it is important to differentiate between flooding arising from natural phenomena (Rivers, Coastal and Pluvial), for which the OPW is lead Authority; and flooding arising from Urban Stormwater drainage, water supply systems and wastewater infrastructure, which are the direct responsibility of Local Authorities. Cognisance must also be taken of the Water Framework Directive and its implications in relation to management of flooding.

8.3 Types of Flooding

Flooding is a natural occurrence that can happen at any time in a wide variety of locations and plays a role in shaping the natural environment. There are essentially two major causes of flooding:

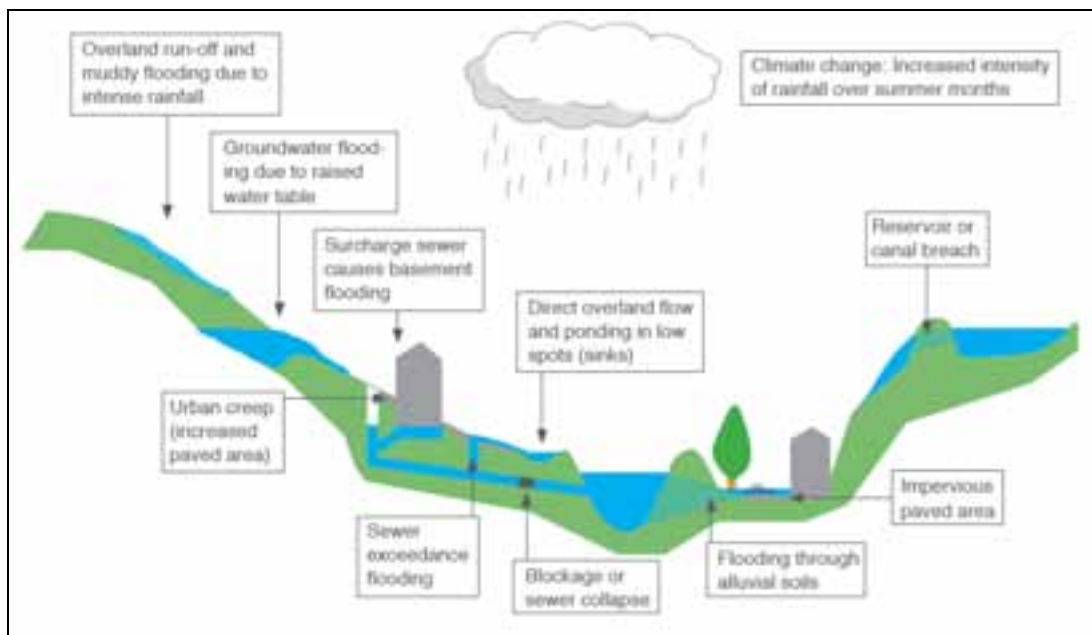
1. **River** – caused by prolonged and/or intense rainfall; and
2. **Coastal** – caused by higher than normal sea levels, largely as a result of storm surges and resulting in the sea overflowing onto land.

Both types of flooding can further be explained under the following different types:

- **Overland flow** occurs when the amount of rainfall exceeds the infiltration capacity of the ground to absorb it. This is common after intense rainfall and this eventually a piped or natural drainage system.
- **River flooding** occurs when the capacity of a watercourse to convey water through an area is exceeded, blocked or restricted and this spills out into its floodplain.
- **Flooding from artificial drainage systems** can occur after intense rainfall and occurs when flow entering systems, such as urban storm water drainage systems, exceeds its discharge capacity and the system becomes blocked or cannot discharge due to high water level in the receiving watercourse.
- **Estuarial flooding** occurs when there are high flows in rivers entering the sea and a high tide prevents water flowing out to sea which may flood river banks.
- **Coastal flooding** occurs when sea water encroaches on land due to failure of coastal defences both natural (e.g. dunes), or man-made, or due to exceptional climatic or other factors. When this occurs, it can result in sewer flooding in urban areas, overland flow and flooding from groundwater in rural and urban areas.
- **Groundwater flooding** occurs when natural water levels stored in the ground rises above normal groundwater levels, as a result of prolonged rainfall. The capacity of the underground reservoir is exceeded and the water seems to rise up from the ground.
- **Incidences of infrastructure failure** such as burst water mains, dam breaches or leaking canal and failure of flood defence or pumping station failure. Flooding of this nature can be sudden and may occur with or without warning.

- **Development in certain areas** also increases flood risk both upstream, by restricting the capacity and conveyance function of the watercourse and floodplain system, and downstream, by decreasing the volume available for flood storage on the floodplain. Development may also increase flood risk by altering flow routes on the floodplain, or by changes to the channel which can increase the flow discharged to downstream location; and by increasing run-off due to changes in land management and introducing surfaces with reduced permeability such as roads, roofs and car parks.

Figure 8.1 Principal causes and types of flooding



Source: DEHLG & OPW The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, November 2009

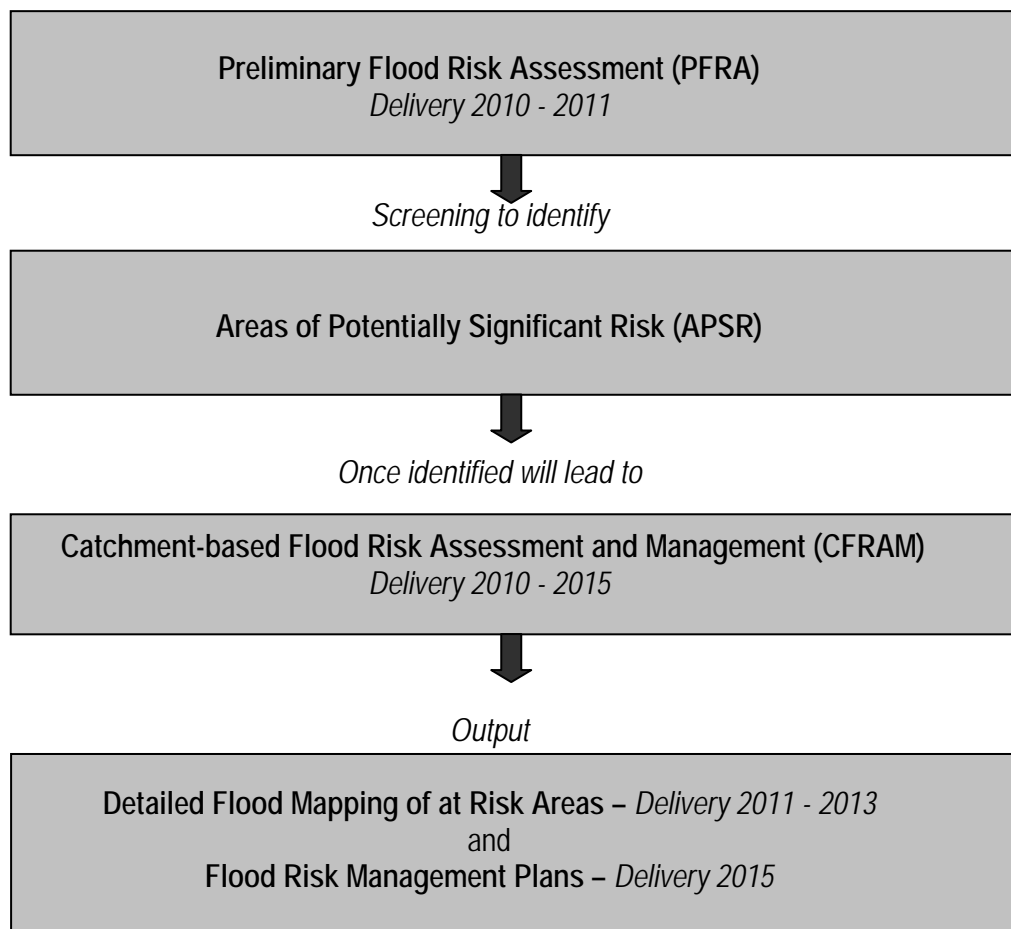
8.4 Existing Flood Risk Assessment

The OPW are currently involved in preparing a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments (PRFA's) with the relevant Local Authorities, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other key agencies. This will identify Areas with Potential Significant flood Risk (APSR's) based on historic and predictive data and consultation with stakeholders. Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management Plans (CFRAMs) will be developed for these areas. These CFRAM Studies will establish a prioritised set of flood risk management measures for their relevant areas, including the use of physical and management responses.

Nationally, the PFRA will be completed in 2010/2011 and will identify areas of potential flood risk. As this is a screening exercise it is probable that not all flood risk areas will be identified. Detailed flood mapping will then be prepared for areas deemed to be at risk by 2013. The focus of these studies is on risk management and not flood prevention.

Figure 8.2 outlines the hierarchy of flood risk assessments that will be required to meet the requirements of the Floods Directive.

Figure 8.2 Hierarchy of Flood Risk Assessment Plans



8.5 Existing Data Available

There is currently limited data available on local catchment areas in Local Authorities, OPW or other agencies. Much of the existing data is accessible on www.floodmaps.ie

The primary sources of current flooding and flood risk data are as follows:-

- Existing individual area/catchment flood studies;
- Historical recording of spatial information from www.floodmaps.ie prepared by the OPW (this map gives a clear illustration of the number and distribution of previous flood events across the Region.³³);
- Flood benefit mapping where arterial drainage works have taken place (layer on Flood maps) which is a surrogate indicator of flood risk;
- Mapping of extents of historical flooding, including O.S historical mapping;
- Soils maps of the Region from the Geological Survey of Ireland;
- Topographical mapping including Lidar mapping. (Local contour data.);
- Coastal Flooding Studies pertaining to defences, including information pertaining to Irish Coastal Protection Strategy studies;(Draft Stage) and
- Urban Drainage studies undertaken by Local Authorities.

³³ It should be borne in mind that works have taken place in some flood locations to alleviate risk of repeat flood events and data quality is variable.

8.6 Background to Flooding in the Border Region

The Border Region incorporates six local authority areas of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth which covers an area of 12,156 sq km and includes a multitude of topographies, soil and rock types, and water bodies. The area is spread across a number of River Basin Districts-North Western, Western, Neagh Bann, Shannon and Eastern. The area has a significant coastline and is bounded to the east by the Irish Sea and to the west and north by the Atlantic Ocean. It contains a significant number of lakes.

As a topographically diverse area traversed by a number of rivers and with a large coastline the area contains a substantial number of risk areas for flooding.

As previously outlined, mapping of historical flood events in the Border Region is available on www.floodmaps.ie, along with associated reports and gives a general indication of where flood vulnerable locations exist. Further information on extent of benefiting lands, land commission drainage areas and areas which historically flooded is also shown. Coastal flood risk mapping is at draft stage and indicates areas of potential risk ³⁴ based on climate change predictions. This data is indicative by nature.

Many of our towns, including four of the larger towns in the area, are located on the coast/coastal estuaries and, thus, may be vulnerable to rising tide levels. The impact of increased tide levels on existing coastal defence structures, adjacent low lying areas and existing surface water drainage infrastructure, through tide locking of both stream and piped systems, needs to be considered. The potential impact and risk associated with joint probability events such co-incident high river flows, exceptional tide and adverse weather events is also relevant.

All of our major towns are located adjacent to rivers. As such, increased extreme flow levels may impact on adjacent lands, particularly where flows are constricted by bridges or other features. Furthermore, surface water drainage in many areas discharge to smaller streams. These streams are particularly responsive to local high intensity rainfall events. Flood risk in these streams will be disproportionately exacerbated by increased runoff from urban development. As such they have potential to significantly increase local flood risk.

Topography of centres will also impact on flood potential, with rainfall and associated runoff flowing through, and accumulating, in low lying areas. Thus there is a risk associated with overland flow, particularly if natural flow channels are constrained or blocked by development, and ponding in low areas. Capacity constraints in existing piped drainage systems, particularly on combined systems may also cause localised flooding with additional health related risks.

8.7 Regional Flood Risk Appraisal

Within the context of planning for future growth, areas known to be at risk from flooding, both now and in the future, should be overlaid on locations identified for development or already developed. The assignment of risk to these areas is, thus, based on limited historic data available, and needs take account of existing flood defences, or their adequacy, flood return periods and climate change impacts.

In this Regional Flood Risk Appraisal, the focus of flood risk assessment will be based on the key settlements identified in the Core Settlement Strategy. Other settlements within the Region are known to be at risk from various types of flooding but they, along with the key urban settlements, will be subject of a more detailed Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which will be carried out during future reviews, and preparation of County Development Plans within the Region. Table 8.1 outlines a summary of the various types of flooding that may affect our key urban settlements.

³⁴ Potential flood areas do not take cognisance of existing flood defenses in place.

Table 8.1 Types of Flooding Affecting Key Towns

Type of Flood Risk	Settlement	Risk Area	Recommendations for Development & Local Area Plans
Coastal Fluvial	Letterkenny	Lands adjacent River Swilly- within the defined town centre.	Permit only appropriate development subject to mandatory flood risk assessment.
		Lands adjacent Urban streams that may be susceptible to flooding.	Carry out catchment based hydrological assessments, flood path analysis and incorporate catchment based SUDS provisions in the Development Plan. OPW undertaking CFRAM for River Swilly
Coastal Fluvial	Sligo	Low lying lands adjacent to Harbour	Permit only appropriate development subject to mandatory flood risk assessments
		Localised Flooding /Urban streams	Implementation of measures in Sligo Main Drainage Studies/SUDS provisions in Local Area Plans.
Coastal Fluvial	Dundalk	Area to East of town protected by ramparts and lands adjacent to Castletown River.	Incorporation of recommendations in CFRAM study as variation into local plans for Dundalk and Environs Development Plan and local area plans.
		Lands adjacent Urban Streams	Implement appropriate improvement works and condition appropriate catchment based SUDS provisions for new developments. OPW undertaking CFRAM for Dundalk area.
Coastal Fluvial	Drogheda	Areas adjacent to River Boyne	Incorporate appropriate policies to flood proof redevelopment of brownfield sites along quays and preserve appropriate flow channels through setting back of development and creation of open space amenity along river bank.
		Lands adjacent Urban Streams	Implement appropriate improvement works and condition appropriate catchment based SUDS provisions for new developments.
Fluvial	Carrick on Shannon	Riverside areas	Permit only appropriate development subject to mandatory flood risk assessment in identified flood risk areas. Review indicative flood levels based on climate change.
Fluvial	Monaghan	Adjacent Old Cross Square and Shopping centre	Implement improvement of Shambles channel. Condition appropriate SUDS on new developments discharging to watercourse.
		Coolshannagh, Killyconnigan, Mullaghdoon.	Permit only appropriate development subject to mandatory flood risk assessment in flood susceptible areas as highlighted on flood benefiting lands mapping.
Fluvial	Cavan	Adjacent Cavan River	Maintain existing natural flood attenuation features. Incorporate SUDS on new developments discharging to watercourse. Preserve wetlands which attenuate river levels.

8.8 Development within Flood Risk Areas

Specific areas in the key settlements, identified within the core settlement strategy, are vulnerable to two key sources of flooding- fluvial and coastal. It is, therefore, apparent that effective management of flood risk coupled with wider environmental, sustainability and economic considerations, mean that it is possible to facilitate the continued growth and expansion of these urban centres based, on the consolidation of the urban core. In line with the sequential approach and justification test criteria set out in the Department's Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management, it is considered that these locations should be encouraged to consolidate and grow, in order to bring about a more compact and sustainable urban development form, in parallel with a clear flood risk management policy framework.

Such an approach, whilst appropriate for brown field sites and areas directly abutting to urban core, may be less so in peripheral areas, where alternative more appropriate land use options should be considered (i.e. recreation, protected industrial etc.). In the context of defended areas, it is essential that consideration should be given to the impact of climate change, in that the impact of defence failure, overtopping and possible rapid inundation must be considered in determining what land use and development may be facilitated. In particular, hospitals, emergency services, schools, sheltered housing or other developments which are directly sensitive to, or whose operation may be compromised by inundation, should not be permitted in such areas.

Other smaller towns in the Region have been identified as vulnerable to flooding, based on the current information available. Within these settlements, implementation of the flood risk planning guidelines is essential, and the sequential approach on flood risk establishes the mechanism to reconcile proposed land use and development and highlight the flood risk issues. The outcome of such flood risk assessments must then feed directly into County, Town and Local Area Plans, by providing flood risk maps with appropriate policy and objectives.

In addition to the above, all other flood plains within the Region should be protected from non-essential developments, and any proposed development should not materially affect flood risk.

A key consideration in implementing the sequential test, is the issue of social resilience, in that properties in flood risk areas may become devalued and thus may end up being utilised to house more vulnerable members of society. These, in turn, are more vulnerable to flooding in that they are economically disadvantaged and may find it harder to recover from consequences of flooding, thus widening existing inequalities.

8.9 Flood Risk Assessment across Administrative Boundaries

An integrated approach to catchment management is required to manage flood risk. This will entail the co-operation of many authorities, in that many of our rivers not only cross county boundaries, but are also affected by national boundaries. Furthermore, in the case of the Rivers Shannon and Erne, flow management is largely controlled by ESB, whilst the OPW and Rivers Agency also have a significant role to play.

It is recommended that a collaborative approach to the shared management of river catchments should be fostered under aegis of River Basin Management Plans, so as to facilitate implementation of flood management initiatives.

8.10 Regional Flood Risk Management Policy Framework

The impact of flood risk within the context of the Regional Planning Guidelines, and decisions regarding where development will be permitted, is recognised as being of significant importance to the growth of this

Region. The issues highlighted have been incorporated into the policies outlined below, both within the main document, and within the Environmental Report associated with the preparation of the Guidelines. To effectively manage flood risk, catchment wide management is required.

Regional Flood Risk Policy (FRP)

FRP1 Development Plans and Local Area Plans should be consistent with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, and adopt strategic, integrated, sustainable and proactive approach to catchment management to avoid and reduce flood risk within the Region, managing the risk from:

- tidal effects around estuaries and along the coast including the implications of the latest predictions for sea level rise;
- fluvial flooding along river corridors and other significant watercourses resulting from catchments within and beyond the Region and other sources of flooding; and
- pluvial flooding resulting from surface water runoff and capacity constraints in surface water drainage systems.

FRP2 Where new or upgraded flood/coastal defences are shown to be essential to protect existing development, all such proposals shall be subject to the Floods and Habitats Directive and all other statutory requirements;

FRP3 New development should be avoided in areas at risk of flooding. However, it is recognised and acknowledged that the key urban settlements are at risk from coastal and fluvial flooding, but their continued growth and expansion can be facilitated through the careful expansion of the urban core and the implementation of appropriate land uses in areas at risk

New developments within a flood plain, will not only be at risk of flooding, but can add cumulatively to the risk of flooding elsewhere, and serve to undermine the flood plain's natural function of accommodating and attenuating flood flows. Accordingly, to minimise flood risk and help maintain their natural function it is essential to avoid development within flood plains wherever possible.

However, where justification to permit development can be provided on sustainability and planning grounds, cognisance must be taken of outputs of CFRAM Studies in the provision comprehensive flood protection and management measures; which should be fully implemented in conjunction with any development in flood risk areas. Appropriate land uses should also be incorporated into those areas at risk.

FRP4 County Development Plans and Local Area Plans shall include a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Existing and proposed zoning of lands for development in areas at risk of flooding (flood plains³⁵) should follow the sequential approach and justification test set out in the DEHLG Guidance on Flood Risk Management.

FRP5 SUDS based drainage plans should be prepared in conjunction with Local Area Plans to optimise flood/runoff management potential of the areas.

Reducing the impact of existing and future development on flood risk can be achieved by adequately controlling runoff from new developments and associated areas, through employing Sustainable Drainage Systems, such that development impact is neutral or positive on flooding.

³⁵ Flood plain is defined as follows

Rivers – the extent of a flood event with a 1% annual probability of exceeding the peak floodwater level.

The Coast – the extent of a flood event with a 0.5% annual probability of exceeding the peak floodwater level

FRP6 Through flood plain protection and SUDs, Local Authorities should incorporate improvements in biodiversity and amenity for existing and proposed developments.

Issues such as Coastal squeeze and compensatory measures to mitigate impact of climate change on existing habitat sites should be considered. Appropriate SUDS planning will also address both water quality and amenity dimensions.

FRP7 Direct strategically significant growth to low risk areas.

Strategically significant projects and infrastructure should, as a rule, be located in low risk areas.

FRP8 An evidence based approach should be adopted to the application of sequential approach and justification test in zoning of flood susceptible lands for development. This should be transparent and use objective criteria appropriate to proposed zoning.

Transparency and objective criteria will ensure that zoning process optimizes economic, social and environmental value.

FRP9 Founded on the precautionary approach to dealing with flood risk, measures such as flood compensation storage works or new hard-engineered flood defences alone, will not be acceptable as justification for development in a flood plain

The provision of compensation storage or hard defences alone shall not be considered sufficient justification to permit a development. Such measures will only be considered as part of a proposal if development/zoning is warranted by justification test on planning and sustainability grounds in the first instance, and no alternative site is available

FRP10 Recognising the concept of coastal evolution and fluvial flooding as part of our dynamic physical environment, an adaptive approach to working with these natural processes shall be adopted.

Focus of a flood management strategy should not solely be driven by conservation of existing lands. It should recognise that marshes, mud flats and other associated eco-systems evolve and degenerate and appropriate consideration should be given to the realignment of defences and use of managed retreat and sacrificial flood protection lands to maintain such habitats as part of overall strategy.

8.11 Development Plan Implications

The RPGs recognise the need to protect across the Border Region, the natural flood plains and riparian corridors of all rivers that have not already been built on, and seek that this is explicitly stated and spatially designated in all future County Development Plans and Local Area Plans. Redevelopment of areas within flood plains should also incorporate appropriate flood protection and mitigation measures.

In the absence of Flood Risk data, Councils should identify these areas using other data from the OPW, existing studies, historical information available, and, where necessary, through additional studies or investigations. An inter-agency and collaborative approach must be adopted by Local Authorities in dealing with flood risk management.

Land required for current and future flood management should be safeguarded from development.

The process of identifying lands for future development in towns and villages should follow the sequential approach and justification test. It should also include adequate provision for adaptation to, or protection against, the impacts of climate change.

The coastline of the Border Region, like all coasts, is experiencing both erosion, deposition and some flooding as a result of normal sea action, and also in the future, by increased storm activity and sea level rise. Parts of the coast are low lying and vulnerable to flooding in the long-term from sea level rise, and it is essential that current and future plans and development do not create significant problems. Where coastal areas are bounded by Natura 2000 sites, cognisance should be taken of the need to mitigate the effects of coastal squeeze on same.

Continued investment needs to be made in research on long term options for the protection of coastal towns from long-term sea level rise and increased storm activity.

If flood risk is not to increase over time, it is important that County, Town and Local Area Plans identify lowest risk lands for future development. In order to do so, local planning authorities will need to identify the spatial variation of flood risk within their areas. These areas should be identified through carrying out Strategic Flood Risk Assessments. Strategic Flood Risk Assessments will enable planning authorities to apply the sequential approach and justification test to the preparation of strategies, plans and programmes and provide a plan-led approach to the future development of the Region. The DEHLG Guidelines on Flood Risk Management, including Technical Appendices, provide extensive advice in regard to the forgoing and serve to ensure a uniform approach to flood risk management.

In a flooding event, whether widespread or extremely localised, damage to key infrastructure (e.g. power stations or significant sub-stations, communication hubs, wastewater treatment plants, hospitals, schools, major roads etc.), has major implications both to those in the area and across the Region. The cost of such disruption is significant to business and can also place people in high risk situations. For this reason, it is advised that key infrastructure suppliers should assess current elements and stress test future projects against flood risk, where this has not been previously undertaken.

Chapter 9 Implementation and Monitoring

9.1 Introduction

The previous Guidelines contained a comprehensive structure for implementation and monitoring. The success of the implementation structures is very much dependent on the co-operation and collaboration of stakeholders. Any project that requires collaboration can only be effective if participants are willing to engage in collaborative dialogue.

The new Guidelines are focused and precise in their aims, targets and outcomes, therefore, much more constructive monitoring and reporting on implementation will be readily achievable. Given the provisions of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill, 2009, greater cognisance will be taken of the Guidelines as County, Town and Local Area Plans will be required to be consistent with the RPGs.

9.2 Implementation Structures

The implementation of these Guidelines will require a co-ordinated effort from a wide range of stakeholders. Much of the implementation will lie within the remit of various public and semi state bodies, charged with the provision of social, economic, and physical infrastructure and the protection of the natural and built environment.

Following the adoption of the Guidelines, the Regional Authority will establish a Monitoring and Implementation Committee to oversee the implementation of the Guidelines. This Committee will include the existing RPG Steering Committee and other relevant stakeholders. Its main role and function shall be:

- The monitoring of inputs or actions;
- The monitoring of outputs or achievements;
- The monitoring of outcomes or the extent to which actions, policies and programmes are effective.

It is also important that implementation of these Guidelines build on existing structures. Such structures include:

- Regional Authority Operational Committees;
- RPG Technical Working Group;
- Local Authorities;
- County Development Boards;
- Other Standing and Ad-hoc Committees

9.3 Investment Priorities

The Regional Planning Guidelines represent an important spatial framework for the constituent Local Authorities in the Border Region, Government Departments and their agencies, as well as the private sector, to co-ordinate and pool their investments to gain greater synergies for the Region. For example, a concerted and integrated approach to matters such as land use and transportation planning, servicing of land for housing and commercial purposes, and urban renewal and regeneration in a targeted set of locations, can have dramatic effects in boosting local economic activity and wider regional benefits.

A key step in the implementation of the Guidelines will, therefore, be represented by various public bodies and private interests, working together to support progress on investment priorities defined in the Guidelines.

The key investment priorities for this Region are set out in Section 1.15 of the Guidelines. Other significantly important priorities for the region are outlined in Chapters 4 and 5.

9.4 Interregional Issues

The integration of work in this Region with other regions in Ireland, as well as Northern Ireland, is a core focus of the Guidelines. In particular, specific work with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Department of Regional Development (DRD) in Northern Ireland, will be key to incorporating and implementing national issues within the Region. There are numerous non statutory development frameworks such as the Newry/Dundalk Twin City Strategy, the North West Gateway Initiative and the proposed Interreg IVA Spatial Planning Initiative through ICBAN, which are of critical importance to the development of this Region. These initiatives and strategies must be considered in parallel with the implementation of these Guidelines. The RPGs in adjoining Regional Authorities of the West, Midlands, Dublin and the Mid East, will also be of paramount importance when monitoring and assessing implementation.

The review of public administration in Northern Ireland will see the introduction of 11 new councils with enhanced planning functions. These new councils and structures offer an opportunity to develop new working groups and committees, which would enhance the implementation of these Guidelines, and spatial planning in general, on a cross border basis.

9.5 Operational Implementation

In accordance with the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill, 2009, Local Authorities will be required to ensure that their development plans are in accordance with these Guidelines. However, most other bodies do not fall within the control of any of the structures that might be used to oversee the implementation of these guidelines. Given that this document represents the considered views of the main actors responsible for the Region's continued sustainable development, it is hoped that they would be given due weight and consideration when decisions are being made by such bodies.

The Border Regional Authority will take responsibility for the establishment, management and facilitation of the above. It is proposed that the Monitoring and Review Committee would meet on an annual basis and discuss a monitoring and review report presented by the Regional Authority Executive. In drafting a report for the Committee, the Regional Authority will require the input of each local authority; where a nominated person by each constituent local authority will report on a county's progress in implementation over the preceding year. These comments would then be amalgamated and included in the Annual Implementation Report, for consideration by the Monitoring Committee. The report and any recommendations from the Monitoring Committee will be presented to the members of the Border Regional Authority for their consideration, approval and preparation of an action plan, if required.

9.6 Monitoring using Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is an important element of an implementation programme. Monitoring of the Guidelines will be undertaken through the setting of targets and indicators, that will ultimately be determined and agreed by the Monitoring and Implementation Committee. The following is, however, an indicative list of targets and indicators that may be used in monitoring of the Guidelines.

Table 9.1 Targets and Indicators for Implementation of Chapter 3

Chapter 3	Objective	Target	Indicators
Settlement Strategy	To provide balanced and sustainable regional development	Ensure that key settlements reach the minimum population targets set for them within these Guidelines	Actual population growth in the key urban settlements; Migration patterns and population change; Residential units granted and commenced within settlements
		Ensure adequate zoned and serviced residential lands within settlements to accommodate minimum population growth targets	Figures from DEHLG Housing Land Availability returns and Local Authorities; Amount of zoned residential lands within County/Town and Local Area Plans; Housing demand in County Development Plan Settlement and Housing Strategies
		Ensure greater consistency between County and Town Development Plans and Local Area Plans	Consistency with RPGs Core Settlement Strategy and main aims
		Gateways to grow at 1.5 times and Hubs at 1.33 times that regional growth rate between 2016- 2022. In the interim, settlements should aspire to reach these targets	Population growth in key settlements Performance of Gateways using GDI Score
		Reduce commuting distances and times to key settlements	Travel to work and settlement catchment statistics from CSO and NIRSA
		Reduce population growth in environs and catchment areas of key settlements	Population growth in towns, environs and catchments and along main transport corridors
		Provide greater number of family homes within urban settlements	Number of new residential units with 4+ bedrooms within settlements
		To create and sustain an attractive rural environment	No. of new one-off dwellings granted/commenced within the countryside New businesses services etc in rural area

		Reduce numbers of vacant residential units	Numbers of previously vacant residential units now occupied
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Table 9.2 Targets and Indicators for Implementation of Chapter 4

Chapter 4	Objective	Target	Indicators
Economic Strategy	To build on the regions strengths/ potential and continue to develop a competitive environment to support and stimulate enterprise development	Retain existing jobs within the region	Total numbers employed
		Develop new emerging sectors for growth (section 4.4)	Numbers employed in key sectors as outlined in table 1.3
		Increase employment in both FDI and indigenous sector	New business start-ups and numbers employed in new emerging sectors
		Improve competitiveness and productivity	GVA Data
		Increase number of rural and urban based enterprises	Agency assisted employment data
		Improve diversification within the rural economy	Tourism numbers; Number of agricultural employees now working in alternative sectors
		Improve education attainment at all levels	Numbers of students achieving 2 nd , 3 rd , and 4 th level qualifications
		Develop skills base and encourage re-skilling of employees	Persons returning to full and part time education
		Develop a smart economy	Number of new start up businesses
		Develop and harness the entrepreneurial spirit of regions workforce	
		Provide sufficient serviced zoned lands for industrial and commercial purposes to accommodate growth	Amount of serviced commercial and industrial zoned lands

Table 9.3 Targets and Indicators for Implementation of Chapter 5

Chapter 5	Objective	Target	Indicators
Infrastructure Strategy Transport	Enhance the capacity for the movement of people, goods, energy, services & information within, and outside the region	Increase a modal shift from private car to public transport	Numbers of persons using private car and public transport
		Develop 'smarter-travel' aims and objectives	New developments in public transport services
		Develop land-use and transportation planning	Number of ILUTS carried out for settlements
		Develop Strategic Radial Corridors and Strategic Links	Investment and improvements on key transport corridors
		Reduce travel times	Travel times between settlements
		Develop existing ports and airports	Movement of people, goods and services through ports and airports
		Improve water and waste water infrastructure	New and upgrades to water supply network and waste water treatment plants
		Develop principles for Water Services (Section 5.3.2)	Degree to which Local Authorities meet/achieve guiding principles
		Develop Water Services Investment Programme	Success/completion/investment in priority projects as outlined in table 5.1
		Develop gas, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure	Level of investment and development of the all energy networks
Water Services			Grid 25 projects completed
			Completion of National Broadband scheme
			Completion of Project Kelvin
Energy & Telecommunications		Draft a Renewable Energy Strategy for the region	Completion and adoption of strategy
		Promote and develop a mix of renewable energy	Numbers of new sources and types of renewable energy
Renewable Energy			
Waste			

Management		generation types	projects
		Develop waste management facilities & alternative options	Numbers of new 'green collar' jobs Numbers of new and alternative waste management facilities

Table 9.4 Targets and Indicators for Implementation of Chapter 6

Chapter 6	Objective	Target	Indicators
Environment & Amenities	Protect the environment to meet the needs of the existing population without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs	Protect biodiversity	No. of sites and monuments designated and protected under relevant legislation and Directives
		Protect all European and Nationally important sites within the natural and built environment	
		Protect surface and ground waters in accordance with the WFD	Quality of surface and ground waters
			Attainment/success of POMS in RBMPs
		Reduce demands on non-renewable resources	Level of demand on fossil fuels and uptake of alternative sources of fuel
		Protect and manage the landscape of the region	Quality of the landscape – determined through Landscape Character Assessments
		Protect endangered native species	Population of native species
		Meet relevant climate change targets	Climate changes measures taken within relevant plans and programs

Table 9.5 Targets and Indicators for Implementation of Chapter 7

Chapter 7	Objective	Target	Indicators
Social Infrastructure and Amenities	Provide, facilitate and accommodate a wide ranges of services to ensure a good quality of life for all persons who live, work and visit the region	Make the region an attractive place to live and work	Quality of life indicators; Gateway Development Index scores
		Ensure equality of access to all services	Numbers of people with and without access to services
		Promote and facilitate a co-ordinated approach to the delivery and provision of services	Numbers of new social and community buildings and services
		Promote, encourage and accommodate inter-regional and cross border co-operation in provision of all services	Numbers of students achieving 2 nd , 3 rd , and 4 th level qualifications; Number of social services provided on a inter-regional and cross border basis
		Promote social inclusion within all planning policy and decisions	Numbers of persons who are considered socially excluded
		Ensure sufficient lands are zoned for Social Infrastructure and Community Development	Amount of lands zoned in development plans and local area plans for Social Infrastructure and Community Development purposes
		Promote and facilitate the development of the Gaeltacht	Numbers of people living and working in the Gaeltacht area

Table 9.6 Targets and Indicators for Implementation of Chapter 8

Chapter 8	Objective	Target	Indicators
Regional Flood Risk Appraisal	Set a high level policy framework for development plans and local area plans to address flood risk issues within the region	Develop appropriate flood risk assessments at all levels of planning	SFRA to be completed and incorporated within all County Development Plans
		Develop CFRAMs for the region	Completion of CFRAMs by 2016
		Ensure all new developments granted planning permission have been assessed for flood risk	All county and local area plans should include appropriate policies for flood risk; No. of new developments granted in areas at risk from flooding

The above targets and indicators are suggested as examples only, and are not intended to be exhaustive. They do however have the advantage of being directly associated with the aims, policies and objectives outlined earlier in the Guidelines.

9.7 Future Review of Regional Planning Guidelines

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 - 2006, planning authorities are obliged to have regard to³⁶ Regional Planning Guidelines for a period of six years after their adoption, when preparing their statutory Development Plans. The process of monitoring the implementation of the Guidelines will also include an evaluation of indicators and targets by the Regional Authority, such as the ones above, to determine:

- The degree to which overall goals and aims of the guidelines are being achieved;
- The degree to which implementation of the NSS is being achieved;
- The degree of fit between local planning policies and the regional guidelines and the need for any adjustment that will also support implementation of the NSS.

These guideline, therefore, have an in-built review mechanism which will closely monitor and evaluate their effectiveness over the next six years. Data gathering and regular reporting on review issues is aimed at preparing the way for a full review of the Guidelines by 2016.

³⁶ Proposal for amendment in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill, 2009 where 'development plans must be consistent with Regional Planning Guidelines..'

Appendix 1 Gateway Development Index Domains and Indicators

FIGURE 8: SUMMARY OF GDI DOMAINS AND CONSTITUENT INDICATORS		
Domain/Indicator	Variable Used	Main Source
1. Population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population growth Age vibrancy of population 	Population change relative to national average Age dependency rate	Census of Population Census of Population
2. Enterprise and Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New firm formation Quality of enterprise Unemployment rate 	New VAT registrations (per 1,000 population) Share of services sector in total employment No. on Live Register per 100 workforce	Revenue GAMMA Department of Social and Family Affairs
3. Knowledge and Innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labour force quality Graduate admissions Graduate retention Third-Level R&D 	% labour force with third-level qualifications Third-level admissions as % of age cohort Proportion of graduates finding jobs in area R&D Earnings per head of (Zone 1) population	Census of Population Higher Education Authority Higher Education Authority Higher Education Authority
4. National and Physical Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> River water quality Drinking water quality 	River water quality indicator Drinking water quality indicator	Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Protection Agency
5. Transport and Connectivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport access Retail service availability ICT Connectivity 	Non-car use, travel times and public transport availability Retail outlets per 100 households PC/Internet access per 1,000 households	Census/Pobal GAMMA Census of Population
6. Health and Wellness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mortality Birth weight Primary healthcare 	Mortality rate Average birth weight No. of GPs per capita	Health Service Executive* Health Service Executive* Health Service Executive
7. Social Facilities and Networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social facilities Crime levels Community involvement 	No. of facilities per head No. of serious crimes per capita Level of people participating in Community Activity	Faite Ireland* CSO/Gardaí Census of Population
8. Affluence and Deprivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic growth Social class composition Strength of labour market 		The new measure of Deprivation The new measure of Deprivation The new measure of Deprivation
* not included in current version of GDI		
SOURCE: DETAILED GDI DATA FRAMEWORK, ANNEX		

Appendix 2 Significant Road Schemes in Northern Ireland likely to have a regional impact in the Border Region in the Republic of Ireland

Existing Schemes in Northern Ireland

Schemes included in the various programmes listed are contained in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan. These include:

Under Construction

Road No	Road Description	Improvements	Scheme Estimate £M	Due Completion
A1	Beech Hill to Cloghogue	New Dual Carriageway	152M	Winter 2010
A4	Dungannon to Ballygawley	Realignment and upgrading	115M	Winter 2010
A1	Junctions at Hillsborough, Banbridge, Loughbrickland and Dromore	Junction improvements	30M	Winter 2009
A4 / A5	Annaghilla and Tullyvar	Realignment	18M	Winter 2010
A2	Broadbridge – Maydown to City of Derry Airport	New Dual Carriageway	24M	Winter 2010
A29	Carland Bridge	Carriageway realignment	4M	Winter 2010

In Planning

Road No	Road Description	Improvements	Status	Scheme Estimate £M
A3	Armagh North and West Link	Link Road	Public Information day held on 26 June 2008	Under Review
A32	Cherrymount Link	Link Road	Notices of Intention and Environmental Statement published in February 2008	Under Review
A5	Aughnacloy (Border) to Londonderry	Dual Carriageway	Public information days to be held April / May 2008	Under Review
A8	Belfast to Larne Road	Provide dual carriageway	Preferred Route announced August 2009	Under Review
A32	Omagh-Dromore-Irvinestown-Enniskillen Road	On-line and off-line improvements	Approval to appoint Consultants on 7 May 2008	Under Review

A2	Buncrana Road Londonderry – 1	Widening to 4-lane carriageway between Pennyburn roundabout and the proposed Skeoge Link roundabout	Minister announced preferred route on 10 February 2009.	Under Review
A2	Buncrana Road Londonderry - 2	Widening to 4-lane carriageway between proposed Skeoge Link roundabout and the Border	Minister announced preferred route on 10 February 2009.	Under Review

Future Schemes in Northern Ireland

These schemes are expected to be implemented within the next ten years or so (subject to clearing the statutory procedures, having a satisfactory economic appraisal and the availability of funds at the time)

Road No	Road Description	Description	Scheme Estimate €M
A28	Armagh East	1.5km single carriageway link road	Under Review
M1 / A1	Sprucefield Bypass	4km of new dual carriageway from M1 motorway to A1 at Hillsborough, bypassing Sprucefield, including flyover at Hillsborough Junction	Under Review
A4	Enniskillen Southern Bypass	Provide 3.2km of 2+1 single carriageway to bypass Enniskillen from A509/A4 Sligo Road to A4 Belfast Road	Under Review
A4	Fivemiletown Bypass	Provide 3.4km of 2+1 single carriageway to bypass Fivemiletown	Under Review

Shared Investments by both Governments in Ireland and Northern Ireland

1. **City of Derry Airport** - Road improvements are now underway in Northern Ireland and will provide a high quality route from the port and airport over the Foyle River and around the City of Derry towards Letterkenny and the wider North West;
2. **The A8 improvement (Belfast-Larne)** – extends the economic potential of the Eastern Corridor by offering more reliable connections for ferry services from Larne to Scotland and Europe;
3. **The N2/A5 (Dublin-Derry) Route** - will offer a significantly improved quality of access to and from the North West. It is envisaged that improvement of the Derry port and airport links and the construction of an orbital route around the City will lead to better distribution of traffic between the Western and Eastern Corridors;

Appendix 3 SWOT Analysis of the Border Region

SWOT Analysis of the Border Region	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Quality of life High quality natural environment Landscape Abundance of water ways Significant Gaeltacht area Strong entrepreneurial spirit Strong arts and culture sector Cultural distinctiveness Leisure and tourism Significant Coastline Cost of living	Weak urban structure Physical barriers to east west movement Poor road network Poor availability of rail services Very poor public transport system Low population density Competition rather than complimentary Brain drain High dependency ratio
Opportunities	Threats
Unique landscape Tourism – branding the region Sustainable development of natural resources Organics Levels of vacancies that currently exist in residential stock Price of property Border and links with Northern Ireland – cross border trade	Currency fluctuations Net-out migration Decline of agriculture, construction, manufacturing, public sector Further weakening of the urban structure and dispersal of population Climate change

Appendix 4 – Waste Management Facilities in Border Region (highlighted in blue)

Donegal Waste Management Plan

No	Applicant Name	Facility Location
24	Donegal County Council	Ballynacarrick, Ballintra*
57	Donegal Co Council	Carndonagh
62	Donegal Co Council	Churchtown, Lifford, Co. Donegal
63	Donegal Co Council	Drumaboden, Kilmacrennan
85	Donegal Co Council	Burtonport Harbour
90	Donegal Co Council	Balbane Landfill Site, Killybegs
125	Donegal County Council	Glenalla Landfill Site, Milford
126	Donegal County Council	Muckish Landfill Site, Falcarragh
149	Minister for Communications, Marine & Natural Resources	Killybegs, Co. Donegal
215	Meenaboll Landfill Site	Meenaboll, Letterkenny Co. Donegal

Connaught Waste Management Plan

No	Applicant Name	Facility Location
13	Galway City Council	Carrowbrowne
21	•Mayo County Council	Derrinnumera, Newport
27	Ballinasloe Town Council	Pollboy, Ballinasloe
58	Waste Disposal Sligo	Deep Water Quay, Sligo
59	Roscommon Co Co	Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon
64	Leitrim Co Council	Ballynamoney, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim
65	Leitrim County Council	Tullybarden, Mohill
67	Mayo County Council	Rathroeen, Ballina
73	Roscommon Co Co	Killarney Townland, Roscommon
106	Bruscar Bhearna Teoranta	Carrowbrowne, Headford Road, Galway
143	McGrath Industrial Waste Ltd.	Gortnafulla, Castlebar, Co. Mayo
148	Dean Waste Co Ltd.	Townlands of Carrowmoneash, Oranmore, Galway
159	Organic Kompost Ltd..	Cloonerkaun, Cloonfad, Barany of Castlerea, Co. Ros
163	Bergin Waste Disposal	Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon
166	Galway City Council	Liosban Industrial Estate, Galway
172	Minister for Communications, Marine & Natural Resources	Rossaveel, Co Galway
178	Greenstar Ltd.	East Galway Residential Landfill
199	Bord na Mona Energy Ltd	Srahmore Peat Deposition Site Co. Mayo
216	J. McLoughlin Waste Disposal	Ardcolum, Drumshanbo, Co Leitrim
256	Lennon Quarries Limited	Tallaght, Belmullet, Co. Mayo, Mayo

North East Waste Management Plan

No	Applicant Name	Facility Location
10	Meath Co Council	Basketstown
20	•Monaghan County Co	Letterbane, Annyalla, Castleblaney
33	Drogheda Borough Council	Collon Road, Mell, Drogheda
34	Dundalk Town Council	Newry Road, Dundalk
52	Drogheda Port Co	Stagrennan Polder, Stagrennan Drogheda
60	Louth County Council	Whiteriver, Co. Louth
77	Cavan County Council	Cootehill Road, Cavan
91	Cavan County Council	Bailiborough Landfill Site
92	Cavan County Council	Belturbet Landfill
93	Cavan County Council	Ballyjamesduff Landfill
103	Meath County Council	Knockharley Landfill, Navan
117	Greenhill Compost Ltd.	Carnagh Upr, Kilcogy, Co Cavan
118	Marley Compost Ltd.	Crush, Carrigroe, Co Monaghan
121	Kabeyun Ltd.	Gibraltar, Castleshane, Co Monaghan
131	Midland Waste Disposal Ltd.	Clonmagaddan, Proudstown, Navan
140	•Panda Waste Services	Rathdrinagh, Beauparc, Co. Meath
144	Bambi Bins	Coes Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth
146	Greenstar Ltd.	Knockharley, Navan, Co. Meath
151	Murphy Concrete Manufacturing Ltd.	Sarsfieldtown, Gormanstown, Co. Meath
167	Indaver Ireland	Curranstown, Duleek, Co. Meath
182	Natures Way Composting Ltd.	Corbollis Ready Penny, Dundalk, Co. Louth
195	McGill Env. Systems (Irl) Ltd.	Ballynalurgan, Kilmainhamwood, Kells, Meath
206	PTWD Ltd.	Dunboyne, Co. Meath
207	Cavan Waste Disposal	Killygarry Industrial Park, Co. Cavan
219	Organic Gold	Navan, Co. Meath
226	Monopower Ltd. -	Killycarren, Emyvale, Co. Monaghan 248n
248	Oxigen Environmental Ltd	Corranure Landfill, Cootehill Road, Cavan, Co. Cavan.
262	Kiernan Sand & Gravel Ltd.	Foxtown, Summerhill, Co. Meath, Meath
265	Clashford Recovery Facility Ltd.	Naul Townland, Naul, Co. Meath, Meath
268	Lyndon Douglas	Moynalvey, Summerhill, Co. Meath

* Waste Management Facilities within the Border Regional Authority Area

Appendix 5 Mitigation from SEA Environmental Report

Schedule 2B of the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 requires that consideration be given to; “the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan”. Mitigation involves ameliorating significant negative effects and enhancing positive ones. The EPA Guidelines on SEA (2003) state that mitigation; “may involve preventing impacts altogether, reducing their magnitude as much as possible and/or probability of occurrence, or putting in place measures to remedy effects after they have occurred, or to compensate for them by providing environmental benefits elsewhere”. It is important to note that Strategic Environmental Assessment is an integral part of the making of the Guidelines and that this is an iterative process. Consequently the environmental report will continue to influence the making of the Guidelines.

The Guidelines incorporate a wide range of aims, objectives and policies that are founded on the principle of sustainable development. In particular the Guidelines have been formulated with the explicit intention of protecting the environment and avoiding potentially adverse environmental impacts. A number of meetings/workshops have taken place during the formulation of the Guidelines involving the groups such as; the Technical Working Group, the SEA team, the Habitats team, Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, Environmental Protection Agency, National Parks and Wildlife Service, North South Share River Basin District Office, Northern Ireland Environmental Agency and Infrastructural Providers. At these meetings/workshops environmental considerations were central to the making of the Guidelines.

Remaining potentially adverse conflicts or impacts may be characterised as ‘residual impacts’. These are potential impacts that remain after all mitigation measures have been considered under the RPG process. The majority of these are potential impacts, which are likely to be capable of further mitigation through careful, detailed implementation of best practices in terms of development management process and the implementation of County Development Plans, Local Area Plans, Framework Plans, other Plans and Guidelines.

As outlined in the preamble to this report, the management and care of the environment falls within the responsibility of a very wide range of departments and agencies and is governed by a raft of legislative requirements and guidelines. In this regard the Guidelines have been formulated so as to integrate with a wide range of plans and programmes and secure a strategic approach towards the sustainable development of the Region.

It is important to note in terms of environmental assessment, that certain individual plans and projects that provide the framework for development, including County Development Plans, Local Area Plans will be subject to SEA and Habitats Assessment Reports as the need arises. In addition, proposals for developments will be subject to detailed assessment in terms of normal planning requirements including where deemed necessary; Environmental and other Technical Reports, Environmental Impact Assessments and Habitats Assessments.

The measures referred to above will act to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant effects of implementing the Guidelines.

Recommendations arising from Strategic Environmental Assessment

1. The import of the statements in respect to the framework within which the Guidelines operate, and the requirement that development envisaged in the Guidelines is predicated on the provision of adequate infrastructure, community services and facilities and also resources becoming available, as set out in the Preamble herein, should be suitably incorporated into the Guidelines.

2. A statement should be inserted in the Guidelines indicating that they should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Report and Habitats Assessment Report.
3. Further guidance in respect to flood risk should be provided in the Guidelines outline the level of detail required within a hierarchy of subsidiary plans.
4. Policy Addition: Local Authorities shall priorities, and aim to comply with, the recommendations set out in the EPA Report 2009, Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland for Population Equivalents Greater than 500 Persons – A Report for the Years 2006 and 2007.
5. Policy Addition: Local Authorities shall priorities, and aim to comply with, the recommendations set out in the EPA Report 2009, The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland – A Report for the Years 2007 and 2008.
6. Policy Addition: Planning Authorities shall consult and seek to collaborate with adjoining Planning Authorities in order to ensure that Development Plan designations, policies and guidelines with respect to the management of the landscape are consistent.
7. Policy Addition: Planning Authorities shall seek to integrate land-use and transportation planning so as to minimise the carbon footprint of urban areas.
8. Policy Addition: Planning Authorities shall consult and seek to collaborate with the Northern Ireland Environmental Agency in order to ensure that Development Plans adopt a joint approach towards the management of the environment and the provision of infrastructure, community services and facilities.

Incorporating Environmental Issues into Draft RPGS and Mitigation Measures

Environmental Issue	Policy, Objective, or reference in RPG's	Additional Policy Objective or Reference Required (final check)
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna		
Impact of development works e.g. forestry, agricultural activities and wide range of infrastructural works	SG5, SG6 ESP 5 INFP 1, INFP 14, INFP 18 – INFP 22, INFO 6, INFP 23, INFP 28, ENVP 1 – ENVP 3, ENVP 4 – ENVP 6, ENVO 2 – ENVO 5, ENVP 9 – ENVP 11, ENVO 8 – ENVO 12, ENVP 14, ENVO 29 – 31, ENVP 15,	
Protection of watercourses especially sensitive water bodies	ESP 8 INFP 18 – INFP 22, INFO 6, INFP 23, ENVP 4 – ENVP 6, ENVO 2 – ENVO 5, ENVO 5, ENVP 9 – ENVP 11, ENVO 8 – ENVO 12, ENVP 15,	
Conservation of Fish Stock	Most water related policies and objectives apply to varying degrees	
Control of Invasive Species	ENVP 6, ENVO 2 – ENVO 5,	
Protection of Natura 2000 sites including certain sites within Northern Ireland	CSP 9, INFP 1, INFP 14, INFP 18, INFP 20 - INFP 22, INFO 6, INFP 23, INFP 28, ENVP 4 –	

	ENVP 6, ENVO 2 – ENVO 5, ENVO 5, ENVP 9 – ENVP 11, ENVO 8 – ENVO 12, ENVP 15,	
Alignment with “Green City Guidelines 2008”	ENVP 6, ENVO 2 – ENVO 5	
Protection of Annex 11 species such as Freshwater Pearl Mussel and Salmon	Biodiversity related policies and objectives apply to varying degrees	Make specific reference to protection of protection of Pearl Mussel. See ENVP 9
Ramsar Sites and Statutory Nature Reserves	ENVO 2 – ENVO 5,	
Ecological Networks	ENVO 2 – ENVO 5, ENVP 15,	
Shellfish Waters	Biodiversity related policies and objectives apply to varying degrees	Make specific reference to protection of Shellfish Waters. See ENVO 8
Population and Human Health		
Quality of Life	Vision Statement and most policies and objectives apply to varying degrees.	
Population Trends and Regional Population Targets and Settlement Patterns	SG2, SG 7, Ch 3 (Table 3.1), Ch 3 Balanced Development Model, Settlement Strategy (Aims, Model, Framework,) and Policies CSP 1 – CSP 9	
Health and its relationship with environmental issues	Many policies and objectives apply to varying degrees - with particular reference to, drinking water quality, provision of; community related infrastructure, services and facilities.	
Radon in buildings		* add statement to RPGs Refer to SEA.
Road Safety		Add reference to RPG's e.g. L A working in collaboration with other stakeholders have a key role to play in bringing Irelands road safety record in line with 'best practice' countries throughout the World. Refer to SEA. See section 5.2.2.4
Provision of infrastructure and community facilities	INFP 2 - INFP 22, INFP 23, INFP 24, INFP 25, INFP 27, INFO 12 – INFO 18, INFP 28, INFP 29, ENVP 13, ENVO 23 – 28, ENVP 15, SIP 1, SIP 2, SIO 1 – SIO 10,	
Flooding	FRP1 – FRP10.	
Water		
Impact of development works on water quality eg forestry,	SG6, INFP 18 – INFP 22, INFO 6, INFP 23, INFP 28, ENVP 4 –	

agricultural activities and wide range of infrastructural works	ENVP 6, ENVO 2 – ENVO 5, ENVO 5, ENVP 9 – ENVP 11, ENVO 8 – ENVO 12, ENVP 15,	
Alignment with aims policies and objectives of River Basin District Plans	SG6, INFP 18, INFO 6 ENVO 5, ENVP 9 – ENVP 11, ENVO 8 – ENVO 12, ENVP 15,	
Wastewater and Drinking Water and Bathing Water requirements – with particular refer to recent EPA Reports on Wastewater Treatment and Quality of Drinking Water	SG6 ESP 8 INFP 3, INFP 1 – INFP 6, INFP 18 – INFP 22 INFO 1 – INFO 6, INFP 23, ENVP 4 – ENVP 6, ENVO 2 – ENVO 5, ENVO 5, ENVP 9 – ENVP 11, ENVO 8 – ENVO 12, ENVP 15,	

Air and Climate Change		
Climate Change & Air Quality	SG 6, ENVP 1 – ENVP 3, ENVO 1, ENVP 15,	
Impact of Climate Change on Cultural and Natural Heritage, Coastal Flooding	ENVP 1 – ENVP 3, ENVO 1	
Limiting greenhouse gas emissions and reducing dependency on fossil fuels	ESP 7 INFP 6 INFP 7 - INFP 13, INFP 24 – NNFP 26, INFO 7 – INFO 11, ENVP 1 – ENVP 3, ENVO 1, ENVP 15,	
Cultural Heritage		
Impact of development works eg forestry, agricultural activities and wide range of infrastructural works	SG5, SG 6, INFP 23, ENVP 12, ENVO 13 – 22, ENVP 14, ENVO 29 – 31, ENVP 15,	
Identification and protection of Geological Sites.	SG5, ENVP 5, ENVO 1, ENVO 2.	Add statement outlining the need for L A to collaborate with each other and with the GSI in identifying and protecting geological sites of importance – refer to submission from GSI in SEA – See Section 6.9 – Built Heritage
Protection of items of Architectural and Archeological Interest	SG5, INFP 23, ENVO 8 – ENVO 12, ENVP 14, ENVO 29 – 31, ENVP 15,	
Consideration of Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark	ESP 6	
Landscape		
Impact of development works eg forestry, agricultural activities and wide range of infrastructural works	SG5 SG 6 ESP 5, INFP 23, INFO 7, ENVP 7, ENVP 8, ENVO 6 – ENVO 7, ENVO 22, ENVP 14, ENVO 29 – 31, ENVP 15,	
Identification. classification and protection of landscape	SG6 ENVP 7, ENVP 8 ENVO 6 – ENVO 7, ENVO 22, ENVP 14,	

	ENVO 29 – 31, ENVP 15,	
Lack of uniformity between Local Authorities towards management of landscape	SG6, ENVP 7, ENVP 8 ENVO 6 – ENVO 7, ENVP 14, ENVO 29 – 31, ENVP 15,	
Other Issues		
Urban Character, layout and Design	ENVP 12, ENVO 13 - ENVO 22	
One-off housing in the countryside	Many policies and objectives apply to varying degrees, CSP 8 in particular	
Cross border co-operation and collaboration in respect to spatial planning	SG6, SG8, INFP 29, ENVP 15, ENVO 23, SIO 2,	
Cumulative impact of off-shore wind farms		
Development of Recreation and Tourism Facilities	ESP 5, ESP 6	
Intercounty and Transboundary Environmental Pressures	SG6 SG8 ESP 6 INFP 1, ENVP 4 – ENVP 6, ENVO 2 – ENVO 5, ENVO 5, ENVP 9 – ENVP 11, ENVO 8 – ENVO 12, ENVO 8 – ENVO 12, ENVO 23, ENVP 15,	
Coastal Management	SG6, ENVP 14, ENVO 29 – 31,	
Waste Management	SG6, INFP 28, INFP 29.	
Alternatives under Art 5 of the SEA Directive	CH 3 Settlement Strategy with particular reference to, Settlement Hierarchy and the Balanced Development Model)	
Level of Commercial and Residential Vacancy	CSP 3, Other measures including Economic Strategy, provision of key Infrastructural and Community related services and facilities.	
Sustaining Rural Communities	CSP 8, INFP 5 INFP 8, INFP 18, INFP 19, INFP 23, INFP SIP 1, SIP 2, SIO 1 – SIO 10, 27, INFO 12 – INFO 18,	

Appendix 6 Mitigation from Habitats Directive Assessment Report

Mitigation Measures

Development, by its nature, necessitates land use change generally from a vegetated area dominated by agricultural or semi-natural land cover to a built environment fulfilling the residential, commercial and physical infrastructural requirements of society. The RPGs set out policies and strategic objectives that direct this development to robust receiving environments which have the capacity to absorb such development, and also outline Development Plan Implications for Local Authorities within its jurisdiction.

Initial reviews of the policies and objectives in the Guidelines indicated that there may be a risk of adverse effects on the integrity of many Natura sites. Any adverse effects or potential significant impact could be overcome through appropriate mitigation measures. Mitigation measures in the form of amendments and additions to the policies and objectives are provided to ensure compliance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive by integrating measures for the protection of Natura 2000 sites into all policy areas covered by the proposed plan. Mitigating policies clearly indicate that where any physical development, such as housing, commercial development, roads, ports, service infrastructure or any other form of development, has the potential to significantly impact on a Natura 2000 site, it will be subject to an individual HDA process, as defined by Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive. Where it is found that the plan or project has the potential to directly or indirectly impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, the appropriate mitigation will be through avoidance. If avoidance is not possible, mitigation in the form of alternatives to the proposed plan or project must be sought. In considering alternative solutions the conservation objectives and status of the Natura 2000 site will outweigh any considerations of cost, delays or other aspects of an alternative solution. The competent authority should not, therefore, limit its consideration of alternative solutions to those suggested by the project or plan proponents. It is the member state's responsibility to consider alternative solutions, which could be located within different regions or counties.

Recommendations have also been made in relation to cross-compliance with other relevant plans, such as all the Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans within the Region, where such plans clearly facilitate the protection of Natura 2000 sites.

The mitigation arising from Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is incorporated into the following policies and objectives which have been incorporated into the Draft RPGs, to ensure there are no significant effects on the Natura 2000 network, both in situ and ex situ, as a result of the implementation of the Guidelines:

INFP 1, ENVP 4, and ENVP 5: Ensure that plans and projects are assessed according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, by consideration of the conservation objectives, qualifying interest and threats to the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites. These are:

INFP 1, INFP 2, INFP 4, ENVP 4, and ENVP 5: Ensure that all plans and projects associated with the development/improvement of the strategic radial corridors and strategic links identified within the region are assessed according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

INFP 1, INFP 14, and INFP 16: Ensure that all development, expansion, or improvement of ports or airports are assessed according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

INFP 1, INFP 19, ENVP 4, and ENVP 5: Ensure that all plans and projects associated with the provision of water and sewerage facilities comply with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

INFP 1, INFP 23, ENVO 4, and ENVP 5: Ensure that all plans and projects for the development of energy networks are assessed according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

INFP 1, INFP 28, EVNP 4, and ENVP 5: Ensure that all plans and projects associated with the development of waste management infrastructure area assessed according to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

INFP 1, FRP3, ENVP 4, ENVP 5: Ensure the protection of the Natura 2000 sites' supporting rivers and streams by avoiding development in areas at risk from flooding, whilst facilitating the continued growth and expansion of the key urban settlements that are at risk from coastal or fluvial flooding.

INFP 1, FRP 1, ENVP 4, and ENVP 5: Ensure that development and local area plans adopt a strategic approach to flood risk management to avoid any negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites.