

## Appendix 1

### ICBAN Progress against Action Plan (01 April 2021 - 31 March 2022) PROGRESS REPORT FOR PERIOD 1 APRIL 2021 - 31 DECEMBER 2021

ICBAN TARGETS/OUTPUTS 2021/22	ACTIVITIES	PROGRESS
<b>Platform for Cross Border Cooperation in the ICBAN Region.</b>	<p>Facilitate and service Board Meetings, CEO/CM Meetings, other Sector Specific / Thematic Meetings</p> <p>Facilitate and service meetings with key stakeholders and assist in establishing better cross border working relationships and arrangements.</p>	<p><b>ICBAN Management Board Meetings were held on:</b> 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021.</p> <p><b>ICBAN Annual General Meeting was held on:</b> 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021</p> <p><b>Officer Group Meetings were held on:</b> 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021, 09<sup>th</sup> June 2021, 06<sup>th</sup> September 2021, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021, 09<sup>th</sup> November 2021, 08<sup>th</sup> December 2021.</p> <p><b>Meetings/Events from 01 April 2021 - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Launch of East Border Region strategy, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021</li> <li>▪ Attendance at launch of PEACE Platform: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021</li> <li>▪ Attendance at NPA Programme Project Closure Workshop: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021</li> <li>▪ AEER's General Assembly and Annual Conference on 'Making the EU Green Deal work in Cross-Border Regions', 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021.</li> <li>▪ NPA Annual Conference held in Sligo on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021.</li> </ul>
<b>Contribute to the effective and efficient running of ICBAN.</b>	<p>Ongoing operation of Internal Control System. Annual Financial Statement / Accounts.</p> <p>Supporting the employment of an Administrator.</p>	<p><b>Internal Control System:</b> The Accounts and Audit Statement for 2020/21 were approved at the AGM on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021.</p> <p><b>Executive Assistant employed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the development and implementation of ICBAN's corporate aims and objectives, through the provision of administration and secretarial services.</li> <li>• Providing competent, reliable and efficient secretarial, administrative and support services for ICBAN.</li> <li>• Corporate Administration: arranging appointments and service meetings for the ICBAN Management Board and Sub-Committees, Working Groups and others as required.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial &amp; Company Administration: including banking, payroll, Assets Register, procurement etc.</li> <li>Project Administration: maintaining a management information system for all project related documentation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support the employment of the ICBAN CEO to lead the organisation moving forward.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership, management &amp; development of ICBAN.</li> <li>Develop strategic focus of ICBAN in partnership with Member Councils.</li> <li>Maintain and grow ICBAN's position in cross border development and promote cross border cooperation.</li> <li>Communicating the benefits, successes and awareness of ICBAN within the region and beyond.</li> <li>Establish, develop &amp; maintain robust structures and systems to ensure effective and efficient delivery of agreed outcomes.</li> <li>Report to the ICBAN Management Board.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CEO Principal Accountabilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acting as a figure head for ICBAN.</li> <li>Developing and managing new relationships with Councils (elected representatives &amp; officials).</li> <li>Working with Partner Council Chief Executives and County Managers.</li> <li>Maintaining ICBAN's position in cross border development through effective influencing at community, local and central government level.</li> <li>Providing leadership, managing and developing the ICBAN operational team.</li> <li>Contributing to the development and implementation of strategic, operational and project plans, in partnership with ICBAN member Councils and other stakeholders as appropriate.</li> <li>Overseeing systems and procedures to ensure effective and efficient delivery of agreed outcomes.</li> <li>Facilitating collaboration between stakeholders in the field of strategic regional development in the cross-border area. Reporting to the Management Board.</li> <li>Managing public relations and maximising exposure to and awareness of ICBAN's work throughout the central border region.</li> </ul> <p><b>Promoting cross border cooperation through - activities included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with counterparts in the East Border Region Partnership and Centre for Cross Border Studies, regarding the Peace Plus consultation, and engaging with Shared Island Unit: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021</li> <li>Attendance at the Presentation of the results of the 1st Quarterly Survey on the Conditions for North-South and East-West Cooperation: 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021</li> <li>Meeting with Colm Markey MEP: 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021</li> <li>Meeting with Waterways Ireland: 06<sup>th</sup> May 2021</li> <li>Meeting with Shared Island Unit: 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021</li> <li>Meeting with the Waterways Community: 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021</li> <li>Meeting with InterTrade Ireland: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021.</li> <li>Presentation to the Oireachtas Joint Committee for the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021</li> <li>Meeting with the President, Vice President and Chair of the Board of Governors of Institute of Technology, Sligo: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021.</li> <li>Attendance at CCBS workshop on "Border-proofing": Do we need to measure cross-border impacts of policy?: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021</li> <li>Meeting with ICRLD on rural regeneration projects development: 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021</li> <li>Presentation to Fermanagh &amp; Omagh District Council on Brexit: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021</li> <li>Attendance at ICRLD webinar on 'Changing Spatial Relationships between Home and Workplace': 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Meeting with South West College (06<sup>th</sup> October 2021) and Southern Regional College (18<sup>th</sup> October 2021) to discuss Border Hubs concept and cross-border opportunities.</li><li>▪ Meeting with the Sinn Féin representatives to discuss the implementation of the FRP: 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021</li><li>▪ Meeting with Senator Emer Currie: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021</li><li>▪ Meeting with UK Government Minister of State Conor Burns MP in Enniskillen. The Minister was asked to re-consider the UK’s participation in the future INTERREG programme as part of UK-EU negotiations, and to examine how a joint territorial fund could be created drawing upon the opportunities in both the Irish Government’s Shared Island Fund and the UK’s Shared Prosperity and Levelling-up Funds. The Minister has asked the CEO to outline this further in follow-up correspondence: this was then sent on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021.</li><li>▪ Meeting with Shared Island Unit: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021</li><li>▪ Meeting with the Project Manager of the BRIDE (Biodiversity Regeneration in a Dairying Environment) Project to discuss project implementation: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021</li><li>▪ Meeting with the SEUPB to discuss the PEACE Plus Programme priorities: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021</li><li>▪ Meeting with the Sinn Féin Policy Unit, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021</li><li>▪ Meeting with regional Fianna Fáil Senators, TDs and local representatives to discuss and promote the FRP: 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021</li><li>▪ Meeting with Involve re All-Island Democratic Innovation Network: 01<sup>st</sup> December 2021</li><li>▪ Meeting with regional colleges to discuss the Border Growth Hubs proposal and Human Capital Pillar of the FRP: 01<sup>st</sup> December 2021</li><li>▪ Meeting with rivers/water quality stakeholders to discuss developmental opportunities: 02<sup>nd</sup> December 2021</li><li>▪ CEO invited to participate as a panel member for the launch event of NESC report ‘Climate and Biodiversity Ambition: Shared Island as a Catalyst’: 08<sup>th</sup> December 2021.</li><li>▪ Presentation to Armagh City, Banbridge &amp; Craigavon Borough Council’s Governance, Resources &amp; Strategy Committee: 08<sup>th</sup> December 2021</li><li>▪ Meeting with QUB Intern to discuss Ulster Canal Brief: 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021</li><li>▪ Meeting with TASC to discuss roll-out of Border Transition Project: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021</li></ul> <p>On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021, ICBAN received a grant offer of €20,000 from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) towards the organisation’s core costs.</p>						
Sustain Existing Jobs	Support the provision of a staff complement to enable ICBAN to achieve its goals. Projected: 3 full time	<b>ICBAN Secretariat:</b> <table><tr><td>Shane Campbell</td><td>CEO</td></tr><tr><td>Joanne Breen</td><td>Executive Assistant</td></tr><tr><td>Andy Hallewell</td><td>Innovation Officer</td></tr></table>	Shane Campbell	CEO	Joanne Breen	Executive Assistant	Andy Hallewell	Innovation Officer
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<p><b>ICBAN Strategic Development Function</b></p>	<p><b>Digital Connectivity - Telecoms/High Speed Internet Provision</b></p> <p>Lobby for improved broadband connectivity investment</p> <p>Implement, monitor and report on recommendations outlined in the 'Fibre at Crossroads Part II Report</p> <p>Review NIAO Report on award of Project Stratum contract by July 2021. Progress and report on findings</p> <p><b>Brexit</b></p> <p>Progress cross border co-operation, monitor evolving developments and advise on responses to consultations in respect of Brexit and the NI Protocol.</p> <p>In collaboration with Queens University Belfast, complete research into the impact of Brexit and the NI Protocol on those living and working in the Central Border Region by November 2021.</p>	<p>The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) has finalised their report into the use of public monies on broadband infrastructure in NI, through BT. This request had originally been put to the Audit Office by ICBAN in 2018. The <a href="#">report</a> was released on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021.</p> <p>The challenges of home working / schooling during the public health crisis have featured in the report and NIAO had asked for any anecdotal evidence on frustrations with using and accessing broadband during lockdown. Examples from Mid Ulster have been cited (1.12 of report).</p> <p>ICBAN has asked the Stormont Public Accounts Committee to action a review of the key findings.</p> <p>ICBAN continues to monitor the roll-out of Project Stratum and welcome the commitment that over 37,000 premises in the three ICBAN NI Council areas will be passed as part of Project Stratum: (<a href="#">Fermanagh &amp; Omagh District Council: 14,821; Mid Ulster District Council: 12,289; Armagh City Banbridge &amp; Craigavon Borough Council: 10,080</a>).</p> <p>ICBAN keeps abreast of Brexit developments, through monitoring of current affairs and governmental updates. ICBAN has been submitting evidence to a number of committees and consultations and uses such opportunities to make representations on behalf of the Central Border Region.</p> <p>Together with a small team from Queen's University Belfast, ICBAN has been delivering 'The Border After Brexit' project. This project has enabled engagement with communities and stakeholders in the Central Border Region to consider the implications of Brexit and the NI Protocol.</p> <p>The objective is: <i>To facilitate the broad, fair, and inclusive representation of views from the border region that are otherwise overlooked or under-represented.</i></p> <p><b>'Temperature Gauge' blog series:</b> From January 2021, QUB conducted a 'temperature gauge' on Brexit and the NI Protocol in which relevant media stories and events across these islands were reported on. This formed the basis of a Blog every six weeks, which summarised the main stories and occurrences. There were four Blogs for each of the following weeks: <a href="#">1-5</a>, <a href="#">6-12</a>, <a href="#">13-18</a>, and <a href="#">19-25</a>.</p> <p><b>Research element</b></p>
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	<p><b>Creative Industries &amp; Tourism</b></p> <p>Boost the attractiveness of tourism destinations in Mid Ulster</p> <p>Progress development of literary tourism in Mid Ulster</p> <p>Report on the 'Business of Literature Zones' project (BLITZ)</p> <p>Develop a Marketing Framework within 5 Regional SMEs by 30 June 2021</p> <p>Support and engage with 5 Regional SMEs to develop new Immersive Technology concepts for 5 new products/services by June 2021</p>	





	<p>Deliver a series of webinars to enable small businesses to take advantage of the AR and VR resources</p>	<p>ICBAN has organised two of these free webinars for SMEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) training for small businesses selling on the Internet;</li> <li>• Automated Marketing processes for small businesses.</li> </ul> <p>Details of all the webinars have been promoted and shared with Councils and businesses from across the Central Border Region:</p> <p><i>22nd November 2021: 'e-Exporting &amp; Marketing' (3hrs)</i> E-Commerce, Mobile-Commerce &amp; Social Commerce; How companies can sell online via these channels, the pros and cons of each, the international opportunities they present, how these channels / digital marketing efforts can attract international traffic and how to convert these leads into paying customers</p> <p><i>01st December 2021: Export Marketing Plan (3hrs)</i> How to create an effective export marketing plan and factors to consider such as foreign country selection, competitor landscape, channels, methods, timelines, budget etc.</p> <p><i>07<sup>th</sup> December 10am: Search Engine Optimisation (2hrs)</i> Improve the quality and quantity of website traffic to SME websites from search engines and enhance business visibility and brand awareness. This workshop will work with real life practical examples drawn from a selection of pre agreed participant companies. The level is aimed at entry level with a view to intermediate progression.</p> <p><i>9th December 2021: Automated Marketing (2hrs)</i> How to automate SME marketing efforts resulting in consistent and quality content being distributed to target customers while saving time - thus allowing SMEs to focus on other important business activities. This is a practical, industry-based session pitched at entry level in terms of e.g., Mailchimp and HubSpot but signposting towards intermediate progression for those SMEs wishing to develop their future capacity in this area.</p> <p><u>Digital City: The online gated business community</u></p> <p>The full launch of the website is now being planned to coincide with the final international webinar events for SMEs.</p> <p>A test version of the project website may be viewed now at: <a href="https://digi2market.eu/">https://digi2market.eu/</a></p>
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	<p><b>Collective Advocacy on behalf of the Region</b></p> <p>Report on the promotion and implementation of The Framework of Regional Priorities for the Central Border region 2021-2027</p>	<p>The project final conference is scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 in Coleraine.</p> <p><b>The Framework of Regional Priorities for the Central Border Region, 2021-2027'</b>  The Framework of Regional Priorities (FRP) strategy document provides a timely and important refresh of the Regional Strategic Framework (RSF) (2013 - 2027). This strategic initiative launched in March 2021 recognises the geopolitical, economic and social changes that have occurred since the publication of the RSF, initially due to Brexit, and subsequently due to climate change and COVID.</p> <p>This FRP is motivated by, and seeks to give effect to, ICBAN's vision of a region with a thriving and diversified economy that will be strengthened and sustained through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encouraging investment in value-added industries and promoting innovation;</li> <li>• embracing new technologies and enhancing connectivity;</li> <li>• expanding knowledge capital;</li> <li>• enhancing quality of life; and</li> <li>• utilising the environment respectfully and responsibly.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>ICBAN continues to promote the FRP. Meetings have been held with key stakeholders, including all Member Councils' Senior Management and local political representatives, Shared Island Unit, Oireachtas Joint Committee for the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, Institute of Technology, Sligo, FE Colleges, Waterways Ireland, and InterTrade Ireland etc.</p> <p>The FRP Sub-Committee has been established with the aim of supporting the overall work programme of the ICBAN Management Board, in overseeing the implementation of the Framework of Regional Priorities (FRP) strategy. It is intended that this Sub-Committee will help bring an energy and impetus to the delivery of the regional priorities.</p> <p>This will be an oversight role that will 1) support and direct the operational efforts of staff, and 2) advise the Management Board on decisions relating to delivery of the FRP.</p> <p>The remit includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- helping identify and apply for financial supports for the implementation plans,</li> <li>- directing promotional plans,</li> <li>- reviewing research and reports,</li> <li>- enhancing engagement and buy-in from member Councils,</li> <li>- monitoring the operational programme,</li> <li>- and putting in place structures for engaging other regional and national stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p>It is anticipated that the sub-committee would seek and attend meetings with stakeholders on key project developments, advocacy initiatives, and related issues for attention.</p>
	<p>FRP Subcommittee established</p>	

	Ongoing promotion Catalyst projects	<p>The Sub-Committee has met on 05<sup>th</sup> May 2021, 02<sup>nd</sup> June 2021, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021, 08<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and 07<sup>th</sup> October 2021. The next meeting is planned for 06<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and this will include a presentation/discussion with the Project Manager of the climate-friendly farming BRIDE Project.</p> <p>Two post-graduate students from Queen's University Belfast commenced their internships with ICBAN on 01<sup>st</sup> February 2021 and completed in May 2021. One intern has completed research on <a href="#">Farm to Fork: Strengthening and Developing Agri-Food Initiatives in the Central Border Region</a>.</p> <p>The other has completed a <a href="#">Briefing Paper on the Implications of Brexit for ICBAN's 'Framework of Regional Priorities for the Central Border Region, 2021-2027'</a>.</p> <p>An intern will commence work on the Ulster Canal restoration project in 2022.</p> <p><b>Catalyst Projects</b> ICBAN has identified a shortlist of regional catalyst projects, that could further enable the Central Border Region to add value to its territorial assets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Catalyst 1: Farm to Fork - strengthening the region's agriculture sector, food processing industry, catering firms and hospitality providers to collaboratively avail of new and emerging opportunities and sectoral trends;</li> <li>▪ Catalyst 2: Greenways and Blueways - growing and connecting these vital pieces of infrastructure - to promote tourism and active travel;</li> <li>▪ Catalyst 3: River Catchments Sustainability - working with all stakeholders across river catchments - from source to sea, to enhance water quality and to drive cross-sectoral projects that will strengthen the region's economic base;</li> <li>▪ Catalyst 4: A Thriving Regional Bioeconomy - to build on Councils' work in this field through advancing research and development (R&amp;D), upping regional skills capacity and enabling greater industrial and spatial collaboration; and</li> <li>▪ Catalyst 5: International Mountain Biking Destination - to develop a connected / networked set of mountain-biking trails - capitalising on the region's topography and adding value to the existing suite of visitor attractions, while providing local communities with new amenities.</li> </ul>
	Updates on progress in respect of Mid South West Growth Deal	<p><b>Mid South West Growth Deal</b></p> <p>Through the Council Senior Officers' Forum, ICBAN receives regular updates from the Officers of the three NI Councils included in the MSW Deal. The ICBAN CEO will meet with the Council Directors in the MSW group on 17<sup>th</sup> December.</p>

		<b>Consultation responses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PEACE Plus Consultation Response (06<sup>th</sup> May 2021)</li> <li>▪ DAERA Rural Policy Framework for NI (06<sup>th</sup> September 2021)</li> <li>▪ Armagh City, Banbridge &amp; Craigavon Borough Council Draft Agriculture Strategy Consultation response (15<sup>th</sup> October 2021)</li> <li>▪ DAERA draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland (21<sup>st</sup> December 2021)</li> </ul>
<b>Events / Promotion / Materials</b>		<p>Updating Facebook, Twitter and the ICBAN website on project developments and promotion of project activities.</p> <p>A dedicated website and social media accounts have been created for the Spot-lit and Digi-2-Market project.</p> <p>A promotional programme has been devised to promote and disseminate the Framework of Regional Priorities.</p>
<b>Cross Border Linkages - provide opportunities for shared learning &amp; ensure a coherent impact of investment throughout the eligible area.</b>	Continue to strengthen the working relationships with the East Border Region, and North West Region, to share learning and good practice	<p>ICBAN has continued to build effective working relationships with the other Cross-Border Groups in North West and East Border regions.</p> <p>ICBAN works very closely with the other Cross Border Groups, sharing information on a range of topical issues relating to cross-border working. Meetings are regularly held with East Border Region, North West Strategic Partnership Board, and Centre for Cross Border Studies and discussions include Peace Plus, engaging with Shared Island Unit, and rolling out their various regional development frameworks / strategies.</p>