

Networking in Europe and Beyond



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OFMDFM

Networking in Europe and Beyond

A review of Measure 4.1 of the Peace II
programme



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In the main the review report aims to 'aggregate-up' the views expressed during the course of the research for this review. However in order to provide some illustrations and 'colour' to this review report, a range of 'sentiments' expressed to the PwC review team during the course of the research for this review are included in particular sections of this report. These should not be viewed as 'verbatim quotations' from these discussions nor are they intended to be formal case studies. Rather they are included to provide illustrations of the diversity of activity within the Measure 4.1 projects and of some of the impacts and outcomes arising.

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Executive Summary

Background

1. The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE II) is a unique EU funding Programme which covers Northern Ireland and the six border counties of Ireland (Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo). The Programme aims to help Northern Ireland become a more peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region. The PEACE II programme aims to '*reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promote reconciliation*'.
2. Within PEACE II Measure 4.1 was established to support organisations that promote EU and international networking and facilitate the exchange of best practice in peace and reconciliation trans-nationally. With an allocation of circa £7m, it **offered the scope, because of the nature of activities supported, for significant leverage in terms of 'shared learning' and profiling of Northern Ireland (and the Border Counties) in a European/¹ international setting**. Twenty-two projects were funded, 18 under OFMDFM and four under SEUPB.
3. The European Policy and Co-ordination Unit (EPCU), of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), as the main implementing body for Measure 4.1 appointed PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to assess the effectiveness and impact of the funded activity. The Terms of Reference for the Review are set out in Section I of the report along with the research methodology employed by the PwC assignment team.

Main highlights

4. Reflecting on the various sections in the main report it is evident that:-
 - Only a small proportion of the projects funded by the Measure had any prior experience of constructive dialogue and structured networking with external regions. In view of all of the above, it should be concluded that **the baseline position for Measure 4.1 was minimal**;
 - The **Priority level targets for the Measure as a whole have been met** (indeed slightly exceeded). Over and above the headline figure of 22 projects supported, it should be acknowledged that all projects encompassed a number of sub-networks based on different themes of dialogue and interaction; and/ or different geographies. The Measure was proactively managed to optimise impacts arising and related expenditure. **Circa £7million of funding was successfully committed and spent, which leveraged a further £1.5million of match funding** (both in cash and in-kind across 14 out of the 22 projects). The split of funding between Northern Ireland and the Border Region was 93:7 respectively;
 - The **fit with the Peace and Reconciliation agenda was very strong across Measure 4.1 funded projects**. It is clear that linking members of civil society from Northern Ireland and the Border Region to external regions has created a 'safe space' for constructive dialogue to happen that otherwise may not have happened. In turn this has contributed to a very wide range of reconciliation impacts within Northern Ireland and the Border Region

¹ Activities supported were primarily orientated towards Europe, but there was some scope for wider international networking.

(for example, new or renewed relationships between divided communities; changed attitudes including the development of a culture of respect/ tolerance; acknowledgement of the 'past' and dealing with same; a greater sense of a shared society / 'Shared Future²');

- **With reference to the PEACE II distinctiveness criteria³ it is clear that while all projects took opportunities arising from the peace process as a main objective, not all of the projects were as successful in addressing the legacy of the conflict.** The ability to address the legacy of the conflict was more evident in projects that were totally centred on networking around conflict resolution and involving, for instance, work with beneficiary groups such as victims, politically motivated ex-prisoners, and current / former members of the security services. In respect of the 5 'strands' of reconciliation the Measure was particularly successful in addressing strands 1, 3 and 4, and less successful in addressing strand 2 and 5;
- **Whilst the majority (59%) of funded projects were Northern Ireland wide, the remainder set out to service a specific area / community** within Northern Ireland or the Border Region. This balance can be largely attributed to the robustness of the selection panel procedure at the outset, where clear decisions were made to optimise the coverage and minimise overlap within the Measure;
- There is also a sense that **the Measure has been successful in reaching areas, sectors and groups affected by the conflict.** Considering the diversity of projects funded by Measure 4.1 the impacts arising in this regard broadly mirror the perspective of the PEACE II programme as a whole. In respect of areas, the impacts have been highest in respect of disadvantaged areas which have experienced relatively high levels of violence and disadvantaged areas whose image had been affected by local violence or community tension, and areas where social and economic development had been inhibited by the conflict. The development of **sectors particularly affected by the conflict has also been one of the main outcomes emerging** from the Measure 4.1 projects, as is the case more broadly within the PEACE II Programme. From the perspective of groups, the Measure has generated positive impacts for the most marginalised sections of society including by way of example: the disabled, marginalised youth, victims, and children impacted by the conflict. This progress is in part a reflection of the quality of the selection process for the projects in the first instance and ongoing management by OFMDFM to optimise the reach and impact of the projects 'on the ground';
- **All of the projects encompassed a number of sub networks based on different themes of dialogue and interaction and different geographies.** In broad terms a network is defined as a group of organisations or individuals that interact or engage in informal/ formal communication with others for mutual assistance or support. Based on this definition it is clear that most projects incorporated a number of networks **with a total of over 150 networks created by Northern Ireland projects and a further 20 from the Border Region;**
- The **external 'reach' achieved by Measure 4.1 has been vast**, set against a limited baseline position. The vast reach achieved by the Measure overall is further reflected in the breadth achieved by some individual projects (for example, the NIPPA and CFNI projects). Overall slightly more of the funded activity has resulted in 'learning into' Northern Ireland and the Border Region rather than 'learning out' to external regions. This trend is a clear reflection of the limited baseline position for the Measure;

² Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (2005) *A Shared Future - Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland*, March 2005, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

³ Addressing the legacy of the conflict and taking opportunities arising from PEACE.

- Much of the potential for learning out has been achieved by projects where the constructive dialogue is largely centred on sharing expertise in terms of conflict management/ transformation with other conflict zones, within and beyond the EU. This is not, however, always the case and there are several good examples within the Measure of 'learning out' in other topic areas. Clearly it needs to be acknowledged through this review that **Northern Ireland and the Border Region can interact and influence on an international stage in a range of sectors or topics beyond conflict resolution.** This should be viewed as a foundation for taking the strategy for the Region's engagement within Europe (and beyond) to a new level reflecting an evolution from previous activity;
- Linked to this, it was apparent through a number of discussions with project partners based in EU / International regions that **activities funded by Measure 4.1 have contributed to the external promotion of a more positive image of Northern Ireland and the Border Region;**
- Data collected by OFMDFM and SEUPB suggests that the **overall 'throughput' of beneficiaries within the Measure was circa 10,000 individuals⁴.** In headline terms this illustrates that **the reach of Measure 4.1 has been significant, and in value for money terms equates to an average cost per beneficiary of £700** (based on the ratio between circa £7million of PEACE II funds and the throughput of circa 10,000 beneficiaries);
- It is evident that there **has been greater scope for added value, where the networks established have been entirely new.** That said; these projects carry the highest risk profile. There are also several very good examples of where **the support from Measure 4.1 has enabled pre-existing networks to augment and professionalise their work through the addition of an international dimension** which has informed their policy and practice (for example, the NIUSE project). Finally, there are also several excellent examples of projects where **the support from Measure 4.1 enabled an organisation that was already a 'thought leader' in external markets to consolidate and diversify their position** (for example, INCORE within the University of Ulster; and NIPPA);
- The research into the projects undertaken for this review suggests that where the **themes were either few in number and / or clearly defined within a project** there was more prospect of securing ongoing commitment from partners and beneficiaries, and ultimately improved outcomes;
- Looking beyond the 'activity outputs' of the funded projects it is clear that the **projects funded by Measure 4.1 have created value** in a range of ways. A widely acknowledged benefit amongst projects and beneficiaries was the **exposure to different cultures / experiences** that was facilitated through the various networking activities. This contributed to a range of benefits in terms of changed attitudes and behaviours. Furthermore through networking the majority of projects were exposed to models of delivery, including a **mixture of service delivery models and models of collaboration** across various sectors. Finally it is evident that **the critical mass of networks and in some cases the high-level representation, enabled impacts to arise in respect of strategic policy inputs and influence.** Several of these benefits particularly in terms of new models of delivery or policy influence may not yet be fully realised;

⁴ Actual number of participants provided by OFMDFM and SEUPB data was 9551. It should be noted that this figure is inclusive of some of the beneficiaries from external regions as well as internal to Northern Ireland and the Border Region

- Over and above the direct benefits from networking previously discussed, a range of more **indirect economic benefits** have also arisen in a number of projects. These relate for instance to economic impacts related to business / trade development; through hosting 'in-bound 'delegations' of visitors to Northern Ireland for visits, seminars and conference activity and; increased financial sustainability of organisations. To take one example in this context, NIUSE hosted the 2007 EUSE conference in Belfast in June 2007 as a direct result of their Measure 4.1 funded project. The economic impact of this one event alone, attracting circa 450 external delegates to Northern Ireland, which is likely to have equated to almost half of the grant support awarded to NIUSE through the Measure (circa £90-100k based on an average visitor spend per trip of £188)⁵; and
- To date the majority of projects **have sustained either their entire network or at a minimum some of the partnerships achieved through the network** beyond the PEACE II funding period.

Additional observations

5. The following observations should be noted as additional 'learning points' from the review of activity funded by the Measure.
 - While it is evident that networking at a local/regional level brings with it a number of challenges, **when the concept is extended further into civil society networks in an EU and international dimension, a whole range of additional challenges come into play.** For instance, these include physical and psychological factors related to distance, cultural diversity and language barriers;
 - At an overall level some of the 'value for money' indicators are good; for instance the **average cost per beneficiary engaged of £700 represents good value for money.** However, at the project level the **value-for-money achieved varied widely** across the 22 projects. Some of the projects that were awarded funding in the region of £200-£400k were very successful in terms of the profile and outputs achieved, suggesting that this could be an 'optimum' level of funding support;
 - The **Network of Networks (Network NI) fulfilled a very useful role during the life of the Measure.** However, looking ahead the ongoing sustainability of this is less clear. In any event, the role of a 'collective forum' such as this **would need to evolve, perhaps to fill a smaller and more strategic 'space'**;
 - **Strategic/ political changes over the last few years have had both positive and negative implications for Measure 4.1.** Many commentators felt that the policy work emanating from the Measure 4.1 funded projects may have had more impact in a devolved government environment. It was also felt that this would have provided access to an environment and individuals to drive the policy agenda forward. It was felt that some of the efforts to drive the policy impacts were 'too mechanistic and in a vacuum' whilst sitting in the direct rule political backdrop that prevailed. On the other hand, the publication of 'A Shared Future'⁶ provided a strategic framework for developing community relations and peace building activities that helped to frame some of the reconciliation and diversity debates within the Measure funded activity. Finally, during the life of Measure 4.1 OFMDFM published a high-level strategy with respect to Northern Ireland's engagement in Europe ('Taking Our Place in Europe – Northern Ireland's European Strategy 2006-2010). This strategy was launched at the Competitive Cities conference, hosted by the CONNECT project in Belfast in October 2006, and for many commentators this also provided a reference framework for some of their work within Measure 4.1; and

⁵ Tourism Facts 2006, NITB.

- There remains a **'healthy' market for influence/ input into core policy network** from external networking and best practice within Northern Ireland and the Border Region. Correspondingly, it is also viewed that the balance could shift more towards 'learning-out' over time – that is Northern Ireland and the Border Region have much to offer a 'wider world', at least, but certainly not confined to the challenges of conflict transformation.

Looking ahead – some indicative thoughts

6. While the Terms of Reference for this review did not require articulation of 'future directions' with respect to ongoing support for civil society networks co-operating with the EU and international countries, some views were expressed throughout the research. Accordingly some of the views expressed in this regard are detailed in the main evaluation report.
7. In summary these views reflect a need to build on the progress achieved through Measure 4.1 and the need to acknowledge that the rationale for intervention may be different in future. It is recognised that the Measure has been successful in 'punching above its weight' and achieving the leverage that was anticipated at the outset. Furthermore it is evident that through the Measure there is now the basis of an infrastructure of civil society networks of co-operation with EU and international regions.
8. Looking ahead from the achievements of Measure 4.1, several commentators expressed a view that a *'more ambitious approach in engaging with Europe' / International regions* should now be explored. Within this there was a healthy debate about where the ownership of this agenda should reside within central government and the associated funding levels. Allied to this, it was viewed that the focus should be shifted away from viewing Europe as a source of funding for Northern Ireland and the Border Region and towards the view that Europe and International regions are marketplaces to which expertise and capacity can be exported. This relates to the need identified in the recently published ⁷Draft Programme for Government 2008-11, to engage positively in the European Union, to build on existing partnerships and collaboration across key policies and programmes.

⁷ Building a Better Future – Draft Programme for Government 2008-11, Northern Ireland Executive.

1 Introduction

Terms of Reference

1.1 The European Policy and Co-ordination Unit (EPCU), of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), as the implementing body for the Northern Ireland element of Measure 4.1, appointed PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to assess the effectiveness and impact of the funded activity. In particular the assignment was commissioned to review:

- How the Measure activity addressed the legacy of the conflict and/or took opportunities arising from peace;
- The effectiveness of, and the extent to which project activity targeted areas, groups and sectors either directly or indirectly;
- How the Measure has contributed to promoting cross community links, developing reconciliation and mutual understanding between and within communities;
- The extent to which funded projects met the PEACE II horizontal principles;
- The effectiveness of funded projects in contributing to making Northern Ireland and the Border Region more outward and forward looking;
- The effectiveness and the structure of the networks created, identify international best practice that has been applied in a Northern Ireland setting and Northern Ireland best practice in an international setting by citing relevant case studies; and
- Identify guiding principles in establishing productive international networks.

Background – the PEACE II Programme

1.2 The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE II) is a unique EU funding Programme which covers Northern Ireland and the six border counties of Ireland (Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo). The Programme aims to help Northern Ireland become a more peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region. The PEACE II programme aims to *'reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promote reconciliation'*⁸.

1.3 In contributing towards this overall strategic aim, PEACE II has two specific objectives which make the Programme distinctive from other Structural Fund interventions operating in Northern Ireland and Ireland. The objectives include:

- **Address the legacy of the conflict:** the Programme is intended to address specific problems generated by the conflict in order to assist the return to a normal, peaceful and stable society. Projects and actions will be supported which address the economic and social patterns which have grown as a result of the conflict; and/or
- **Take opportunities arising from PEACE:** to encourage actions which have a stake in peace and which actively help promote a stable and normal society where opportunities can be grasped. Projects and actions will be supported which have a remedial effect on sectors, areas or groups which have been hindered in their economic and social development by the conflict and for which the prospect of a more stable society is a new opportunity.

⁸ EU Programme for PEACE and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland 2000-2004, Operational Programme, Page 41.

- 1.4 Successful projects needed to fulfil one or both of these objectives to meet the 'distinctiveness criteria'. In addition, projects were required to highlight how they are 'paving the way to reconciliation' through the promotion of mutual understanding and respect between and within communities and traditions in Northern Ireland and/or North and South. This includes actions which promote cross community links and actions which promote reconciliation through single community identities.
- 1.5 The Managing Authority for PEACE II is the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), a cross border body established under the Good Friday Agreement. The Programme is implemented by various bodies including government departments and non-governmental organisations, known as Intermediary Funding Bodies (IFBs). Furthermore, in Northern Ireland, Local Strategy Partnerships (LSPs) and in Republic of Ireland, County Council Led Task Forces were responsible for allocating funds.
- 1.6 The PEACE II Programme was a seven year Programme (2000-06)⁹ providing €994m (some £650m) to a range of social and economic projects through five discrete Priorities that include:
- Economic renewal;
 - Social integration; inclusion and reconciliation;
 - Locally based regeneration and development strategies;
 - Outward and forward looking region; and
 - Cross-border co-operation.

Measure 4.1

Background

- 1.7 Within PEACE II, Measure 4.1 was established to support organisations that promote EU and international networking and facilitate the exchange of best practice in peace and reconciliation trans-nationally. With an allocation of circa £7m, it **offered the scope, because of the nature of activities supported, for significant leverage in terms of 'shared learning' and profiling of Northern Ireland (and the Border Counties) in a European/¹⁰ international setting**. This has never been attempted before and meant that in order to deliver the outcomes; it required innovative and novel thinking by the implementing teams within OFMDFM and SEUPB.
- 1.8 In Northern Ireland, two separate calls were made for project applications within Measure 4.1, one in February-April 2002 and one in January- March 2003. A total of 85 project applications were received across both calls. The selection panel, in identifying projects for funding, aimed to achieve a balance between support for consolidating/ expanding existing networks and support for new networks. Furthermore the selection panel pro-actively attempted to optimise the overall balance of projects in terms of sector (economic, social, cultural, and environmental) and 'external reach' - that is coverage across the original EU 15 member states, the new EU accession countries and countries beyond the EU.
- 1.9 Arising from the above the breadth of activity supported by the Measure was extensive, engaging **members of civil society from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors** in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties. Projects funded were focussed on networking to promote constructive dialogue, innovative practice and trans-national learning in an economic, social, cultural and environmental context (or combinations of these). In addition Eurolink, one of the project promoters established a '**network of networks**' encompassing all

⁹ The PEACE II Programme was initially allocated €700m and established to run for five years (2000 to 2004) but from acknowledging the current difficulties in the PEACE process in Northern Ireland and the efforts of the two Governments in seeking to re-establish the devolved institutions, the European Council agreed to fund the Programme for a further two years. In June 2005, an additional €160m was allocated for the 2005 and 2006 period.

¹⁰ Activities supported were primarily orientated towards Europe, but there was some scope for wider international networking.

the Measure 4.1 funded projects entitled 'Network NI'. This aimed to promote the expertise, skills and services of its members throughout Europe and beyond and to develop strategic partnerships which could contribute towards the sustainability of its membership. Table 1.1 provides an overview of the 22 projects supported under Measure 4.1, whilst a summary of each project's aims, objectives, results and learning can be found at Appendix D.

- 1.10 In this introductory context it is important to acknowledge the baseline position for Measure 4.1, so that the additionality value of the funded activity can be captured and to enable the 'counterfactual' scenario to be assessed. In broad terms, Northern Ireland has historically held a peripheral position in Europe and this coupled with the somewhat negative perceptions of the region, had constrained the opportunities for constructive dialogue with external regions. Similarly, the opportunities for active participation in strategic alliances with external regions, sub-regions and cities were also constrained. Only a small proportion of the projects funded by the Measure had any prior experience of constructive dialogue and structured networking with external regions. In view of all of the above, it should be concluded that **the baseline position for Measure 4.1 was minimal.**

Table 1.1: Overview of projects funded by Measure 4.1

Project Mgt	Project Name	Project Sponsor	Size of Grant	Countries and Regions engaged
OFMDFM	Young Citizens in Changing Societies	Public Achievement	£212,168	Netherlands, Finland, Balkans, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, South Africa, USA
OFMDFM	Eurolink & Eurolink Fast Track	The Rural Centre	£477,641	EU25
OFMDFM	Partnership for Progress	Concordia	£1,009,195	Holland, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Australia
OFMDFM	Shared Learning	UUJ	£1,183,895	Toledo, Basque, Balkans, Latvia, Nansen Assembly of EU Regions
OFMDFM	Women Networking	Women's Support Network	£409,088	Ireland, France
OFMDFM	Youth Work in Contested Spaces	Youth Council	£172,279	Bosnia, Israel, Palestine, South Africa
OFMDFM	Northwest European Network	Derry City Council	£159,904	Spain, Finland, Czech Republic, USA
OFMDFM	Community Foundations in Divided Societies	CFNI	£173,211	Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Macedonia, Nepal, Israel, South America, Sri Lanka, India
OFMDFM	Fermanagh Social Economy Network	Fermanagh Trust	£109,587	Sweden, Ireland, USA
OFMDFM	ICBAN Region Higher and Further Education and Technology Transfer	ICBAN	£318,640	Ireland, Sweden, Czech Republic, Canada
OFMDFM	Connect	Belfast City Council/ COMET	£352,400	Poland, Sweden, Spain, Lithuania
OFMDFM	Linking Early Childhood Services at a European/International Level	NIPPA	£377,585	Italy, Albania, Moldova, Ukraine and USA
OFMDFM	Learning Together	Youth Action	£90,060	Sweden, Latvia, Ireland
OFMDFM	Supported Employment Home and Away	NIUSE	£213,332	EUSE (16 countries), Ireland
OFMDFM	Local and International Mummung Networks	The Mummings Foundation	£314,433	Bulgaria, Poland, Sardinia, Macedonia, Ireland
OFMDFM	EU B2B Connect	NORIBIC	£368,028	EBIC (20 countries)
OFMDFM	Civic Leadership	Mediation NI	£256,500	USA, Amsterdam, Macedonia, Ireland, Belgium
OFMDFM	Enterprise Network Europe	Enterprise NI	£309,909	CESCE (8 countries and Ireland)
SEUPB	Messines Peace Networks	FAS	€ 150,040	Belgium, Cyprus, The Balkans
SEUPB	Forest Link	Donegal County Development Board	€329,000	Belgium, Austria, Scotland, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Wales, Northern Ireland
SEUPB	Donegal Tourism Research Programme	Donegal County Council	€55,800	Northern Ireland, Ireland, Austria
SEUPB	North West Food Network	North West Food Consortium	€149,940	Donegal, Leitrim, Cavan, Sligo, Birmingham, Paris, Boston, Amsterdam, Italy, France, Netherlands, Provence, Northern Ireland

Headline financial performance

- 1.11 As evident from the table above the split of funding between Northern Ireland and the Border Region was 93:7 respectively. The Northern Ireland element of the Measure was pro-actively managed by OFMDFM throughout; for instance by initiation of independent strategic reviews of two projects to optimise the impacts arising and by large scale de-commitments from 3 projects totalling in excess of £450,000. These funds were distributed by OFMDFM to other Measure 4.1 projects following a call for proposals seeking additional value added activities.
- 1.12 A number of smaller de-commitments were made from projects following final claims and these funds were carefully managed and re-allocated to ensure that all of the Measure funds were spent. Table 1.2 below provides an overview of the headline financial information for the Measure.
- 1.13 As a result of the way in which the funds were professionally managed within OFMDFM, by a relatively small team compared to other implementing bodies, of the Measures that closed in 2006, the Northern Ireland element of Measure 4.1 was one of only two that was fully spent.

Table 1.2: Overview of ‘headline’ financial indicators for Measure 4.1

	Northern Ireland	Border Region
Total funding available	£6,485,591	£479,789
Funds committed	£6,507,855	£474,981
Average award	£361,547	£119,947
Funds spent	£6,507,855	£474,981
Largest project	£1,183,895	£235,000
Smallest project	£90,060	£39,857

Source: OFMDFM & SEUPB

Note: Financial information for the border projects was provided in Euros, this has been converted into sterling for the purpose of this report at an exchange rate of 1.4.

- 1.14 In the context of value-for-money considerations it is important to highlight that across the 22 projects funded in Northern Ireland and the Border Region, 14 raised a matched funding contribution, either cash, in-kind or a combination of both. **The value of the match funding raised was £1,536,161, set against the Measure funding of £6.97m.** Table 1.3 overleaf provides a detailed breakdown of the match funding raised by each of 22 projects.

Table 1.3: Match Funding at Project Levels

Project	Cash match	In-kind	Total Match Funding	Total Measure 4.1 funding	Total project funding	Match funding as a % of total project funding
Young Citizens in Changing Societies	£45,900		£45,900	£212,168	£258,068	18
Eurolink & Eurolink Fast Track				£477,641	£477,641	0
Partnership for Progress		£142,380	£142,380	£1,009,195	£1,151,575	12
Shared Learning		£725,494	£725,494	£1,183,895	£1,909,389	38
Women Networking				£409,088	£409,088	0
Youth Work In Contested Spaces		£55,281	£55,281	£172,279	£227,560	24
Northwest European Network	£53,301		£53,301	£159,904	£213,205	25
Community Foundations in Divided Societies	£29,138		£29,138	£173,211	£202,349	14
Fermanagh Social Economy Network				£109,587	£109,587	0
ICBAN Region Higher and Further Education and Technology Transfer	£8,000	£97,254	£105,254	£318,640	£423,894	25
Connect	£72,700	£68,075	£140,775	£352,400	£493,175	29
Linking Early Childhood Services at a European/International Level				£377,585	£377,585	0
Youth Action				£90,060	£90,060	0
Supported Employment Home and Away	£6,598		£6,598	£213,332	£219,930	3
Local and International Mummung Networks		£42,662	£42,662	£314,433	£357,095	12
EU B2B Connect	£19,370		£19,370	£368,028	£387,398	5
Civic Leadership	£29,871		£29,871	£256,500	£286,371	10
Enterprise NI		£118,800	£118,800	£309,909	£428,709	28
Messines Peace Networks				£114,030	£114,030	0
Forest Link				£250,040	£250,040	0
Donegal Tourism Research Programme				£42,408	£42,408	0
North West Food Network	£12,662		£12,662	£113,954	£126,616	10
TOTAL	£277,540	£1,249,945	£1,527,486	£7,028,287	£8,555,773	18

Source: OFMDFM and SEUPB.

Note: Financial information for the border projects was provided in Euros, this has been converted into sterling for the purpose of this report at an exchange rate of 0.76 Euros to £1.

'Headline' Activity Performance

- 1.15 Given the baseline position set out previously and the fact that Measure 4.1 was viewed as a new and innovative Measure, it was not deemed appropriate to specify context indicators for actions proposed under the Measure. However a number of Priority level targets and indicators were identified within the Operational Programme for PEACE II. These are set out below along with the outturn achieved, by OFMDFM and SEUPB respectively.

Table 1.4: Performance against Priority level targets for OFMDFM funded projects

Indicators	Target	Outturn
Output		
New/existing Northern Ireland networks to be supported	10	18
Result		
New/existing Northern Ireland networks participate in international networks	75%	100%
Impact		
Participant organisations obtaining positive outcomes from Northern Ireland and international networks	50%	94%
New networks still in operation by 2006	50%	100%

Source: OFMDFM

Table 1.5: Performance against Priority level targets for SEUPB funded projects

Indicators	Target	Outturn
Output		
New/existing Border Region networks supported (ROI)	4	4
Result		
Supported networks participating in international networks (ROI)	3	4
Impact		
New networks still in operation by 2006	50%	100%

Source: SEUPB

- 1.16 The outturn data above represents the 22 projects funded by OFMDFM and SEUPB. However **this headline figure 'masks' the fact that all projects encompassed a number of sub networks based on different themes of dialogue and interaction and/ or different geographies.** In broad terms a network is defined as a group of organisations or individuals that interact or engage in informal/ formal communication with others for mutual assistance or support. Based on this definition it is clear that most projects incorporated a number of networks **with a total of over 150 networks created by Northern Ireland projects and a further 20 from the Border Region.** This is best illustrated by examples:
- The CONNECT project promoted by the COMET partnership had a central rationale of governance and how cities transform their urban areas via the cities governance structures. Within this overarching theme four separate sub-networks were developed between the BMAP region and the cities of Valencia, Rybnik, Stockholm and Vilnius; and
 - The Civic Leadership project promoted by Mediation Northern Ireland had distinct sub-themes for instance, community policing involving networking and constructive dialogue with the USA and civic leadership in a divided society involving networking and constructive dialogue with Macedonia.

Assignment approach

1.17 In completing this assignment the PwC team undertook the following tasks:

- *Desk-based review*: this included a review of all documentation relating to the Measure. In particular, the original project economic appraisals/VFM studies; progress and final project reports and evaluation reports submitted by projects to OFMDFM / SEUPB; and
- *Primary research*:
 - i. Project level: visits/consultations with each of the projects; 18 in Northern Ireland and 4 in the Border Counties (where the interviews were conducted in line with the topic list attached at Appendix A); and
 - ii. Selected partner and beneficiary discussions: in order to inform the impact of funded activity external to Northern Ireland and at 'grass-roots' level in Northern Ireland, a number of discussions were undertaken with partner organisations in EU/International regions and with members of civil society in Northern Ireland who participated in project activity.

Report structure

1.18 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Fit with the Peace and Reconciliation Agenda;
- Contribution to making Northern Ireland / the Border Region more 'outward and forward' looking;
- Value of network creation and content;
- Guiding principles: and
- Conclusions.

1.19 Whilst the Terms of Reference for this review did not explicitly require consideration of 'future directions' in terms of policy and support for EU/international networking, it was a subject that was discussed in the primary research undertaken for this review. Accordingly the final section of this report sets out some indicative thoughts in regard to this area.

2 Fit with the Peace and Reconciliation Agenda

Introduction

2.1 In considering the fit of Measure 4.1 funded activity with the 'peace and reconciliation agenda' there are lessons to be learnt from the assessment of impact within the PEACE II programme more generally. Recent evaluation reports¹¹ have developed an emerging evidence base on the impact of the PEACE II Programme as a whole and the findings of these were synthesised in an impact report published by SEUPB¹². This outlines a range of different impacts delivered by the Programme including, inter alia:

- **Progress towards PEACE and reconciliation goals** (including direct and indirect impacts on reconciliation);
- **Impacts of the conflict on areas, sectors and groups** (focusing, for example, on marginalised sections of society and areas affected by the conflict);
- **Facilitating cross-border development** (for example, promoting economic and social development and improving cross-border relationships and understanding);
- **Promoting new ways of working** (facilitating participation in new governance arrangements);
- **Acting as a catalyst for development** (for example, facilitating financial leverage or creating 'knock-on effects' by encouraging additional development); and
- **Facilitating inclusiveness and building capacity** (for example, increasing skills, establishing relationships and networks and promoting economic and social integration).

2.2 On this basis, the research carried out with Measure 4.1 projects was structured to capture examples of impacts against each of the categories above.

Progress towards PEACE and reconciliation goals

2.3 With reference to the PEACE II distinctiveness criteria¹³ it is clear that while **all projects took opportunities arising from the peace process as a main objective, not all of the projects were as successful in addressing the legacy of the conflict**¹⁴. In effect for projects centred on networking around conflict resolution, and involving for instance, work with beneficiary groups such as victims, politically motivated ex-prisoners, current/ former members of the security services, there was a clear opportunity to directly address the legacy of the conflict. Projects at this 'end' of the spectrum included the Mediation NI 'Civic Leadership' project; the CFNI 'Foundations for Peace network'; the FAS 'Messines Peace Networks' and the Diversity and Conflict Management theme of the University of Ulster 'Shared Learning' project.

¹¹ PricewaterhouseCoopers (2005) *Update of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the PEACE II Programme 2000-2006, Final Report* and McClure Watters (2006) *Developing an Impact Evaluation for the PEACE II Programme*.

¹² SEUPB (2006) *The EU Programme for PEACE and Reconciliation – The Impact*.

¹³ addressing the legacy of the conflict and/or taking opportunities arising from PEACE

¹⁴ Funded projects had to meet either or both criteria.

- 2.4 At the other 'end' of the spectrum, where impacts were more limited with respect to addressing the legacy of the conflict, projects were largely centred on networking around economic/ regeneration themes. In this context the peace distinctiveness arose more from the inclusive manner in which participants were brought together on a cross-border, cross community and cross-sectoral basis. Accordingly, the impacts were more consequential and indirect. These included the NORIBIC 'EU B2B Connect', the Enterprise NI 'Enterprise Network Europe', the Belfast City Council/ COMET 'CONNECT' and the North West Food Consortium 'North West Food Network' projects.
- 2.5 Finally in the 'middle' of this spectrum were projects that focused on geographic areas and/or groups that have suffered as a result of the conflict, and who consequently were prevented from fulfilling their potential in society - for instance children, families, young people and women in interface areas. By way of example, these included the NIPPA 'Linking Early Childhood Services at a European/ International level', Youth Council 'Youth Work in Contested Spaces', Youth Action 'Learning Together', Public Achievement 'Young Citizens in Changing Societies' and Women's Support Network 'Women Networking' projects.
- 2.6 In the initial stages of the PEACE II Programme, a degree of confusion existed over what reconciliation actually meant and how it could be addressed. In addressing these concerns, a definition of reconciliation was defined for the PEACE II Extension by Hamber and Kelly¹⁵ which has helped to clarify the term, encourage greater understanding of reconciliation and refine the 'uniqueness' of the Programme even further. This working definition of reconciliation has general acceptance and regards reconciliation as a voluntary act which cannot be imposed and involves five interwoven and related strands. These strands are set out in Table 2.1 later in this section.
- 2.7 In reporting on the performance of the Measure with respect to peace and reconciliation goals, it is fundamental to highlight that this definition of reconciliation encompassing the five strands was developed well *after* the selection of all the projects to be funded by the Measure. As there was no agreed framework for measurement of this at the outset, any conclusions that can be drawn at this stage are largely qualitative in nature and anecdotal.
- 2.8 Table 2.1 overleaf provides some anecdotal evidence with respect to impact against each of the five reconciliation strands. From this **it is clear that there were impacts across all strands. That said; the Measure was particularly successful in addressing strands 1, 3 and 4, and less successful in addressing strand 2 and 5.** This is as would be expected given that unless a project was totally centred on conflict resolution and involved work with beneficiary groups directly affected by the conflict (for example, such as victims, politically motivated ex-prisoners, current/ former members of the security services), the scope to significantly 'acknowledge and deal with the past' was limited. Similarly with respect to strand 5, a limited number of the projects specifically considered the structures that gave rise to the conflict in the first instance.

¹⁵ Hamber, B. and Kelly, G. (2004) *A Working Definition of Reconciliation*. Occasional paper published by Democratic Dialogue, Belfast.

Table 2.1: Illustrations of reconciliation impacts

The Five Strands of Reconciliation	Examples from Measure 4.1 Projects
<p><i>Developing a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society:</i> the development of a vision of a shared future requiring the involvement of the whole society, at all levels. Although individuals may have different opinions or political beliefs, the articulation of a common vision of an interdependent, just, equitable, open and diverse society is a critical part of any reconciliation process.</p>	<p><i>The Diversity and Conflict Management (DCM) strand has delivered a range of activities around Northern Ireland's growing diversity, explicitly designed to reduce racism...the project has also helped to facilitate political dialogue around issues of common concern, for instance parading as addressed by the 'What Shared Futures?' conference...overall the project has provided numerous 'safe' spaces in which political relationships have been built.</i> (Shared Learning, University of Ulster)</p> <p><i>NIPPA has launched 'Respecting Difference - the Media Initiative for Children'. The Media Initiative for Children (MIFC) was developed by NIPPA and the Peace Initiatives Institute (Pii, USA). It combines a series of cartoon advertisements with a pre-school curriculum. Together they aim to build a better understanding among children of physical, racial and cultural differences, other differences will be addressed over time.</i> (Linking Early Childhood Services at a European/International Level, NIPPA)</p>
<p><i>Acknowledging and dealing with the past:</i> acknowledging the hurt, losses, truths and suffering of the past. Providing the mechanisms for justice, healing, restitution or reparation, and restoration (including apologies if necessary and steps aimed at redress). To build reconciliation, individuals and institutions need to acknowledge their own role in the conflicts of the past, accepting and learning from it in a constructive way so as to guarantee non-repetition.</p>	<p><i>We took a group of people from 10 projects to South Africa on a learning exchange which was remarkable for them - there were ex-prisoners of every shade, representatives from victims groups – and a range of local people who had been affected by the Troubles and who have always tried to do community work...through our South African partner, we had a very structured programme for them...we met with the senior police; we went into the prisons at the highest level and we learnt about reintegration issues etc ...they benefited from a whole range of very structured visits and programme learning that they brought home with them.</i> (Foundations for Peace Network, CFNI)</p> <p><i>We facilitated a study trip to Belgium on restorative justice...this allowed for a private encounter between a diverse range of parties with conflicting views and attitudes towards the evolution of restorative justice in Northern Ireland...the trip was an opportunity to create a 'space' apart from the every day pressures of community, official and political life for these people...we brought in a European dimension via the European Restorative Justice Network who provided an external context on which Northern Ireland practitioners and policy makers could reflect on local practice...most importantly the trip provided an opportunity for relationship building to happen...a safe context for exchange of views and positive dialogue.</i> (Civic Leadership Project, Mediation NI)</p>
<p><i>Building positive relationships:</i> relationship building or renewal following violent conflict addressing issues of trust, prejudice, and intolerance in this process, resulting in accepting commonalities and differences, and embracing and engaging with those who are different to us.</p>	<p><i>The diversity of the groups from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland promoted interactions between groups previously divided or who knew little about one another...the interaction between Loyalists and Republicans was good...working with one another and being in exchange trips prompted a realisation of joint concerns'</i> (Foundations for Peace Network, CFNI)</p>

The Five Strands of Reconciliation	Examples from Measure 4.1 Projects
	<p><i>The geographic focus of the project on South Armagh and South Tyrone is entirely in keeping with the addressing the legacy of the conflict...in that these areas suffered acutely during the Troubles...we focused on protestant communities, Fivemiletown & Aughnacloy, and Catholic communities, Middletown & Creggan...amongst other things our project helped young people from these areas to understand the Balkan States and in turn be more open and inclusive. (Learning Together, Youth Action)</i></p> <p><i>The project has strengthened the Mummie network within Northern Ireland particularly between the mainly protestant Ards Rhymers and the mainly catholic Aughakillymaude mummies...in addition the project has built Mummie networks between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland...involving Sligo, Leitrim and North Co. Dublin. (Local and International Mummie Networks, The Mummies Foundation)</i></p> <p><i>It doesn't take too much work to correlate the project of the Peace Distinctiveness criteria...connecting people in Northern Ireland to thinkers of policing who have gone through a very hard time in Boston over the years and who have completely different experience of it...but have a common theme for example, issues around trust and community policing...and being able to connect some of the themes with things that are happening in Northern Ireland... these are the substantive issues that we are dealing with in moving to a peaceful society in Northern Ireland' (Civic Leadership Project, Mediation NI)</i></p>
<p><i>Significant cultural and attitudinal change: changes in how people relate to, and their attitudes towards, one another. The culture of suspicion, fear, mistrust and violence is broken down and opportunities and space opened up in which people can hear and be heard. A culture of respect for human rights and human difference is developed creating a context where each citizen becomes an active participant in society and feels a sense of belonging.</i></p>	<p><i>The project got individuals to think through their own context and how they could apply their learning from another context to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. (Young Citizens in Changing Societies, Public Achievement)</i></p> <p><i>Various politicians across BMAP worked together and left Northern Ireland, linking in with NGOs and social partners to view best practice...to date this is very rarely done... even in terms of ad-hoc conversations - I think they have learned a lot and at the same time developed respect for each other's position (CONNECT, Belfast City Council/ COMET)</i></p> <p><i>The project played a role in co-ordinating and networking with women's organisations, building cross-community links and facilitating joint lobbying to challenge inequity and promote positive policy change within a democratic framework. (Women Networking, Women's Support Network)</i></p>
<p><i>Substantial social, economic and political change: the social, economic and political structures which gave rise to the conflict and estrangement are identified, reconstructed or addressed, and transformed.</i></p>	<p><i>Previously there was a feeling amongst the Tourism industry in Donegal that they did not want to be associated with the Tourism industry in Northern Ireland as the conflict could have put potential visitors off.....links with the Northern Ireland tourism industry were loose and we didn't really have much communication...through the project progress has been made...UK residents are now more keen on travelling through Northern Ireland to Donegal and the Northern counties are now marketed on a collective basis....instead of the north/south divide (Donegal Tourism Research Programme, Donegal County Council)</i></p>

The Five Strands of Reconciliation	Examples from Measure 4.1 Projects
	<p><i>The Cultural Regeneration theme used the built heritage of Derry to 're-image' a divided city...furthermore it informed and influenced core policy development in terms of how the creative industries can become a driving force in a new global economy...providing new avenues of employment, alienating deprivation and thus addressing the legacy of the conflict (Shared Learning, University of Ulster)</i></p>

Note: The examples set out above were included to provide some illustrations and 'colour' to this review report, and draw on a range of 'sentiments' expressed to the PwC review team during the course of the research for this review. These should not be viewed as 'verbatim quotations' from these discussions nor are they intended to be formal case studies. Rather they are included to provide illustrations of the diversity of activity within the Measure 4.1 projects and of some of the impacts and outcomes arising.

Impacts of the conflict on areas, sectors and groups

- 2.9 Inclusion of the distinctiveness criteria in the PEACE II Programme was designed to encourage projects to proactively target areas, sectors or groups affected by the conflict and promote activities that would address the legacy of the conflict and/or take the opportunities arising from peace¹⁶. The subsequent paragraphs provide an analysis of the achievements of Measure 4.1 projects in this regard and further information is attached in Appendix C as to the Measure's coverage of areas, sectors and groups affected by the conflict.
- 2.10 Looking across the diversity of projects funded by Measure 4.1 the impacts arising on areas, sectors and groups broadly mirror the perspective of the PEACE II programme as a whole. Several of the projects have generated **positive impacts for the most marginalised sections of society** and in particular a large proportion of the 22 projects focused on young people, women and older workers as illustrated in the table below.

Table 2.2: Summary of groups targeted by Measure 4.1 projects

Groups targeted	Number of projects	% of total projects
Victims of conflict	10	45
Ex-prisoners and their families	9	41
Displaced persons	11	50
Young people, women and older workers	18	82
Former members of security and ancillary services	8	36
Other groups and communities	7	32

Source: OFMDFM and SEUPB

- 2.11 Examples of those projects who were particularly successful at targeting the most marginalised sections of society are highlighted in the following paragraphs; for instance:
- The NIUSE project has **created sustainable benefits for those with a disability** in Northern Ireland, by developing the local/regional supported employment networks into a 'formal club' NI and by placing NIUSE at the heart of the European Union of Supported Employment, which has further enhanced the profile of the organisation as an expert body on supported employment. This in turn will support ongoing efforts to mainstream funding for supported employment in Northern Ireland. Furthermore through the project NIUSE were able to share expertise with the Czech Republic – a country that had experienced years of social and economic deprivation as a result of political conflict. Interestingly it was reported that the Czech Republic was ahead of Northern Ireland in terms of policy (because supported employment policy is mainstreamed there) but lagged behind Northern Ireland in terms of practice on the ground. By contrast Northern Ireland was recognised to be stronger in terms of practice on the ground but lagging in terms of policy. Therefore a strong basis for networking and collaboration between the two countries existed, with the ultimate aim that any learning would benefit the quality of life of disabled individuals;
 - The CFNI 'Foundations for Peace' network, engaged with a very wide range of individuals directly impacted by the conflict in Northern Ireland, through practice exchanges to South Africa, USA, Belgium and the Middle-East. By way of example, a **young victims group** (from WAVE) undertook a skills development and confidence building course in the USA, twinning with a group of young victims from gangland attacks in Washington. The practical learning derived from this cross-cultural setting was brought back to Northern Ireland and cascaded through their peer groups;

¹⁶ PricewaterhouseCoopers (2005) *Peace II Qualitative Assessment of the Economic Measures*.

- All of the youth projects (Public Achievement, Youth Council and Youth Action) have focused on **empowering marginalised young people to play a role in building a post conflict society** in Northern Ireland – either directly with young people or via enhancing the capacity of youth work professionals, through an ongoing process of sharing and implementing best practice across their respective EU/international networks;
- The NIPPA project focused on bringing together early childhood practitioners, professionals, academics, support organisations - largely from areas¹⁷ experiencing or emerging from conflict. Within the network, expertise was shared on areas such as; early childhood development; the effects of conflict on children, families and communities; and strategies/ approaches for supporting children and families in a conflict/ post conflict society. Furthermore, through Network NI, NIPPA formed a strong working relationship with the Fermanagh Trust project which has achieved good outcomes for the Early Years sector in County Fermanagh. Therefore it is clear that **children marginalised as a result of the conflict have been significant beneficiaries of the Measure**; and
- The Women’s Support Network (WSN) supports Women’s Centres and groups, who work within their own communities to improve, regenerate, renew and empower their community for women, children and their families. WSN facilitated the networking of its member organisations by hosting events, enabling them to become informed of wider policy issues that affect them and allowing them to address common issues of concern and learn from each other’s practices. Member organisations included **women’s groups based in deprived areas including interface areas** that would have been directly impacted by the conflict, for example, the Falls and Shankill women’s groups who interacted on a cross-community basis.

2.12 Development of **sectors particularly affected by the conflict has also been one of the main outcomes emerging** from the Measure 4.1 projects, as is the case more broadly within the PEACE II Programme. Table 2.3 sets out the performance of the Measure in this regard under the sector categories specified by the monitoring framework. It should be noted that each project targeted a number of sectors.

Table 2.3: Summary of sectors targeted by Measure 4.1 projects

Sectors targeted	Total number of projects	% of projects
Tourism	6	27
Entrepreneurship	12	55
Arts and Sports	4	18
Other sectors	13	59

Source: OFMDFM and SEUPB

2.13 Given the diversity in terms of sectors supported by Measure 4.1, the fact that more than half were categorised as ‘other’, reflects the fact that the sector categories for reporting against were somewhat limiting. Examples of projects which targeted some of the sectors above are noted below:-

- **Tourism:** the existence of the border and the conflict in Northern Ireland has clearly been a major barrier to implementing a collaborative north/south approach to promoting the North West region of Ireland as a tourism destination. The Donegal Tourism Research project funded by Measure 4.1 has made significant progress in this context, it has challenged

¹⁷ Including Albania, Columbia, Croatia, Israel, Palestine, Mali, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, USA, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iran.

previous negative perceptions about linking Donegal with Northern Ireland and it has further helped to build practical solutions to 'channel' visitors from the North Coast of Northern Ireland to Donegal and vice versa (for example, through the conception of the Atlantic drift driving route);

- **Entrepreneurship:** a further example relates to support provided to develop the export capacity of micro-businesses and SME's through the EUB2B/ NORIBIC and Enterprise Network Europe projects, which again is a sector that has suffered from the negative image of Northern Ireland abroad in attempting to develop export capacity as a strategy for growth. The NORIBIC project while operating on an Northern Ireland wide basis, targeted SME's based in areas of disadvantage within Northern Ireland; and
- **Other:** some of the Measure 4.1 funded projects have facilitated the development of services, training and engagement that would otherwise not have happened or at the very least, not happened as quickly. An example in this context is the NIUSE project which has brought supported employment networks across Northern Ireland into a 'formal club' and developed their capacity to support and service their members based on insights from international practice.

2.14 Finally the role of Measure 4.1 projects in targeting areas affected by the conflict needs to be highlighted. This is summarised in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4: Summary of areas targeted by Measure 4.1 projects

Areas targeted	Total number of projects	% of projects
Disadvantaged area(s) experiencing or which have experienced relatively high levels of violence	18	82
Area(s) such as sectarian interfaces where inter-community conflict and dispute is high and community relations are correspondingly poor	11	50
Disadvantaged area(s) whose image and attractiveness as an investment location has been adversely affected by local violence or community tension	16	73
Area(s) suffering the effects of physical dereliction (including damaged infrastructure) as a consequence of the conflict	10	45
Area(s) isolated by border closures	11	50
Area(s) with high concentrations of displaced persons as a result of the Troubles	14	64
Area(s) where social and economic development has been inhibited by the conflict	14	64
Other area(s)	1	5

Source: OFMDFM and SEUPB

- 2.15 It is evident from this that the impacts have been highest in respect of firstly, disadvantaged areas experiencing, or which have experienced relatively high levels of violence and secondly, disadvantaged areas whose image had been affected by local violence or community tension and areas where social and economic development had been inhibited by the conflict.
- 2.16 Many of the projects simultaneously targeted more than one of the categories above. For instance the Cultural and Social Regeneration theme of the University of Ulster project had an explicit focus on the interface areas in Derry, through an emphasis on using the built heritage of the City to 're-image' a deeply divided city. This culminated in a joint bid from Derry City Council and ILEX for World Heritage Status for Derry/Londonderry in 2006, informed by networking and exchanges with the walled city of Toledo in Spain facilitated by the project.

Facilitating cross-border development

2.17 The authors of the 2005 study on the impact of the Irish border, 'The Emerald Curtain'¹⁸, highlighted that the PEACE I Programme did "much to underpin the peace process by providing close co-operation between civil society organisations and political leaders at local level. It validated work between ex-combatants and promoted their social and political reintegration. Within PEACE I cross-border interaction gained increasing acceptance, was seen to be a norm and became less threatening to the loyalist community". The PEACE II Programme has been able to build on this progress and **the projects funded by Measure 4.1 again have made a contribution in this context**, although it should be noted that in most instances **networking on a cross-border basis was secondary to developing 'outward and forward looking' networks** within and beyond the EU. Some examples of cross-border development include:

- *Learning Together*: this project facilitated by Youth Action, enabled the organisation to enhance its strong links with their sister organisation, the National Youth Federation of Ireland. On a practical level it also facilitated exchange of experience with the Kerry Diocesan Youth Service in the Republic of Ireland, which is a voluntary youth work organisation working with over 4000 young people, providing a wide range of educational, training, sporting and recreational activities for registered groups;
- *The Donegal Tourism Research project*: had cross-border collaboration at the heart of the project. As previously detailed the project has facilitated a range of actions to stimulate tourism on a cross-border basis between the North Coast of Northern Ireland and County Donegal. It also provided training to the tourist sector on a cross-border basis in terms of e-marketing, IT, and co-operative marketing;
- *Eurolink*: Eurolink is a networking agency which provides information, advice and a range of support services on EU/transnational opportunities to a wide range of organisations in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. The project provided the infrastructure to promote beneficial transnational co-operation through the introduction of additional European partners, projects and models of good development practice to both statutory and non-statutory organisations across its area of operation. Services included information on EU funding, tailored training programmes, work placements, group study visits and partner-finding services for EU projects and programmes. An example of the initiatives developed by Eurolink, within the context of the Measure 4.1 funding, was a cross-border networking project centred on organic farming. Furthermore 'Network NI' facilitated by Eurolink, supported the four Measure 4.1 projects in the Border Counties as well as the 18 in Northern Ireland, thereby contributing to cross-border development;
- *Messines Project*: promoted by FAS (Ireland's National Training and Employment Authority) in the Republic of Ireland has involved networking and collaboration with the International School for Peace studies in Derry, in the interests of developing skills and practice in conflict resolution techniques; and
- *The Technology Transfer project*: promoted by ICBAN was a cross border, multi-sectoral partnership of councillors and social partners from ten local authorities (five in Northern Ireland and five in Republic of Ireland). The aim of the project was to develop and support technology transfer, research and development (R&D) in order to raise the innovative capacity of the cross-border ICBAN region using international linkages. The project assisted in the development of joint ventures and technology transfer with research bursaries and support for technology transfer. Circa 70% of the exploratory visits had a cross-border component.

¹⁸ Harvey, B., Assumpta, K., and McGearry, S. (2005) *The Emerald Curtain: The Social Impact of the Irish Border*, Triskele Community Training and Development.

Promoting new ways of working

2.18 One of the main outcomes of the PEACE programmes in Northern Ireland to date has been encouraging the development of new ways of working together amongst different stakeholders. Within the Measure 4.1 funded projects there is also clear evidence of impacts arising in respect of new models of partnership and governance:

- *Partnership for Progress*: facilitated by Concordia and involving a social partnership between the business, agriculture, trade union and voluntary/ community sector, produced a number of joint policy reports (for example, on sustainable development, waste management, child care and migrant workers). These present a 'common denominator' position that highlight how the relevant issues affect the four sectors and all of society. This policy work can act as a 'filter' in terms of strategic inputs to government, with more realistic and practical proposals coming forward;
- *The Connect project*: promoted by Belfast City Council / COMET was centred on governance, with one of its sub-themes being urban regeneration. The key objective was to learn how cities transform their urban areas via the city's governance structures. The target was to assess how each of their partner cities in Europe (Valencia, Stockholm, Rybnik and Vilnius) were doing this with a view to implementing the learning in the BMAP area as the 'gateway' into Northern Ireland and in the context of all the changes impending through the RPA in local government; and
- *The Foundations for Peace Network*: promoted by CFNI, has enabled the network members (who are indigenous Foundations focused on peace-building around the world) to think beyond their own narrow focus. Each member, with their different approaches, has served as a 'mirror' for other members to reflect on their own ways of working.

Acting as a catalyst for development

2.19 Given the very wide range of projects funded under Measure 4.1, several have acted as a catalyst for further development, through 'spin-off' effects. For instance:

- *The Local and International Mumming Networks project*: promoted by the Mumming Foundation in Fermanagh, has established a Mumming museum, based on a similar project in Sardinia, where it has been synonymous with the village and the marketing of it as a point of interest. Accordingly, the Mumming festival in west Fermanagh in December is now marketed as a cultural point of interest, which distinguishes it from other events internationally, and which derives significant economic impacts for the rural economy of the area; and
- *The Connect project*: promoted by Belfast City Council/COMET resulted in business development and trade spin-offs which were not envisaged at the outset. After the initial partnership with Valencia was developed, educationalists, civic leaders and businesses from the BMAP region participated in a trade mission to the city at which £1m of trade was secured for the region.

Facilitating inclusiveness and building capacity

2.20 The majority of the Measure 4.1 projects have incorporated a participatory approach which has increased the skills of participants and helped to establish relationships that can be utilised or transferred for future development. Many of the projects have encompassed a formal capacity building element, to build best practice into their respective sectors. For instance:

- *Youth Work in Contested Spaces*: this project promoted by the Youth Council sought to “build the capacity of the youth work community in Northern Ireland to contribute to international best practice for youth work, particularly in preparing young people for life in a divided and contested society”. Whilst it is evident that more time is required to fully accomplish all of the project objectives, some of the participants highlighted that observations of other divided societies helped them to better analyse, understand and take action with respect to youth work in their own societies;
- *Young Citizens in Changing Societies*: the main goal of this project, promoted by Public Achievement, was to contribute to the establishment of standards of best practice in civic youth work in Northern Ireland through international collaboration and the creation of an international learning community. The project facilitated a number of exchange visits leading to the development of worldwide partnerships, increasing knowledge and comfort levels with people from other cultures; and
- *The Supported Employment at Home and Away project*: promoted by NIUSE not only built the capacity of local supported employment networks in Northern Ireland through bringing them into a formal club, they also provided training for supported employment practitioners from the Czech Republic and thus were able to share expertise with a country that had experienced years of social and economic deprivation as a result of political conflict.

Horizontal/Guiding Principles

2.21 As the PEACE II Programme evolved, so did the concept of horizontal principles. To improve effectiveness and reduce complexity in the selection process, it was *recommended that Programme management Horizontal Principles were renamed as ‘Guiding Principles’*¹⁹. The following principles remained as PEACE II Horizontal Principles:

- Economic and social sustainability;
- New TSN/Impact on Poverty;
- Environmental sustainability;
- Balanced intervention/equal opportunities; and
- Impact on rural development (border region).

2.22 Taking this recommendation forward, the Horizontal Principles were renamed as ‘Guiding Principles’ and furthermore, only two principles (New TSN/Impact on Poverty and Balanced intervention/equal opportunities) were subsequently included in the scoring process for each project application. Environmental sustainability remained a question on the application form as part of the assessment process, but was not scored. In the main, implementing bodies have found the renamed Guiding Principles and a focus on two remaining horizontal principles has not only contributed towards simplification and understanding, but also ensured that the issues are still ingrained within the Programme. Reflecting on the evolution process above Table 2.5 provides some examples of how projects funded by Measure 4.1 have adhered to and contributed towards these five principles.

¹⁹ PricewaterhouseCoopers (2003) *Ex-post evaluation of PEACE I and Mid-Term Evaluation of PEACE II, Final report*.

Table 2.5: Guiding Principles – Examples from Measure 4.1 projects

Economic and Social sustainability	The Donegal Tourism Research project: The research into tourism indicated that although County Donegal has lost market share of holiday visitors in recent years, the market opportunity to attract increasing numbers of visitors is positive, due to increasing overseas visitor traffic to both the Republic and to Northern Ireland. This facilitated a range of actions to stimulate tourism on a cross-border basis between the North Coast of Northern Ireland and County Donegal. It also provided training to the tourist sector on a cross-border basis in terms of e-marketing, IT, and co-operative marketing making both tourism markets (North and South) more sustainable longer term.
New TSN/ Impact on Poverty	The Youth Work in Contested Spaces project promoted by the Youth Council was implemented using a bottom-up approach with a clear focus on equal opportunities and the impact that it would have on the young people and taking into account nTSN and poverty considerations. In addition some of the more 'economic' projects for instance Enterprise Network Europe , promoted by Enterprise NI involved staff and SMEs from across its 32 member Local Enterprise Agencies, many of which are located in areas of deprivation, and connected them to a wider network of learning in terms of business/ SME development.
Environmental Sustainability	Forest Link - The objectives of the Forest Link project, promoted by Donegal County Development Board, were to identify suitable markets and develop a strategy to add value to the timber resources in Co. Donegal thus creating employment and sustainable rural development, and to establish and develop community forests, thereby acting as a catalyst in the strengthening of the forestry sector in the county. Forestry is an important economic contributor to rural areas; this project has led to learning of good and best practice in all aspects of forestry management and development for both state and private forestry owners in Co. Donegal. The project also had many spin-off benefits not envisaged at the outset, including successful funding applications for installation of wood chip boilers in public buildings and promotion of renewable energy. It is envisaged that the project will have long term impacts in County Donegal in terms of development of new markets, products and uses for forestry, leading to sustainable socio and economic outputs over time.
Balanced Intervention/ Equal Opportunities	Supported Employment – Home and Away: Supported Employment is an alternative model to traditional vocational training and employment, assisting people with disabilities to access and maintain employment opportunities, become economically active and develop their self-esteem and self-confidence from making a contribution to their economy. The Supported Employment model is the main method by which people in Northern Ireland with disabilities can access employment opportunities, becoming economically and socially active. The project has been successful in bringing together individuals and organisations from a range of communities in a neutral and non-threatening environment to discuss common issues such as vocational training and employment for people with disabilities. Organisations from different communities have also been consciously matched in order to exchange examples of best practice. The programme has worked within the legacy of conflict and addressed the needs of some of society's most marginalised groups. Women Networking - Women Support Network: Through Measure 4.1 the Women's Support Network engaged the majority of their beneficiaries from community based women in disadvantaged areas within Northern Ireland. They provided representation for women to whom education is a significant barrier; <i>'those women who are sitting at home with 3 or 4 kids who can't even afford to come off their benefits and can't approach FE because there is no childcare allowance. These are the women that we represent'</i> . They worked at the policy level, lobbying government on gender equality issues including Women and Gender in a Bill of Rights.
Impact on Rural Development (Border Region)	315° Foods Initiative / North West Food Network - This was a "multi-faceted project aimed at establishing and developing an outward looking and progressive network of small food producers in the North West region on Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim and Cavan", all of which are rural constituencies. Outputs include the product diversification of membership firms, network visits to overseas producers and the development of web-based marketing and trading capabilities. It is evident that as a result of the project that membership firms are more outward looking and have developed strong business relationships following networking opportunities and trade visits.

The examples set out above are included to provide some illustrations and 'colour' to this review report, and draw on a range of 'sentiments' expressed to the PwC review team during the course of the research for this review. These should not be viewed as 'verbatim quotations' from these discussions nor are they intended to be formal case studies. Rather they are included to provide illustrations of the diversity of activity within the Measure 4.1 projects and of some of the impacts and outcomes arising.

2.23 Reflecting on the above, several of the stakeholders interviewed indicated that the PEACE programme funding might not have been the most appropriate mechanism to develop Northern Ireland as an 'outward and forward region'. That said it is clear that all 22 projects have clearly made a contribution to the Peace and Reconciliation agenda in Northern Ireland, albeit to differing degrees.

3 Contribution to making Northern Ireland/ the Border Region more 'outward and forward looking'

Introduction

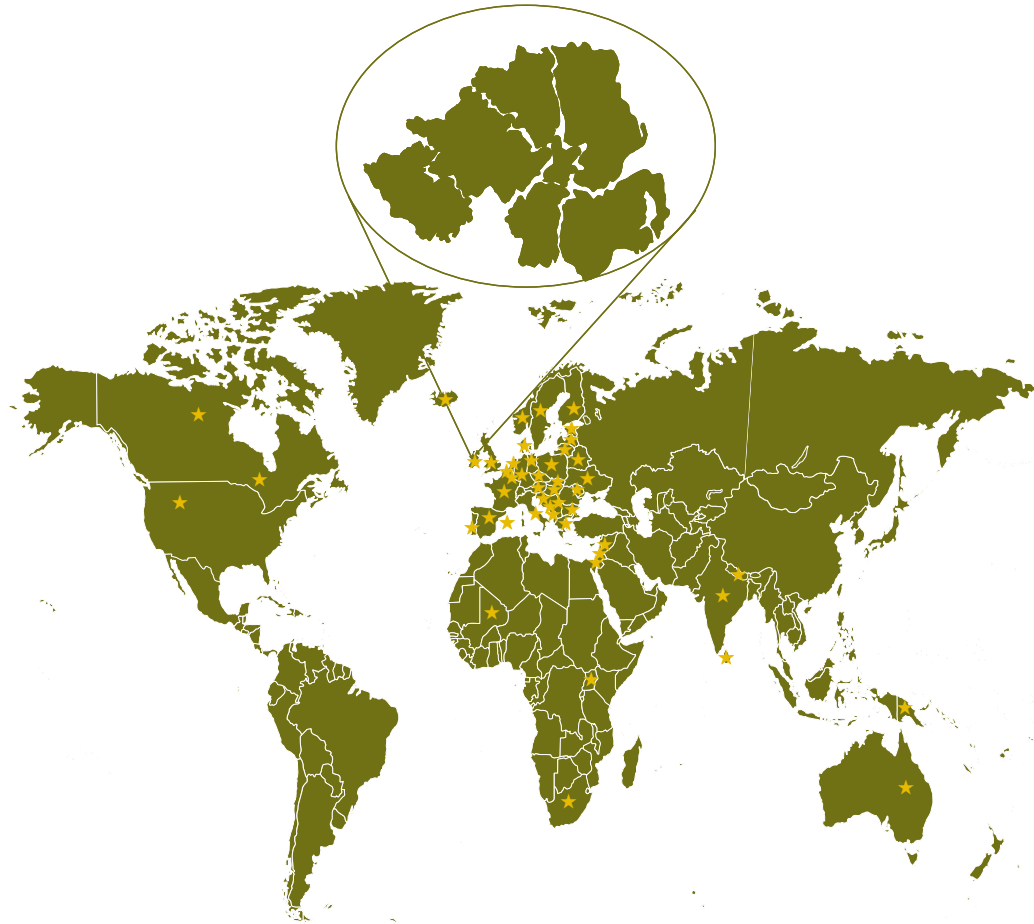
- 3.1 The overarching rationale of Measure 4.1 was to make Northern Ireland and the Border Region more outward and forward looking by encouraging a constructive dialogue with other EU regions on economic, social and environmental matters, and by promoting abroad the positive image of a more peaceful society. Implicit within this is the fact that the networks operate 'both ways' to facilitate 'learning-in' and 'learning out' of Northern Ireland and the Border Region.
- 3.2 This section aims to examine at a fairly high level the contribution that the funded activity within the Measure has made to making Northern Ireland and the Border Region more 'outward and forward' looking. This is to distinguish the analysis from the next section which examines in more detail the application of learning and value created through networking.
- 3.3 In the first instance the 'external' reach of Measure 4.1 is demonstrated, highlighting the geographical coverage achieved via the networking activity in an EU and international context. Thereafter an analysis of the balance within the funded projects of 'learning-in' versus 'learning-out' is set out, informed by the research process. The concept of learning out, (the export of knowledge and expertise to other regions of the EU and beyond) is then examined in more detail. This is because a key aspect of the rationale underpinning the investment of Measure 4.1 funds in civil society networks was to promote recognition of what the region has to offer to the EU and international regions. Therefore from the 'learning-out' achieved by the Measure to date, there should be lessons for the wider pro-active engagement strategy required to promote a positive identity of Northern Ireland and the Border area in the European community and the wider world.
- 3.4 This section then moves on to consider the 'internal' / 'grassroots' reach of the Measure by highlighting the geographic locations of the projects and the areas and communities within Northern Ireland/ the Border Region that were targeted by each. Finally, the section presents an overview of the effectiveness of the dissemination activity within the funded projects, given that this is a key aspect of connecting civil society within Northern Ireland and the Border Region with EU/ international regions.

The external 'reach' achieved by Measure 4.1

- 3.5 Historically, Northern Ireland's peripheral position in Europe coupled with the somewhat negative perceptions of the region, have constrained the opportunities for constructive dialogue with external regions (for example, on economic, social and environmental matters). Similarly, the opportunities for active participation in strategic alliances with external regions, sub-regions and cities have also been constrained. The research with projects funded by Measure 4.1 suggests that **only a small proportion had any prior experience of constructive dialogue and structured networking with external regions.**

- 3.6 Set against this limited 'baseline' position it is encouraging to note the **vast external reach achieved by the projects funded by Measure 4.1**, which is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: The external reach of Measure 4.1



Note: While each country engaged by Measure 4.1 activity has been assigned a star, there were in most cases multiple engagements within each country, across a number of funded projects.

- 3.7 From Figure 3.1 it is **evident that the Measure has achieved a considerable profile for Northern Ireland and the Border Region right across the EU** (including a particular emphasis on the Accession states²⁰ where the emphasis was mostly on 'learning-out' from Northern Ireland and Border Region); and with regions emerging from conflict across the African and Indian sub-continent and the Middle East. There is also evidence of enhanced engagement within the USA, much of which was centred on particular cities and based around a single theme (for example, community policing in Boston within the Mediation NI project; a practice exchange between a young victims group from Northern Ireland and a group of young victims from gangland attacks in Washington, within the CFNI project).
- 3.8 It is important to highlight the breadth achieved by some individual projects as well as the Measure as a whole. It is also interesting to note that in some cases partner regions were selected based on their relative positioning to Northern Ireland and the Border Region in terms of their stage of post-conflict development. This is evident from the comments from projects, which are para-phrased in the text box below.

²⁰ Countries that were in the process of joining the EU

We have nine countries in the Foundations for Peace network currently. We have Bangladesh, two in India, Sri Lanka, Columbia, South Africa, Israel, New York and Serbia. We also have nine affiliate members which expand the reach of the network even further. The main themes in terms of constructive dialogue are peace building, social justice; reconciliation and human rights – those were the things that we went out looking for. (Community Foundations in Divided Societies, CFNI)

Over 2000 members of civic society engaged with the project activities (Shared Learning, University of Ulster)

The emphasis was to develop relationships with new conflict regions that are at different stages in the process to Northern Ireland (for example Basque Country, Serbia-Montenegro, Nansen Network/Balkans) and to facilitate comparative learning and exchange of experience (Diversity and Conflict Management Strand of the University of Ulster project)

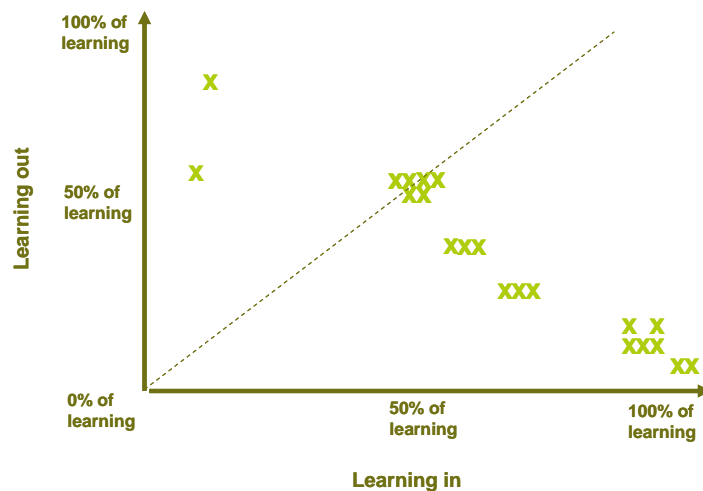
We are now part of an international circuit which we were not before. We have created more awareness about ourselves across the EU and beyond. The Smithsonian Institute is bringing us to the US...more opportunities and benefits will flow for our region. (Local and International Mummery Networks, The Mummery Foundation)

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The balance of 'learning in' versus 'learning out'

- 3.9 The direction of dialogue/learning exchanges between Northern Ireland and the Border Region and other EU /international regions provides an indication of where the main benefits from the Measure have been realised. Clearly it is desirable to achieve both learning in and learning out. However it is clear that the higher the proportion of learning out, the more Northern Ireland is adding value to other EU regions and therefore portraying a positive image of the region externally. Therefore any benefits emanating in terms of learning out are particularly beneficial, given the early stage that the region is at in terms of building a post conflict society. It would have been anticipated at the outset of this Measure that the direction of learning would be predominately 'learning in'.
- 3.10 All projects to a degree have involved both dimensions, but **the balance between 'learning in' and 'learning out' has varied quite significantly** at the level of individual projects and indeed even between different networking themes within the same project. The research conducted with projects has enabled an indicative 'plotting' of the balance between these two dimensions within the Measure as a whole as set out in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Indicative 'Plotting' of Projects



- 3.11 Overall Figure 3.2 would suggest that **more of the activity funded within the Measure has resulted in 'learning into' Northern Ireland and the Border Region.** This is likely to be a reflection of the real 'gap' in constructive dialogue with external regions to date, as set out previously and linked to the constraints around the peripherality and the negative external image of Northern Ireland and the Border Region. Comments made by projects are paraphrased below to illustrate the nature of activities.

Mostly learning in

As companies were micro-businesses/SMEs, they were genuine first time exporters. Therefore we engaged predominantly in 'learning in'. The project was more focused on getting companies out there (EU B2B Connect, NORIBIC)

There remains a great 'import need' for Northern Ireland in terms of learning how to build sustainable communities in Northern Ireland with a shared sense of place/identity'...so the diversity component of the DCM strand was more 'learning in'...in addition the cultural component of the CSR strand fulfilled a real need in the cultural policy sphere in Northern Ireland...in raising awareness of cultural policy as an area of relevance to Northern Ireland and to encourage debate in the cultural sector about how to professionalise it...so again 'learning in'. (Shared Learning, University of Ulster)

A balance between learning in and learning out

50:50 'earning in' versus 'learning out'...we usually had the inward visits first involving a group of around 12 international partners/delegates from a variety of sectors (city strategists, environmental planners, to youth planning, NGOs and elected representatives and town mayors) ...they would come over and they would spend three full days in the Borough. The reciprocal visit would include around 20 people including the Connect Secretariat as well. Our make up would have been two elected representatives from each of the five councils, a social partner from the same and Connect Secretariat'. (CONNECT, Belfast City Council)

60% 'Learning in' versus 40% 'Learning Out'. (Linking Early Childhood Services at a European / International Level, NIPPA)

Mostly learning out (initially)

At the early stages they probably learnt a lot more from us than vice-versa and would have taken an awful lot of what we were doing to see if it could be replicated in other regions. The exception to that would have been Columbia who were much further down the line with some of the issues than we were and South Africa. They were the ones that we learnt most from because there has been a Government response to the processes as well as a civic society response. (Community Foundations in Divided Societies, CFNI)

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An overview of 'learning-out'

- 3.12 Most of the potential for learning out from the funded activity within the Measure has been achieved where much of the **constructive dialogue is centred on sharing expertise in terms of conflict management/ transformation with other conflict zones,** within and beyond the EU.

Within the DCM theme the conflict management activity thus far is largely learning 'out of Northern Ireland' to other conflict zones, within and beyond the EU. DCM developed over 20 reports, articles and papers including reports on project activities, best practice and policy papers, all these resources are on our website. We shared out learning around conflict through engagement with Kosovo and the Basque Country. (Shared Learning, University of Ulster)

We hosted a group from Palestine to look at the role of women in peace building...the learning around peace building was transferred from Fermanagh Trust to visitors from Palestine. (Fermanagh Social Economy Network, Fermanagh Trust)

Macedonia was an opportunity that we could not have taken otherwise... we had already been doing some work for the Centre for International Cooperation (CIC) and they recognised that their civic leadership needs were such that they wanted their press to understand how we report in a divided society. Laterally a few months ago there was a cross-community group over so there is an ongoing relationship (Civic Leadership, Mediation NI)

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- 3.13 This is not, however, always the case as indicated by the examples in the text box above. Within this it is also evident that where the funding from Measure 4.1 enabled the project promoter to consolidate an already strong external 'thought leadership' position, that learning out was achieved (for example, NIPPA). Furthermore where the support enabled the project promoter to move to a position of influence within their EU representative body, there were opportunities for learning out (for example, NIUSE). Clearly it needs to be acknowledged through this review that **Northern Ireland and the Border Region can interact and influence on an international stage in a range of sectors or topics beyond conflict resolution.** This should be viewed as a foundation for **taking the strategy for the region's engagement within Europe (and beyond) to a new level, reflecting an evolution from previous activity.**
- 3.14 Linked to this, it was evident through a number of discussions with project partners based in EU / International regions that their involvement in Measure 4.1 activity had changed some of the negative perceptions and stereotypical images that they previously held about Northern Ireland and the Border Region. Therefore as is indicated by the summary extracts from the projects representatives interviewed below the **activities funded by Measure 4.1 have contributed to the external promotion of a positive image of Northern Ireland and the Border Region.**

Before I met the project coordinator and the Mummies I was only aware of Northern Ireland in terms of the conflict and violence that you see on the TV...after the Irish Mummie Troup came to Bulgaria I became aware of the efforts that they put into developing and maintaining their culture. When they came over they took part in St Patrick's Day celebrations and were on the news. This publicity meant that they were profiled across Bulgaria. Also they visited an ethnographic museum and built relationships there. . . now masks for Irish Mummies hang in the Museum. They were back over a few months ago, so you can see that the networks have definitely been maintained. (Bulgarian Embassy, Mummie Foundation)

I went to Belfast on a visit and when I was there I attended a conference and learnt how different groups work from social, economic and environmental backgrounds. I was taken on a tour of the city and I remember the nice houses by the river front. Before I came to Belfast I knew that it was a city that was part of the region and that it had trouble with terrorism. After my visit I left with a good impression, I could see that the city had been developed very well and had a good infrastructure i.e. congress centre. We would like to continue with this relationship as we have found it very useful in terms of sharing best practice and participating in good conferences. (Valencia City Council, CONNECT)

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- 3.15 Furthermore, several of the projects hosted major conferences and events in Northern Ireland and the Border Region which also provided additional opportunities to showcase the region and the relevant sectoral expertise.

In response to growing demands for information and support from colleagues in the early childhood sector abroad, NIPPA has undertaken a number of initiatives in Eastern Europe. For instance..... we facilitated round table consultation meetings in Belarus and Moldova with key governmental, non-governmental and academic organisations in the early childhood sector; they provided training programmes for early childhood practitioners in the Ukraine, Belarus, Albania, Moldova and Serbia; they hosted inbound visits from early years practitioners from the Ukraine, Belarus, Albania, Moldova and Serbia; we provided equipment for three pre-school centres in Belarus through donations from member groups in Northern Ireland. Furthermore NIPPA hosted the first ever Working Forum, with the World Forum Foundation in Belfast in November 2004. This Forum brought together early childhood leaders from 13 countries to explore the theme of early childhood education and the contribution of programmes to peace and reconciliation. (Linking Early Childhood Services at a European / International Level, NIPPA)

We hosted a talk for 40 representatives from 4 countries (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic & Slovakia)....discussing ways to encourage small businesses to look outside their own regions/surrounding areas, ways to recognise opportunities to break into other areas (EU B2B Connect, NORIBIC)

We hosted visits from two major regions under the Democratising Kiev project. (i) This resulted in training being delivered in Kiev across the regions; (ii) Study visit took place back in Northern Ireland- all the lessons learned were written up and circulated across the regions under Foundation Building Themes'. (Fermanagh Social Economy Network, Fermanagh Trust)

The support from Measure 4.1 helped to enhance the position of NIUSE as an expert body on supported employment outside Northern Ireland...during the project it moved into a prominent position within the European Union of Supported Employment ...evidenced by the fact that NIUSE held the presidency of EUSE involving 17 national associations and hosted the 8th EUSE Conference in Belfast for the first time in June 2007. (Supported Employment Home and Away, NIUSE)

19 women came here from Italy, visited various initiatives in Fermanagh- for example, with "women in agriculture," (organic farming, jam and chutney making etc) - subsequently they created their own "women in agriculture" and a related magazine, they created a collective network, ...very beneficial as farming women are isolated and do not normally have the facilities to work together. We gave them training, helped set up business planning support, and brought in mentors. - in effect they took models of best practice back to Italy (Eurolink and Eurolink Fast Track, The Rural Centre)

'There is always a big interest from other countries in what we do in Northern Ireland as there are very few countries that have the same depth of grass roots level women's community groups and this is what the researchers have an interest in talking to us about. We field these calls for our groups and only send researchers that we feel will get good benefits from speaking to our women on the ground to them'. (Women Networking, Women's Support Network)

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The 'internal / 'grassroots' reach of Measure 4.1

- 3.16 Evidence collected by OFMDFM and SEUPB suggests that the **overall 'throughput' of beneficiaries within the Measure was circa 10,000 individuals²¹**. This is an average 'reach' of 434 participants per project; with the largest 'reach' being 1606 and the smallest number of individual project participants being 30. It is important to note that this figure could include a very small proportion of double counting between projects. For instance, in some cases a participant may have been involved in more than one project. In addition some projects delivered joint visits / network events or exchanges. However, this figure does exclude double counting within projects where a participant will have been involved in more than one activity. Therefore the level of 'overstatement' is likely to be minimal.
- 3.17 In headline terms this illustrates that **the reach of Measure 4.1 has been significant, and in value for money terms equates to an average cost per beneficiary of £700** (based on the ratio between circa £7million and the throughput of beneficiaries).
- 3.18 The profile of project beneficiaries has been partially captured through equality questionnaires which were distributed to individual beneficiaries of Measure 4.1 projects as a means to assess the impact with respect to some of the Section 75 categories. At 4th May 2007, there were a total of 1184 individual returns and 2 summary returns for Measure 4.1 as a whole. These beneficiary forms relate to 18 out of the 22 projects that were supported in Northern Ireland and therefore should be viewed as broadly representative of the funded activity.
- 3.19 Reflecting on the data captured by this process and summarised in Table 3.3 and 3.4, it is clear that **uptake at the beneficiary level was fairly well balanced from both a gender and community background perspective**.

Table 3.3: Gender breakdown

	Number	Percentage
Male	640	54
Female	537	46
TOTAL	1177	100
Unanswered	9	

Source: Section 75 Database 04.05.07

Table 3.4: Religious community background

	Number	Percentage
Protestant	491	42
Catholic	544	47
Neither	131	11
TOTAL	1166	100
Unanswered	20	

Source: Section 75 Database 04.05.07

- 3.20 Whilst the majority (59%) of funded projects were Northern Ireland wide, the remainder set out to service a specific area / community within Northern Ireland. As indicated by project level information in Appendix B, the locations of the project head offices were dispersed across Northern Ireland and the Border Region, with eight projects having their head office in Belfast, four in Derry / Londonderry, two in Donegal, one in Dublin and the remainder in a variety of locations such as Ballygawley, Dungannon, Fermanagh and Letterkenny.

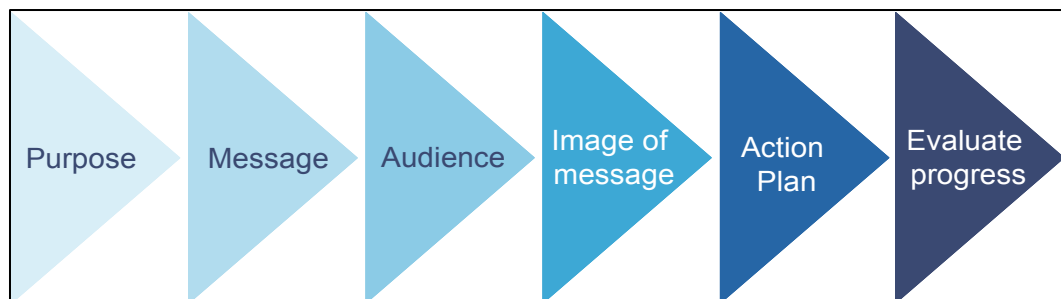
²¹ Actual number of participants provided by OFMDFM and SEUPB data was 9551. It should be noted that this figure is inclusive of some of the beneficiaries from external regions as well as internal to Northern Ireland and the Border Region

- 3.21 This balance can be largely attributed back to the robustness of the selection panel procedure at the outset, where clear decisions were made to optimise the coverage and minimise overlap within the Measure.

The effectiveness of dissemination

- 3.22 Dissemination has been critical within Measure 4.1 in connecting members of civil society within Northern Ireland and the Border Region, who have not been directly engaged in project activity, with the lessons emanating from the interaction / dialogue with EU/ international regions.
- 3.23 Broadly speaking, the purpose of dissemination is to promote the utilisation of results and experiences, to produce changes and to influence. Dissemination and influencing can be viewed from various angles. At an individual level some of the effects are development of know-how, improved working methods and new ways of thinking. From the viewpoint of an organisation or other community, the utilisation of results can, for example, increase effectiveness, widen the network and enhance the experiences of project work inside the organisation. The most demanding level of dissemination is the transfer of results, their application and dissemination to another sector or another target group.
- 3.24 The majority of the projects within Measure 4.1 recognised that dissemination measures were an essential part of the entire project, not a separate task to be carried out at the close of the project. It is evident from research with projects that a result and dissemination-centred way of thinking supported the project and shaped the entire procedure. Reflecting on the learning within the projects, Figure 3.5 illustrates the elements of an effective dissemination plan, which should be determined and embedded at the outset.

Figure 3.5: Approach to effective dissemination



- 3.25 Reviewing the dissemination activity of the Measure 4.1 projects, it is evident that **a broad spectrum of success has been achieved** in this regard. The dissemination activity ranged from the 'minimal approach' which was adopted by a small number of the projects (i.e. circulation of the project's final report around their own organisations only) to, a 'high and wide' dissemination approach which in some cases included a promotional tour around countries that were engaged with as part of the Measure activity.

Promotional tour to assess how EU countries might benefit from networking and which way to approach it - six days, developed publications targeted at foreign countries, then asked to return by several organisations to give related presentations, visited EU honorary consuls. (Eurolink and Eurolink Fast Track, The Rural Centre)

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- 3.26 The most successful projects in terms of dissemination spent time at the outset of the project planning their aims and objectives and planning a 'communications / dissemination strategy' alongside this to ensure maximum impact of the project outcomes.

Examples of 'best practice' in planning for dissemination

We decided on the leaflet and publishing the strategic plan. We also decided on the conference initiative and the launch in the UN to really scale up the profile and to introduce the concept and the ideas. We have a website established and maintained in India. The website is in a number of languages which is really good. Each of the members has the literature and documentation and promotes the network. (Community Foundations in Divided Societies, CFNI)

The report was taken back to all the committees for endorsement and those fed into the final conference in terms of what people learnt from Belfast and what they could learn more of from Belfast. We showcased even more projects than expected. This culminated in the final report and the CD-ROM and that has gone out to 358 participants (in the actual projects) and an additional 150 domestic partners (involved in the final conference). In addition the Connect project fed into our European bulletin which was issued quarterly - so if we had tangible project updates/outputs, then we fed that into our EU bulletin which is sent out to some 358 participants and international colleagues as well. (CONNECT, Belfast City Council)

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- 3.27 Organisations that took a more minimal approach to dissemination cited that funding constraints impacted on the scope of their dissemination activity. It is interesting to note that Concordia, who were in receipt of circa £1m in funding reported being unable to fund any collective dissemination for their project. Their dissemination was centred on the various themes explored in the dialogue facilitated by the project. Perhaps better planning at the outset could have ensured that they also included a collective dissemination process.
- 3.28 Generally the reasons for success or lack of success of dissemination activity experienced by the projects can be summarised as follows:

Table 3.6: Characteristics of successful / less successful dissemination activity

Characteristics of less successful dissemination activity	Characteristics of successful dissemination activity
Lack of EU wide dissemination	EU wide dissemination
No interactive dissemination	Interactive dissemination i.e. face-to-face / joint delivery / visits to EU regions
Information only available in one European language	Information available in more than one European language
No formal targeted audience	Formal targeted audience
No dissemination beyond those participating	Dissemination beyond those participating

4 Value of network creation and content

Introduction

- 4.1 Initially this section sets out an introductory analysis of the extent to which Measure 4.1 sustained existing formal networks; developed informal networks into more formalised arrangements; or created brand new networks. All of these different types of support for networking were eligible within the Measure. Within this context it also reflects on the diversity of networks sustained, developed or created, in terms of networking themes.
- 4.2 Building on the information set out in the last section in terms of the profiling achieved by funded activity within Measure 4.1, this section aims to go 'one stage further' in setting out how the learning gained through project activity has been applied. In essence this involves looking beyond the 'activity-based' outputs of projects (which have largely already been captured through monitoring returns) to consider outcomes, for instance; in respect of changed attitudes/ behaviours; transfer/ upgrading of skills; the implementation of new models of service delivery within civil society; and evidence of strategic input and influence in a policy context (informed by the external networking activity).
- 4.3 In addition it considers the wider 'spin-off' economic benefits that have indirectly arisen for the economy of Northern Ireland and the Border Region, for instance; through hosting 'in-bound delegations' of visitors to Northern Ireland for visits, seminars and conference activity. Finally, it considers the extent to which the networking activity within projects is being sustained or has the potential to be sustained after the Measure 4.1 financial support ended.

The balance between sustaining, developing and creating networks

- 4.4 In order to fully capture the nature of the additionality created by Measure 4.1, it is important to categorise projects against their baseline position. During the research with the 22 projects supported by the Measure, three main models were identified:-
- **Pre-established formal networks:** these organisations existed with networking as their main 'raison d'être' prior to Measure 4.1 support. Examples of projects that fall into this category would include the Women's Support Network, Eurolink and the NIUSE projects. In some of these cases at least some of the Measure 4.1 support was used as a substitute for mainstream / core funding to sustain what had been built already. Therefore, relative to other models the scope for added value is potentially reduced. That said there was still evidence within some of these projects that the additional external networking activity resulted in enhanced quality of impacts for the Northern Ireland based network members. For instance the NIUSE project is a good example of a project that used the prominence it achieved within the European Union of Supported Employment to enhance the capacity of the local and regional networks for supported employment in Northern Ireland²². In the realm of more 'economic' projects the NORIBIC and Enterprise NI projects provide examples of support to existing ²³formalised networks, but where the support through

²² evidenced by the fact that they hosted the 8th EU Conference on Supported Employment in Belfast in June 2007

²³ NORIBIC is a member of the European Business Innovation Centre Network (EBN) which has around 160 BIC members throughout Europe including members in the new transition countries of Eastern Europe. EU BIC focuses on small micro

Measure 4.1, rather than substituting an element of previous core/ mainstream funding, enabled a new dimension of project activity. The NORIBIC project for instance pro-actively used the network of 160 EU Business Information Centres, of which it is a member, to support SMEs in Northern Ireland to access a business to business (B2B) network, on a Europe wide basis. Market entry and mentoring support was a key aspect of the project as well as the creation of an 'internationalisation club' of SMEs. Most of the focus was on companies with the potential of intellectual property, including clusters focused on the creative industries, technology/ digital media/ knowledge-based economy. The Enterprise NI project enabled micro-businesses and SME's (all first time exporters) linked to their member Local Enterprise Agencies, to undertake trade and export development activities in EU markets through the 'Tradebridge' element;

- **Pre-established informal networks:** these organisations had been working on an informal and ad hoc basis, with organisations / individuals with a similar interest as themselves. In effect they were already 'outward and forward looking' and used the funding from Measure 4.1 to bring a new and more formalised approach to aspects of this interaction. A key example here would be the NIPPA project in that the organisation was already very outward looking with existing relationships in place with some of its partner organisations²⁴. However the Measure 4.1 funding allowed NIPPA to significantly consolidate these partnerships to manage a programme of 'learning in and out' of Northern Ireland in terms of expertise of early year's provision in conflict/ post conflict societies. A second example is the Diversity and Conflict Management (DCM) Strand of the University of Ulster project - where the INCORE²⁵ organisation was already established globally as a Centre of Excellence in conflict management studies. In this case the Measure 4.1 support enabled the University to expand beyond work in the 'obvious conflict regions'²⁶ and to formalise relationships with new conflict regions that were at different stages in the process to Northern Ireland (for example, Basque Country, Serbia-Montenegro, Nansen Network/ Balkans) with a view to comparative learning and exchange of experience. Furthermore the DCM theme enabled for the first time much more of a focus on the diversity agenda, which had not been a major focus within INCORE; and
- **Birth of completely new networks:** in many instances the Measure 4.1 support enabled the creation of entirely new networks. A key example here is the Mummie Foundation project, based in Fermanagh but supporting Mummie troupes on a cross-community and cross border basis across Ireland to network with Bulgarian and Sardinian counterparts. All of these relationships and networks were entirely new and the project has successfully promoted the idea of a collective cultural heritage. This has ensured that the Mummies now feel part of a European community as well as retaining their own Mummie identity, so contributing to attitudinal change and reconciliation. Similarly the CFNI project created an entirely new network of community foundations working in divided societies, building on the long-standing record of the organisation in peace building, social justice, reconciliation and the support of community development, within the context of a divided society. As an entirely new network this project faced a number of challenges, including meeting the varying expectations of network members but in the main, network members have learned significantly from each other and the co-operation has been formalised through the development and agreement of a Charter. Clearly it is in this last category of project that the most scope for additionality exists.

businesses and the delivery of innovative support; Enterprise NI is a NI representative body the umbrella body of the 32 Local Enterprise Agencies in NI.

²⁴ (the High/Scope Education and Research Foundation (USA), Reggio Emilia (Italy) and CCF International in Eastern Europe)

²⁵ INCORE: International Centre of Research Excellence for the study of Peace and Reconciliation

²⁶ for example the Middle East where INCORE has had a key focus to date

- 4.5 Looking across all the funded projects within Measure 4.1 **there is a fairly even balance across all three categories above**, which is also reasonable in terms of the risk profile.

Networking content/themes

- 4.6 In the main the focus of activity within the projects funded by Measure 4.1 has been on networking around a common theme or a common set of themes. The research with the projects undertaken for this review suggests that **where the themes were either few in number and/or clearly defined there was more prospect of securing ongoing commitment from partners and beneficiaries, and ultimately improved outcomes**. For instance while the CONNECT project at one level was complex involving all local authorities in the BMAP region and four partner cities across the EU, the underlying rationale was always centred on a single theme – governance, and within this how cities transform their urban areas via the city's governance structures. This worked well to focus all parties involved on a common agenda. Similarly the Forest Link project, promoted by Donegal County Development Board, Donegal Forestry Forum and Donegal County Council was very focused on two elements of forestry, one being 'community forests' the other being 'developments of the wood supply chain' and all of the networking with Northern Ireland, Scotland and Scandinavian regions within the project was very structured around these two themes. Accordingly, there are tangible examples of the project having delivered new models of practice on the ground within the lifetime of the Measure 4.1 funding and it is evident that there is a sense of pride within the project that this has been achieved quickly.
- 4.7 By contrast, the ICBAN project aimed to develop and support technology transfer, research and development (R&D) in order to raise the innovative capacity of the ICBAN region using international linkages. Whilst it undoubtedly delivered benefits for the individual participants, it was complicated in 'design' - it was not centred on a single theme or discrete sector and as a result it is fairly difficult to establish what the cumulative impact of the Measure 4.1 funding has been. Similarly the Partnership for Progress project promoted by Concordia, by its nature involving a social partnership of the agriculture, trade union, business and community and voluntary sectors in Northern Ireland has been broadly focused. Published reports included sustainable development, childcare, waste management and migrant workers. The challenge with a project that is as broadly focused is as this is that it can be very difficult for the staff to deliver everything and be 'experts' in all sectors. Accordingly significant use of sub-contract resource was required to deliver the Concordia project.
- 4.8 In addition, while the project has clearly advanced cross-sectoral working in Northern Ireland at a range of levels, some of this has been 'uneven' for instance the study tours have had more uptake from voluntary/community sector and agriculture sector representatives compared to business and trade union representatives²⁷, which may have impacted to a degree on the achievement of some of the intended outcomes of the project. Clearly in both these instances it is more difficult to evaluate impact, relative to a project that is more tightly defined and focused.
- 4.9 Finally, in the context of networking themes it is important to **highlight that the Measure did support new / emerging themes in terms of networking activity**. A clear example in this regard is the cultural networking theme of the University of Ulster project. This raised awareness of cultural policy as an area of political and administrative relevance to Northern Ireland and encouraged debate in the cultural sector about how best to professionalise it. It was clear that there was a healthy interest within the policy and practitioner community alike for this emerging area, evidenced by the fact that some of the conferences and events at the latter stages of the project were heavily oversubscribed.

²⁷ They were reported to be less able to secure leave from work commitments.

Benefits derived from networking

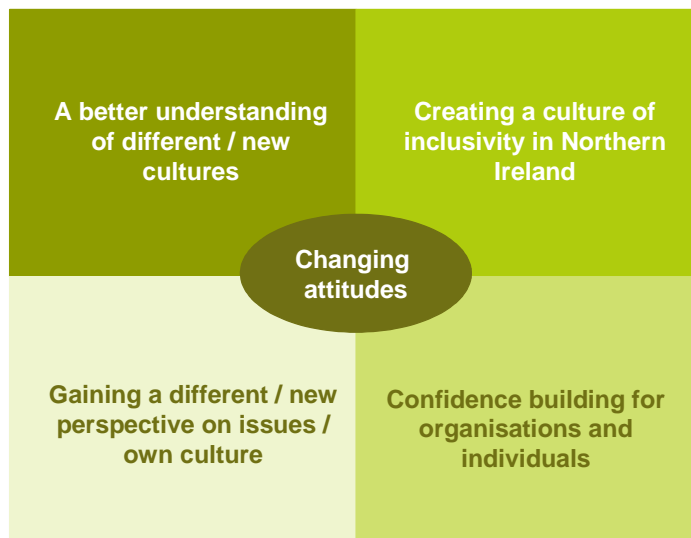
4.10 Looking beyond the 'activity-based' outputs of projects it is clear that the projects funded by Measure 4.1 have resulted in a range of benefits, derived from the application of learning gained through EU/ International networking. In broad terms these benefits can be categorised as follows:

- Changed attitudes/ behaviours;
- Transfer/ upgrading of skills;
- Implementation of new models of service delivery; and
- Evidence of strategic input and influence in a policy context.

Changed attitudes/behaviours

4.11 A widely acknowledged benefit amongst projects and beneficiaries was the **exposure to different cultures / experiences** that was facilitated through the various networking activities. This contributed to a range of benefits in terms of changed attitudes and behaviours, as illustrated in Figure 4.1 below and the range of quotations set out in the text box overleaf.

Figure 4.1 Aspects of attitudinal/ behavioural change



A better understanding of different cultures

When Mumming Troupes came to Northern Ireland from other Countries and when we visited them we experienced differences in symbolism used by Mumming Troupes from Bulgaria and Sardinia. We shared information on cultures and symbolism of costumes and plays at these events. We brought back a shared knowledge of significance of bonfires, in other countries, including England and southern counties in Ireland. (Local and International Mumming Networks, The Mummies Foundation)

We definitely had a broad learning in terms of the sensitivities around caste and all of those things that were new learning for people here... people were fascinated by some of the things that happen in the name of gender, culture and caste in those regions that they had not thought about (Community Foundations in Divided Societies, CFNI)

The exchange helped some of us remove the blinkers of opinions and ideas we had about life in Northern Ireland. (Youth Work in Contested Spaces, Youth Council)

Gaining a different perception on issues / own culture

Ask people a year later how they have developed. People were saying, 'why am I going away with representatives from a different sector' etc? But they came back with a wider viewpoint not just in terms of their own sector but others as well. Overall more tolerant (Partnership for Progress, Concordia)

Much of the policing debate has been emotionally charged but when you take people away to other places - it shifts the terms of discussion. Each time we designed the study trips around the concept of developing a learning community and we gave them time to think together with stimulating material. We like to follow that up by identifying some of the key messages that they have learned. This is an important part of the way we work to build capacity in the constituencies behind each of the participants which also helps us to design the programme for the return visit for here (Civic Leadership, Mediation NI)

Creating a culture of inclusivity in Northern Ireland

We encourage our people to think more inclusively and more widely and locate Northern Ireland in the wider Europe and wider world. It's important to engage. It's a local difficulty within a region. This project has helped to engage with others to gain wider perspectives on our situation here (Eurolink and Eurolink Fast Track, The Rural Centre)

The project encouraged the understanding that Mumming is a universal practise, not exclusively Irish or Catholic. It brought Mummies and Morris dancers from England into protestant schools, as Mumming in the protestant community is dying out. As such the project has contributed to a culture of inclusiveness (Local and International Mumming Networks, The Mummies Foundation)

Confidence building for organisations and individuals

A key aspect was bringing companies together to combine resources and share experiences. The application of learning was achieved through learning from different cultures and from other businesses. For example, 5/6 companies went on trade missions to Germany. For companies even to consider looking outside Northern Ireland, leads to increased confidence. (EU B2B Connect, NORIBIC)

Note: The examples set out above are included to provide some illustrations and 'colour' to this review report, and draw on a range of 'sentiments' expressed to the PwC review team during the course of the research for this review. These should not be viewed as 'verbatim quotations' from these discussions nor are they intended to be formal case studies. Rather they are included to provide illustrations of the diversity of activity within the Measure 4.1 projects and of some of the impacts and outcomes arising.

Transfer/upgrading of skills

- 4.12 A number of the projects highlighted that the networking resulted in the **transferring of skills from organisations and individuals across EU countries and in some cases internationally**. Methods of transfer which were evident included; formal delivery of training, mentoring programmes, exchange visits, partnership working, and practical learning in areas of skills development and confidence building; as illustrated from the following text box.

Skills transfer

We did two youth bank exchanges of 18-25 year olds; one to South Africa and one to Palestine. We trained young people in those regions so that they could establish youth bank and young peoples' grant making projects in those regions. In addition young people from those regions came here and trained with us for two weeks a year and then went back again to use what they had learnt. (Community Foundations in Divided Societies, CFNI)

The NIUSE project not only developed the skills/ capacity of the local/ regional supported employment networks in Northern Ireland.....it placed NIUSE at the heart of the European Union of Supported Employmenta key partner was also the Czech union for Supported Employment who came on a study visit to Northern Ireland and whose members participated in training for supported employment practitioners. (Supported Employment Home and Away, NIUSE)

The SME networking and mentoring programme created new potential contacts for businesses. The mentoring provided assistance and advice to assist SMEs to enter international markets (EU B2B Connect, NORIBIC)

Fermanagh Trust hosted visits from two major regions under the Democratising Kiev project. (i) This resulted in training being delivered in Kiev across the regions; (ii) Study visit took place back in Northern Ireland- all the lessons learned were written up and circulated across the regions under Foundation Building Themes... (Fermanagh Social Economy Network, Fermanagh Trust)

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New models of delivery

- 4.13 Through networking the majority of projects were exposed to models of delivery, including a **mixture of service delivery models and models of collaboration across** various sectors. Where best practice was identified, projects worked to either immediately implement the model or explore the possibilities for implementation. The following text box provides some examples of new models of delivery that have arisen through the Measure.

Models of delivery

There was a Vilnius one-stop community shop model – you went in through a door and you had the house of the voluntary sector and we are actually putting a proposal in as part of the Peace III programme to replicate that model within the waterfront area of Belfast. (CONNECT, Belfast City Council)

Our project was a bit ahead of its time, we looked at development of bio mass and the wood supply chain, we could see how it was done in Denmark and Sweden and that they were 20 years ahead of us. Following this we are currently involved in developing "district heating systems". The visits helped to educate members. (Forest Link, Donegal County Development Board)

The NICEC project enabled the transition from discussion to action as the project built up its intensity and focus of activity. (Shared Learning, University of Ulster)

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Implementing new delivery models

Through community woodland partners in Scotland and Belfast could see difficulties that they had to overcome, for example, insurance: we investigated their model of public liability insurance and have since applied this model here. We are working through networks of cooperatives and local authorities. (Forest Link, Donegal County Development Board)

We established a Mumming museum, based on a similar project in Sardinia, where it has been synonymous with the village and the marketing of it as a point of interest. Accordingly the festival in west Fermanagh in December is now marketed as a cultural point of interest, which distinguishes it from other events internationally, and which derives significant economic impacts for the rural economy of the area. (Local and International Mumming Networks, The Mummings Foundation)

Following a visit to the Nokia Headquarters in Finland for a digital cities conference, the Wireless Initiative Partnership was set up. This enabled new ways of teaching and learning for university students in Derry. The city of Derry now operates a city wide WIFI network and this has changed the way in which businesses do business. This in turn has helped with the regeneration of the city. (North West European Partnership, Derry City Council)

Many farming groups involved in projects for example, visit to Netherlands to learn about fertilizing alternatives etc following the EU "nitrate directive" - the directive also affected how farmers could store waste. (Eurolink and Eurolink Fast Track, The Rural Centre)

So that a model of good practice developed as a result of the network and we have shared that with other networks and mentors and they are looking to use this to encourage that kind of grant making process. We have mirrored it in our Bill of Rights grant making and development programme - we are giving the mentors support to target groups to work up a submission on the bill of rights'. (Community Foundations in Divided Societies, CFNI)

'There have been a number of subsequent meetings between individual ENI members/LEAs which may present positive opportunities, most notably discussions between Castlereagh Enterprises and Czech Invest surrounding the structure and delivery methods employed by Northern Ireland's LEAs'. (Enterprise Network Europe, ENI)

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4.14 Time, resources and overambitious aims were cited as barriers which impacted on the projects' ability to implement new models of delivery. Comments included the following:-

- Time: *'there was too much external learning - too many visits over a short period of time. It would have been better if there had been fewer events and more focus on implementing the learning'; 'There is always value in meeting other similar organisations but the external learning should be limited, there can be too much of this and it takes up too much time and sometimes there is too much focus on the need to spend the money rather than the need to spend it right';*
- Resources: *'there was a lot of learning outside of Northern Ireland. The project has created strong networks and initiated both academic and practitioner discourses about the importance of engaging young people in the rebuilding and transformation of troubled societies. Staffing and other issues meant that there was not as much recording and follow-up as they had anticipated. The benefits/outcomes are therefore little researched'; and*

- Overambitious aims: *'models for effective practice and evaluation have not yet emerged from the work of the initiative. This may have been overambitious goal for a project that lasted only three years, that involved multiple actors from different places and cultures, and that addresses a highly complex issue'*.

Evidence of strategic input and influence in a policy context.

- 4.15 It is evident that **the critical mass of networks and in some cases the high-level representation, enabled impacts to arise in respect of strategic policy inputs and influence**. The text box below illustrates the breadth of policy impacts achieved by projects funded by the Measure.

Examples of strategic input and influence in a policy context

Because immigration is such a big thing, we learnt a lot from Valencia. We are putting a proposal into the Commission for an URBACT funding for ethnic minorities. We learnt from the whole experience how bad we are at managing it; we don't have a strategy for handling immigration. Taking those two points of learning and encompassing them in the URBACT project will be good. (CONNECT, Belfast City Council)

Raised awareness of cultural policy as an area of political and administrative relevance to Northern Ireland and to encourage debate in the cultural sector about how best to professionalise it DCAL Creative Industry Working Groups....brings together key stakeholders from the sector together for the first time. The project has been in the space of informing and influencing core policy development ...how can the arts become a driving force in a new global economy...2006 cultural conference. (Shared Learning, University of Ulster)

The strength of the policy work is in the united voice of the four social partners, which is more difficult for government to ignore (Partnership for Progress, Concordia)

There have been efforts to mainstream the model of Supported Employment as an alternative to traditional vocational training and employment. We gave presentations to Belfast Employment services Board, N&W Belfast Trust. We also had active participation in strategic networks such as the disability liaison group, Northern Ireland Review of Mental Health and Disability in order to help embed SE within policy recommendations. The programme created genuine relevant and sustainable networks that have proved real benefit to those involved in NIUSE and have helped to promote NIUSE is an expert body on supported employment. (Supported Employment Home and Away, NIUSE)

Urban regeneration under the auspices of how cities are governed and how cities can be regional drivers because obviously that is a big thing for the BMAP - it's the gateway into the whole of Northern Ireland. There is going to be massive changes in the way that public administration is implemented and how the decision making process in relation to urban regeneration in all those themes takes place (CONNECT, Belfast City Council)

The victims sector will have learnt significantly from the South African and Columbian experience particularly in relation to memory, truth and justice and reparations and currently at the moment we are looking at the whole issue of witness protection and how that is dealt with and that is fascinating to us. (Community Foundations in Divided Societies, CFNI)

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Indirect benefits

- 4.16 Over and above the direct benefits from networking previously discussed, a range of more indirect economic benefits have also arisen on a number of projects. These relate for instance to **economic impacts related to business / trade development**; through hosting 'in-bound delegations' of visitors to Northern Ireland for visits, seminars and conference activity and; increased financial sustainability of organisations.

There were three additional spin-offs that we never foresaw when we were drawing up the application. We went back out to Valencia and we had educationalists, civic leaders and businesses on a trade mission. One of the points of learning from the initial was the amount of correlation between the business sector and also the commonality between what Valencia wanted and what we could tangibly offer - an outcome for Belfast alone is that we generated significant trade on that mission. We never thought that would happen. (CONNECT, Belfast City Council)

One participant reported having started a new business as a result of learning gained from the study tour and a further two reported business expansion...at least three were investigating new business opportunities. (EU B2B Connect, NORIBIC)

There is now increased potential for Donegal, and we are in top five counties for tourism in Ireland as per the Failte Ireland report. (Donegal Tourism Research Project, Donegal County Council)

We used the support from Tradebridge to make two trips to Europe. Firstly visiting a major trade show and subsequently following up on some of the best contacts that we made at the show. We have been able to tie up agency details in Belgium and Luxembourg and continue to have ongoing discussions with influential designers in Germany. (Enterprise Europe Network, ENI)

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- 4.17 Finally it is relevant to highlight the impact that is associated with major conferences hosted in Northern Ireland during the course of the funded activity within the Measure. A key example in this context is the European Union of Supported Employment Conference, which is held every two years, and in 2007 was hosted by NIUSE in Belfast. With around 650 visitors from 36 countries this had a significant impact on the local tourism economy. Around two-thirds of the visitors were estimated to be from outside Northern Ireland. It is clear that the funding from Measure 4.1 enabled NIUSE to move to a position of prominence within the EUSE and subsequently to secure this major conference for Belfast.

Sustainability

- 4.18 It is important to reflect on the current sustainability of the networks supported by Measure 4.1. The research suggests that **the position is varied across the projects**. Of the 22 projects, the majority have maintained either formal or informal networking contact with their external partners, and a small number are currently still operational but concerned about the potential for future funding.

Formalised networks sustained

We are still going to be tapping into Valencia and they are very interested in our tourist development strategies. Stockholm: are linking in with us again with an INTERREG 4c project, an Initiative which Belfast already leads at the minute. A matter of weeks ago, our officer had Swedish counterparts over looking at public realm and that is going to be built into that. The activity is very much being sustained at the moment. (CONNECT, Belfast City Council)

Under a new Measure (Peace funding under Priority 2) we are now running a victims empowerment project through this network. It has just started and it is at a very early stage. We are in Sri Lanka getting that project off the ground and the members are connecting with it. It will culminate in another big conference here in Northern Ireland next May. The grant didn't really finish which is great in a sense. We continue to have the network working and we are actually doing a practical project. This project is being funded by CRC under Priority 2 of the Peace Programme. We showcase the two projects together to international funders that will help us to sustain the network in the longer term (Community Foundations in Divided Societies, CFNI)

All the projects funded under Measure 4.1 have endured. If you look at Boston College website you will see that there is continued networking going on there (Civic Leadership, Mediation NI)

Networks still maintained after projects, we continue to receive requests, suggestions and feedback from participants on projects afterwards. (Eurolink and Eurolink Fast Track, The Rural Centre)

The cultural regeneration theme has been mainstreamed into the ongoing work of the cultural development department in the University of Ulster. The DCM strand has been mainstreamed into INCORE, in particular its new Diversity in Action project (Shared Learning, University of Ulster)

Informal networks sustained

We still have contacts with partners since the project finished, however in a sporadic way (Learning together, Youth Action)

The links still remain but it's not formal. (Youth Citizens in Changing Societies, Public Achievement)

Networks uncertain about future funding:

Probably sustaining our own was the most vital because if we didn't there would be nobody at the grass roots level doing this work (Women Networking, Women's Support Network)

We are currently lobbying to receive mainstream / core funding as an organisation (Partnership for Progress, Concordia)

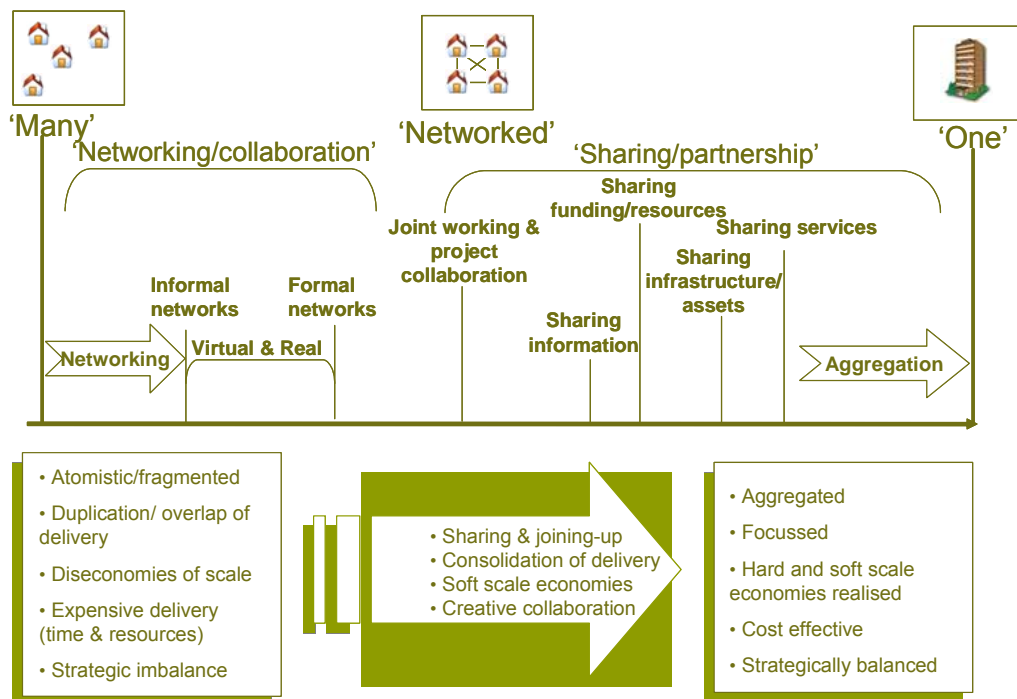
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5 Guiding principles in establishing productive international networks

Introduction

5.1 In broad terms a network is defined as a group of organisations or individuals that interact or engage in informal / formal communication with others for mutual assistance or support. Within this broad definition a wide variety of activities can be accommodated as is evident from the conceptual Figure below.

Figure 5.1: Conceptual model of networking



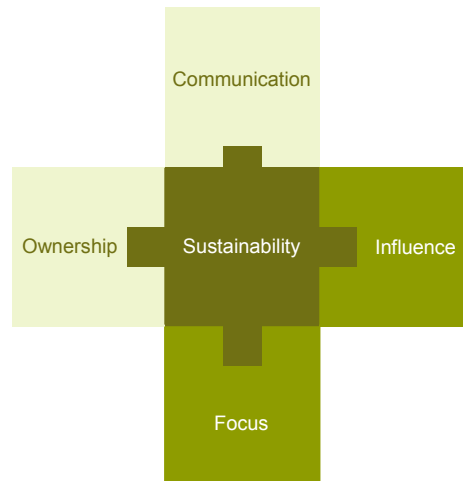
5.2 While it is evident that networking at a local/regional level brings with it a number of challenges, **when the concept is extended further into civil society networks in an EU and international dimension, a whole range of additional challenges come into play.** For instance, these include psychological factors related to distance, cultural diversity and language barriers. All of these additional challenges were evident within the Measure 4.1 projects.

Guiding principles for productive international networks

5.3 The research with project participants explored their views on 'guiding principles' for productive international networks, to highlight lessons learned and to inform the ongoing strategy for pro-active engagement of Northern Ireland and the Border Region in the EU and beyond.

- 5.4 Figure 5.2 illustrates the main findings from this research and indicates that five broad characteristics of successful international networks were highlighted, each of which is discussed below.

Figure 5.2: Characteristics of productive international networks



Communication

'Communicate with your members on a frequent and informative basis and where possible in a face-to-face format'.

- 5.5 While it is commonly recognised that communication is key to networking; the form and regularity that this communication takes is also important. It was highlighted that regular and informed communication was imperative to the network being able to respond and meet queries and requests for information from members quickly, and that this ability to respond quickly was highly valued by members.
- 5.6 In addition, a number of organisations cited that 'you need face-to-face contact' to facilitate productive networking between organisations. However, it was noted that this can be expensive and that in cases where this expense cannot be met, technology should be used to best advantage. The following text box provides comments from the projects on how communication can impact on the productiveness of international networks.

Communication

'We learnt a lot about the practicalities and modalities of rolling out a project. Yes, you can do a lot of it in terms of email but you do need the face-to-face contact. I know that is lot more expensive . . .'

'It is important to engage with the members of the network and to keep in regular contact with them so that they are fully aware of what the outputs of the meetings have been so that their contribution feels valued'.

Ownership/ Dedicated Resource

'Have a network champion who is responsible for driving, facilitating and coordinating the activities of the network'.

- 5.7 Projects highlighted that productive networks need strong facilitation and management. In effect they highlighted that one individual needs to 'own' the responsibility for driving activity.
- 5.8 Where a small number of the projects funded under Measure 4.1 planned to have a network manager at the outset of their project, at the end of the project the majority of funded organisations highlighted the need for such an individual. Typically the role of this individual would be to maintain communication across the network; to drive the pace of the network, to arrange and facilitate network events and activities and display a passion for the networking theme.
- 5.9 Those projects that did have a dedicated resource helped to create a structure to the network; which in turn helped to build a values base and trust amongst the members.

Ownership

'The use of an executive: networks need facilitation, the networks that worked best had an individual who was responsible for managing and coordinating the networks activities - they organise events and get messages out across the network'.

'You need a full-time co-ordinator who has the time and the resources. You need time and resources to dedicate to the project. This is only one of my projects and it was so time-consuming and so many things had to be achieved'.

'Dedicated time and resources for international networks to support and develop networks further i.e. challenging in terms of time inputs required'.

'The organisational capacity, resources and energy needed to sustain the process is immense...I learned the evolution of such a network was a slow process.....in order to grow the network further a full time secretariat will be required'.

Influence

'Concern yourself with quality not quantity in terms of membership and networking activities'.

- 5.10 Project representatives reflected that in setting up a network there can be pressure to demonstrate the strength of the network through the size of membership. However many individuals cited that in fact it was the quality of membership which had a positive impact on the productiveness of the network. Having a discrete mix of ability, geography and viewpoint across the members had in many instances provided the challenge and dynamic to keep the network alive.

Influence: selective membership

'Be careful about membership because you can be pressed to try and get loads of members in because it looks good, but it's actually quality of a network rather than quantity that is critical. That was one of the most difficult negotiations in that network because the result of those decisions meant that we had to ask some people to leave'.

'A balance between those ahead of you in terms of theme and equally you shouldn't rule out those who are deemed to be less progressive because they can shock you. I think if you can get a good geographical and political mix is important'.

- 5.11 It was further highlighted that the network needs to work at a range of levels right up to the policy dimension. Projects emphasised that it was important for the network to make good connections with political bodies and to include in their membership, where possible, elected representatives who could influence the decision-making process.

Influence: levels

'Important to make good connections with embassies, as they can give permission for performing in towns etc. and making connections with local media etc.'

'Good practice - needs to work on a range of levels - beneficiary, practitioner and link up to policy dimension, also need a clear business/policy imperative to underpin the networking'

'The project did engage the community and voluntary sector and the elected representatives so we had the people there who had the mandate who could affect the decision-making process and equally we had the lobbyists who could come at it from another angle to push them...'

- 5.12 The nature of activities implemented by a network can impact on the network's productivity. Some of the research suggested that networking is too often viewed as being 'conference led' rather than the engagement of organisations through more practical / interactive activities. Projects such as the Mummung Foundation illustrated that these interactive activities help to create closer /stronger bonds between networking organisations.
- 5.13 In addition, it was highlighted in some instances, that funding pressures encourage networks to engage in a high quantity of activities in a short space of time and this was not always reported to be conducive to effective learning.

Influence: balancing activities to build and sustain engagement

'Our success proves that practical activities can be just as beneficial in creating networks as seminars and conferences etc.'

'There was too much external learning - too many visits over a short period of time. It would have been better if there had been fewer events and more focus on implementing the learning'

Focus

'Focus the network around a theme of common interest and importance to all networking organisations'

- 5.14 As previously highlighted in this report, the projects that had clarity and focus on a small number of themes, were potentially better positioned to achieve quality outcomes. Overcomplicated project 'designs' and a broad focus in terms of networking themes were more often than not constraints to progress. Another key issue highlighted in respect of focus was a need to ensure that the aims of the network were aligned with the individual networking organisations' core business interests in order to encourage greater commitment to the network. In effect it was reported that this meant that all organisations within the network were working towards a shared / common goal and that the network has a strong, well defined focus.

Focus

'You need to be extremely focused on what the project aims to gain from international networking and aligning it with the core business projects/ interests; Measure 4.1 funding allowed us to build capacity and further consolidate/ strengthen links with existing partners, as well as identify new partnerships/ links; The sharing of good practice across the network of members created a great commitment throughout partnership organisations'.

'To have a strong focus: Companies are interested in learning solutions to problems from a third person or peer - this is what it is important for the network to focus on'.

'You have got to get your concept right - youth working in contested spaces - no one knew what that was and our first conference... we were assuming that people knew a lot about methods of working and we were wrong and we discovered that as we went along- people hadn't got a clue what contested spaces actually was. I think you need to get your theme right and know the stakeholders are all singing from the same hymn sheet'.

One of the complexities and challenges has been to find a common vision amongst members from different countries...progress has been slow but a common vision is now being fostered...members need to seek an element of commonality but retain different perspectives of some of the issues to maintain the vibrancy of the network'.

'We were too ambitious... one example of that were the placements. We had thought that we would have ten placements a year - where ten youth workers from Northern Ireland would go to wherever - we hadn't anticipated that the ELBs, the Youth Workers and Employers would not be happy to realise them for three months to go away. We thought there would be no problem. Our numbers were low and we didn't achieve that target because we hadn't anticipated that. There was also a low attendance at our conference of Northern Ireland delegates because the employers wouldn't release them to go...We needed to think ahead more... the what if's'.

Sustainability

'Secure future funding and the certainty will allow networks to concentrate on core activities and encourages political buy-in'.

- 5.15 A final key guiding principle for creating productive international networks, as cited by the projects, is to have certainty around the sustainability/funding of the network. It was reported that a degree of funding certainty would enable the network to concentrate on networking activities rather than finding funding alternatives which is often the case. In addition, a sustainable network is more likely to receive political buy-in and support.

Sustainability

'The networks are questionable in terms of sustainability i.e. in five years time, would the networks still be alive? A Proper network requires significant funding; mechanisms are needed to support the sustainability of networks beyond the short-term'.

'The main thing that I would say is that in order for an organisation to be able to network effectively beyond their own region they need to be certain that they are being funded to carry out their core activities. We are grinded down and forced to search for funding alternatives and cannot concentrate on the European element'.

The value of the 'Network of Networks'

- 5.16 Network NI was set up to help the 22 Measure 4.1 funded projects to coordinate activities, to promote Northern Ireland as a region of transnational activity and to increase participation levels within the projects. This included encouraging regions of the EU to share information, and export 'skills and expertise amongst the network members. In particular it was intended to be successful in a cross-sectoral capacity, i.e. to encourage different sectoral interests to work and network with each other in an EU capacity.

- 5.17 It is apparent from the research that the views on the value of the 'Network of Networks' are varied as is evidenced from the quotes below.

'I haven't paid much attention to it recently. There is an unholy alliance of projects being funded under Measure 4.1 that aren't very good bedfellows'.

'The Eurolink (Network-NI) project was excellent.....I found it very useful even though some of the projects are very different from ours'.

- 5.18 In the main it is concluded that because Measure 4.1 was new and innovative; and because there was a degree of ambiguity about what could be achieved from successful networking with EU and international regions, **there was a need to have a forum or mechanism for collective debate and exchange of experience.** The existence of the Network of Networks during the life of the Measure effectively **created a 'community of interest' and a common 'reference framework' for projects to draw on.** Furthermore, the contacts made through the Network of Networks facilitated joint working across a number of the projects (Concordia and Eurolink, NIPPA and Fermanagh Trust) which otherwise would not have occurred. Looking more broadly across the PEACE II programme it should be noted that this model of building a collaborative forum within a particular Measure was fairly unique.
- 5.19 However, **the sustainability of the Network of Networks (Network NI) beyond the Measure is less clear.** In the first instance it is reasonable to assume that because of the progress achieved through Measure 4.1 in advancing the capacity of the region to network at an EU and international level, that the level of support required from a 'collective forum' such as this would be reduced, perhaps to the level of occasional requests for information and guidance. In any event **the role of a 'collective forum' such as this would need to evolve perhaps to fill a smaller and more strategic 'space'.** For instance, advising on future policy directions with respect to the external engagement of Northern Ireland and the Border Region and dissemination of good practice learnt through the Measure to organisations embarking on external/ international networking for the first time.
- 5.20 In summary, Network NI carried out a very useful role during the life of the Measure. It is unlikely that it could be sustained from subscriptions or membership fees from Measure 4.1 funded projects - partly because some of these are uncertain about their own sustainability; and partly with the progress achieved within the Measure as a whole, the scale of need in relation to information, guidance and 'hand-holding' has been greatly reduced.

6 Conclusions and future directions

Introduction

- 6.1 At the start of this report it was highlighted that while the funding allocated to Measure 4.1 was fairly modest, there was the scope, because of the nature of activities, for significant leverage to be achieved in terms of shared learning and profiling of Northern Ireland and the Border Region in an EU and international setting. Whilst the extent of this leverage varies from project to project it is clear that in overall terms the Measure has been very successful in ‘punching above it’s weight’ and achieving the leverage that was anticipated at the outset.
- 6.2 Through the Measure there is now the basis of an infrastructure of civil society networks of co-operation with EU and international regions. There is also a significant ‘repository’ of learning; firstly centred on the dialogue that has been facilitated within the networks, and secondly relating to the practice of establishing/ running productive international networks. The latter should inform the more general need for a pro-active strategy of engagement for Northern Ireland and the Border Region in EU / international regions.

Main highlights

- 6.3 Reflecting back on the various sections of this report it is evident that:-
- The **Priority level targets for the Measure as a whole have been met** (indeed slightly exceeded). Over and above the headline figure of 22 projects supported, it should be acknowledged that all projects encompassed a number of sub-networks based on different themes of dialogue and interaction; and/ or different geographies with over 170 networks created. The Measure was proactively managed to optimise impacts arising, and related expenditure. Circa £7million of funding was successfully committed and spent, which leveraged a further £1.5million of match funding (both in cash and in-kind);
 - The **fit with the Peace and Reconciliation agenda was very strong across Measure 4.1 funded projects**. It is clear that linking members of civil society from Northern Ireland and the Border Region to external regions has created a ‘safe space’ for constructive dialogue to happen that otherwise may not have happened. In turn this has contributed to a very wide range of reconciliation impacts within Northern Ireland and the Border Region (for example, new and/or renewed relationships between divided communities; changed attitudes including the development of a culture of respect/ tolerance; acknowledgement of the ‘past’ and dealing with same; a greater sense of a shared society / ‘Shared Future’);
 - With reference to the **PEACE II distinctiveness criteria**²⁸ it is clear that while all projects took opportunities arising from the peace process as a main objective, not all of the projects were as successful in addressing the legacy of the conflict. The ability to address the legacy of the conflict was more evident in projects that were totally centred on networking around conflict resolution and involving, for instance, work with beneficiary groups such as victims, politically motivated ex-prisoners, and current / former members of

²⁸ addressing the legacy of the conflict and/or taking opportunities arising from PEACE

the security services. In respect of the **five ‘strands’ of reconciliation** the Measure was particularly successful in addressing strands 1, 3 and 4, and less successful in addressing strand 2 and 5;

- There is also a sense that that **the Measure has been successful in reaching areas, sectors and groups affected by the conflict**. In respect of areas, the impacts have been highest in respect of disadvantaged areas which have experienced relatively high levels of violence and disadvantaged areas whose image had been affected by local violence or community tension, and areas where social and economic development had been inhibited by the conflict. The development of **sectors particularly affected by the conflict has also been one of the main outcomes emerging** from the Measure 4.1 projects, as is the case more broadly within the PEACE II Programme. From the perspective of groups, the Measure has generated positive impacts for the most marginalised sections of society including by way of example: the disabled, marginalised youth, victims, and children impacted by the conflict. This progress is in part a reflection of the quality of the selection process for the projects in the first instance and ongoing management by OFMDFM to optimise the reach and impact of the projects ‘on the ground’;
- The **external ‘reach’ achieved by Measure 4.1 has been vast**, set against a limited baseline position. The vast reach achieved by the Measure overall is further reflected in the breadth achieved by some individual projects (for example, the NIPPA and CFNI projects). Overall slightly more of the funded activity has resulted in ‘learning into’ Northern Ireland and the Border Region rather than ‘learning out’ to external regions. This trend is a clear reflection of the limited baseline position for the Measure;
- Much of the potential for learning out has been achieved by projects where the constructive dialogue is largely centred on sharing expertise in terms of conflict management/transformation with other conflict zones, within and beyond the EU. This is not, however, always the case and there are several good examples within the Measure of ‘learning out’ in other topic areas. Clearly it needs to be acknowledged through this review that **Northern Ireland and the Border Region can interact and influence on an international stage in a range of sectors or topics beyond conflict resolution**. This should be viewed as a foundation for taking the strategy for the region’s engagement within Europe (and beyond) to a new level reflecting an evolution from previous activity;
- Linked to this, it was apparent through a number of discussions with project partners based in EU / International regions that **activities funded by Measure 4.1 have contributed to the external promotion of a more positive image of Northern Ireland and the Border Region**;
- Data collected by OFMDFM and SEUPB suggests that the **overall ‘throughput’ of beneficiaries within the Measure was circa 10,000 individuals**²⁹. In headline terms this illustrates that **the reach of Measure 4.1 has been significant, and in value for money terms equates to an average cost per beneficiary of £700** (based on the ratio between circa £7million of PEACE II funds and the throughput of circa 10,000 beneficiaries);

²⁹ Actual number of participants provided by OFMDFM and SEUPB data was 9551. It should be noted that this figure is inclusive of some of the beneficiaries from external regions as well as internal to Northern Ireland and the Border Region

- It is evident that there **has been greater scope for added value, where the networks established have been entirely new**. That said; these projects carry the highest risk profile. There are also several very good examples of where **the support from Measure 4.1 has enabled pre-existing networks to augment and professionalise their work through the addition of an international dimension** which has informed their policy and practice (for example, the NIUSE project). Finally, there are also several excellent examples of projects where **the support from Measure 4.1 enabled an organisation that was already a ‘thought leader’ in external markets, to consolidate and diversify their position** (for example, INCORE within the University of Ulster; and NIPPA);
- The research into the projects undertaken for this review suggests that where the **themes were either few in number and / or clearly defined within a project** there was more prospect of securing ongoing commitment from partners and beneficiaries, and ultimately improved outcomes;
- Looking beyond the ‘activity outputs’ of the funded projects it is clear that the **projects funded by Measure 4.1 have created value** in terms of the following categories of benefits; changed attitudes/ behaviours; transfer/ upgrading of skills; implementation of new models of service delivery; and evidence of strategic input and influence in a policy context. Many of these benefits have been realised to date and have the potential to be sustained. Other benefits particularly in terms of new models of delivery or policy influence may not yet be fully realised;
- Over and above the direct benefits from networking previously discussed, a range of more **indirect economic benefits** have also arisen on a number of projects. These relate for instance to economic impacts related to business / trade development; through hosting ‘in-bound delegations’ of visitors to Northern Ireland for visits, seminars and conference activity and; increased financial sustainability of organisations. To take one example in this context, NIUSE hosted the 2007 EUSE conference in Belfast in June 2007 as a direct result of their Measure 4.1 funded project. The economic impact of this one event alone, attracting circa 450 external delegates to Northern Ireland, which is likely to have equated to almost half of the grant support awarded to NIUSE through the Measure (circa £90-100k based on an average visitor spend per trip of £188)³⁰; and
- To date the majority of projects **have sustained either their entire network or at a minimum some of the partnerships achieved through the network** beyond the PEACE II funding period.

Additional observations

6.4 The following observations should be noted as additional ‘learning points’ from the review of activity funded by the Measure.

- At an overall level some of the ‘value for money’ indicators are good; for instance the **average cost per beneficiary engaged of £700 represents good value for money**. However at the project level the **value-for-money achieved varied widely** across the 22 projects. Some of the projects that were awarded funding in the region of £200-£400k were very successful in terms of the profile and outputs achieved, suggesting that this could be an ‘optimum’ level of funding support;

³⁰ Tourism Facts 2006, NITB.

- The **Network of Networks (Network NI)** fulfilled a very useful role during the life of the **Measure**. However looking ahead the ongoing sustainability of this is less clear. In any event, the role of a ‘collective forum’ such as this **would need to evolve, perhaps to fill a smaller and more strategic ‘space’**;
- **Strategic/ political changes over the last few years have had both positive and negative implications for Measure 4.1.** Many commentators felt that the policy work emanating from the Measure 4.1 funded projects may have had more impact in a devolved government environment. It was felt that this would have provided access to an environment and individuals to drive the policy agenda forward. It was felt that some of the efforts to drive the policy impacts were ‘too mechanistic and in a vacuum’ whilst sitting in the direct rule political backdrop that prevailed. On the other hand, the publication of ‘A Shared Future’³¹ provided a strategic framework for developing community relations and peace building activities that helped to frame some of the reconciliation and diversity debates within the Measure funded activity. Finally, during the life of Measure 4.1 OFMDFM published a high-level strategy with respect to Northern Ireland’s engagement in Europe (‘Taking Our Place in Europe – Northern Ireland’s European Strategy 2006-2010’). This strategy was launched at the Competitive Cities conference, hosted by the CONNECT project in Belfast in October 2006, and for many commentators this also provided a reference framework for some of their work within Measure 4.1; and
- There remains a **‘healthy’ market for influence/ input into core policy network** from external networking and best practice within Northern Ireland and the Border Region. Correspondingly, it is also viewed that the balance could shift more towards ‘learning-out’ over time – that is Northern Ireland and the Border Region have much to offer a ‘wider world’, at least, but certainly not confined to the challenges of conflict transformation.

Looking ahead – some indicative thoughts

- 6.5 While the Terms of Reference for this review did not require articulation of ‘future directions’ with respect to ongoing support for civil society networks co-operating with the EU and international countries, views were expressed throughout the research. Accordingly some of these views expressed are set out overleaf. It should be noted that many of these views relate to the wider strategy for Northern Ireland’s engagement in the EU, which should form the context for discussions about how support for civil society networks (co-operating with EU and international regions) should be implemented.
- 6.6 In summary, these views reflect a need to build on the progress achieved through Measure 4.1 and the need to acknowledge that the rationale for intervention may be different in future. In effect several commentators expressed a view that a *‘more ambitious approach in engaging with Europe’ / International regions* should now be explored. Within this there was a healthy debate about where the ownership of this agenda should reside within central government and the associated funding levels. Allied to this, it was viewed that the focus should be shifted away from viewing Europe a source of funding for Northern Ireland and the Border Region and towards the view that Europe and International regions are marketplaces to which expertise and capacity can be exported. This relates to the need identified in the recently published³² Draft Programme for Government 2008-11, to engage positively in the European Union, to build on existing partnerships and collaboration across key policies and programmes.

³¹ Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (2005) *A Shared Future - Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland*, March 2005, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

³² Building a Better Future – Draft Programme for Government 2008-11, Northern Ireland Executive

'Engaging in the EU can be complex.....because this was a peace programme and the issues were very specific, it was easier to make connections'.

'Funding like this is the only way that people are going to get out and about and to become more outward and forward looking..... and to changing perspectives on how Northern Ireland engages with Europe'.

'There is no way that exchanges on this scale could have taken place with domestic funding and there is no way that we would have had the buy in from international partners without the substantial interventions of the European funds'.

'There is a need for Northern Ireland to be more ambitious in terms of engaging with Europe and to stimulate society to do things differently and to have the courage to speak up to their local politicians'.

'I know that we have the new Northern Ireland Strategy for Europe - people expect the strategy to have a budget aligned with it and for it to be rolled out - there needs to be some sort of framework to allow this to happen.....also it cannot be about one sector..... it has to be all-encompassing.....this framework would help people to become more open to Europe and more willing to put Northern Ireland's voice in front of Brussels'

'This type of work should be funded by Government (although not exclusively). Government needs to prioritise what it wants to provide. Policy developers should identify areas..... whether it is OFMDFM or individual departments and then identify players and organisations within the field. There are many very informed and educated facilitators in Northern Ireland who have played a role across society in Northern Ireland who have real potential to harness experiences and lessons learned'.

'OFMDFM want Northern Ireland to be in this place of small regions - we are increasingly coming up across potential partners (in countries and larger regions)' ...

'Organisations should not see Europe as a place where they get funding but as a marketplace for selling their capacity/services. In Northern Ireland we have structures that can facilitate this (NICO for one and NICARE).....is there a way in which NICO can accommodate in an embracing way the work of some of civic society organisations funded by Measure 4.1.....with a view to exporting our expertise commercially'.

'There is income potential around working with other European countries/regions. We have to find sustainable ways of connecting the financial need with external market places. But there are others that aren't on top of that game'.

'The Accession countries are recognising the importance of networking, there is enormous capacity to move the focus.....away from Northern Ireland being a key beneficiary of funding to Northern Ireland being a key capacity builder elsewhere'.

'The strategy for engaging with Europe and beyond is big on rhetoric but has a very moderate budget'.

'We will struggle for future support.....as we are not a service delivery body, we are a network.....however the key issue is that the value of network creation needs to be funded and acknowledged.....as it clearly adds great value to service delivery'.

'The political delays with regard to future EU strategies for networks means that we need as much support as we can in the interim.....from political entities, for example, EU, UK, and Northern Ireland parliaments, consuls etc'

Appendix A: Topic list for project consultations

Evaluation of Measure 4.1 – Interview Topic List

Introduction

As you may be aware PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP have been commissioned by OFMDFM to undertake an evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the investment of PEACE II funds in Measure 4.1 funded projects.

The assignment is focused on looking beyond the ‘activity-based’ outputs of the projects (which have largely already been captured through monitoring activity) to consider outcomes arising from individual projects and the measure as a whole. For instance we are particularly interested in capturing outcomes in respect of:-

- the profiling of Northern Ireland (and the Border Counties) in a European / international setting;
- the value of network creation and content – specifically the extent to which the funded activity under the Measure has supported a ‘two-way process’ of sharing information, skills and best practice with other regions (in Europe and beyond) with a view to mutually beneficial outcomes. In this context over and above consultations with project promoters in Northern Ireland/ Border Counties, we will be undertaking selective consultation with project partners in the EU (and beyond);
- the extent and quality of engagement of members of civil society from the public, private and community/voluntary sectors in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties in Measure 4.1 funded activity. In this respect we are particularly interested in capturing progress towards the application of learning, evidence of changed attitudes/ behaviours and the implementation of new models of service delivery within civil society. To do this it will be necessary to capture evidence in respect of impact at the ‘grass-roots’ and beneficiary level, through selective consultation with individuals/ organisations that have engaged with each project; and
- the peace and reconciliation agenda (for example, with respect to engagement of marginalised sections of society/areas affected by the conflict and actions to facilitate cross-border development, cross-community linkages, inclusiveness and capacity building);

In addition there is an opportunity through the evaluation exercise to capture good practice (for example, guiding principles with respect to productive international networks) and more generally for the findings from the evaluation to input into the forward policy framework in Northern Ireland in terms of civil society interaction in Europe.

Many thanks for your participation in this evaluation. The questions overleaf should provide you with some background to the information that we will wish to capture from you during our interview. If you have any outstanding queries regarding this review please do not hesitate to call either myself or Stephanie Morrow on the numbers noted below:

Kelly Long (028) 90415091
Stephanie Morrow (028) 90415669

Background

1. Could you please provide a brief overview of what your project set out to deliver with the funding it received from Measure 4.1?
 - a) In particular what areas, groups and sectors were you targeting with the project? (linkage of these with Peace distinctiveness criteria; horizontal principles and reconciliation strands³³);
 - b) Please could you identify the main organisations and countries that you co-operated with in delivering the project?
 - c) What were the main activities that were implemented through the project?

The Value of Network Creation and Content

2. Could you please identify what the main networks created/ sustained through your project were?
3. Projects funded within Measure 4.1 were centred on networking to promote constructive dialogue, innovative practice and trans-national learning in an economic, social, cultural and environmental context. Within this context what was the particular focus of your project in terms of networking themes. What was the rationale for the selection of particular networking themes and associated partner organisations and countries?
4. Drawing on evidence from members of civil society in Northern Ireland who have been engaged in your project activities, can you provide examples of how the project may have resulted any of the following:-
 - a) the application of learning (to include learning 'in' and learning 'out');
 - b) changed attitudes/ behaviours;
 - c) the implementation of new models of service delivery within civil society in Northern Ireland/ Border Region;
 - d) other outcomes?
5. What proportion of your benefits arising from your project would you consider to have generated 'Learning into Northern Ireland/ Border Region' versus 'learning out of Northern Ireland/ Border Region'?

Dissemination and Good Practice

6. What methods has your project employed to disseminate the outputs/outcomes arising from the project? (within the direct stakeholder/ beneficiary community of relevance to your project and more broadly)
7. Reflecting on your project experience could you provide some insights into guiding principles for the establishment of productive international networks? Furthermore again reflecting on your project experience have you any thoughts in terms of the forward policy framework in Northern Ireland in terms of civil society interaction in Europe and beyond ?).

Many thanks for your assistance with this evaluation

³³ SEUPB reconciliation strands include: developing a shared vision of an interdependent and shared society; acknowledging and dealing with the past; building positive relationships; significant cultural and; attitudinal change and substantial social, economic and political change.

Appendix B: Location and geographic spread of projects

Location and geographic spread of the projects funded under Measure 4.1

Project Title	Location of Project HQ	Geographical Spread of Project
Young Citizens in Changing Societies	Belfast	Northern Ireland-wide
Eurolink-Carrefore Ulster	Clogher/Ballygawley	Northern Ireland-wide and Border Region
Partnership for Progress	Dungannon	Northern Ireland-wide
Shared Learning	Londonderry/Derry	Northern Ireland-wide
WSN – Women Networking	Belfast	Northern Ireland-wide
Youth Work in contested Spaces	Belfast	Northern Ireland-wide
North West European Network	Londonderry/Derry	North West and Border Region
Community Foundations in Divided Societies	Belfast	Northern Ireland-wide
Fermanagh Social Economy Network	Enniskillen	Fermanagh and Border Region
ICBAN Region Higher and Further Education Tech Transfer	Enniskillen	Fermanagh/Tyrone/Border Region
Connect	Belfast	Greater Belfast
Linking Early Childhood Services	Belfast	Northern Ireland-Wide
Learning Together	Belfast	South Armagh/South Tyrone
Supported Employment – Home and Away	Londonderry/Derry	Northern Ireland-Wide
Local & International Mumming Networks	Derrylin	Fermanagh/Down/Border Region
B2B Connect	Londonderry/Derry	Northern Ireland-Wide
Civic Leadership	Belfast	Northern Ireland-Wide
Enterprise Network Europe	Limavady	Northern Ireland-Wide
Messines Peace Networks	Dublin	Northern Ireland wide and Border Region
Forest Link	Donegal	Donegal
Donegal Tourism Research Programme	Donegal	Donegal
North West Food Network	Letterkenny	Donegal, Leitrim, Cavan, Sligo

Appendix C: Overview of areas, sectors and groups targeted

Areas targeted

	Disadvantaged area(s) experiencing or which have experienced relatively high levels of violence	Area(s) such as sectarian interfaces where inter-community conflict and dispute is high and community relations are correspondingly poor	Disadvantaged area(s) whose image and attractiveness as an investment location has been adversely affected by local violence or community tension	Area(s) suffering the effects of physical dereliction (including damage infrastructure) as a consequence of the conflict	Area(s) isolated by border closures	Area(s) with high concentrations of displaced persons as a result of the Troubles	Area(s) where social and economic development has been inhibited by the conflict, illustrated by demographic and labour market patterns / structures, and low-levels of income, skills and qualifications, and consequently display relatively high levels of multiple deprivation	Other area(s) not included above but which are clearly relevant to the framework from the application of the Peace II Programme
Young Citizens in Changing Societies	✓	✓				✓		
EuroLink-Carrefore Ulster	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Partnership for Progress	✓	✓		✓				
Shared Learning	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
WSN – Women Networking	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Youth Work in contested Spaces	✓	✓	✓				✓	
North West European Network	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Community Foundations in Divided Societies	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Fermanagh Social Economy Network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
ICBAN Region Higher and Further Education Tech Transfer	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Connect	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Linking Early Childhood Services	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Learning Together	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Supported Employment								
Local & International Mummung Networks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
B2B Connect	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Civic Leadership	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
Enterprise Network Europe	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
The Messines Peace Networks	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Forest Link					✓	✓		
Doengal Tourism Research Programme					✓	✓		
North West Food Consortium					✓	✓		

Sectors targeted

	Tourism relating to actions to address the negative image of the region by appropriate marketing activities, facilitating the development of the tourism product and by complementary skills enhancement	Entrepreneurship including ICT and business services particularly in the context of those areas, groups and communities also targeted in the programme	The Arts and Sports particularly in the context of those areas, groups and communities also targeted in the programme	Other sector(s) not included above but which are clearly relevant to the framework for the application of the Peace II programme
Young Citizens in Changing Societies				✓
Eurolink-Carrefore Ulster	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partnership for Progress				✓
Shared Learning		✓		✓
WSN – Women Networking				✓
Youth Work in contested Spaces				✓
North West European Network	✓	✓		
Community Foundations in Divided Societies				✓
Fermanagh Social Economy Network		✓		
ICBAN Region Higher and Further Education Tech Transfer		✓		
Connect	✓	✓	✓	
Linking Early Childhood Services				✓
Learning Together				✓
Supported Employment				
Local & International Mummig Networks	✓	✓	✓	
B2B Connect		✓		✓
Civic Leadership		✓		✓
Enterprise Network Europe	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Messines Peace Networks				
Forest Link		✓		
Doengal Tourism Research Programme	✓			✓
North West Food Consortium		✓		

Groups targeted

	Victims of conflict i.e. the surviving injured and / or disabled - either physically or psychologically - of violent, conflict-related incidents and those who care for or are related to them, along with close relatives who mourn their dead	Ex-prisoners and their families, i.e. qualifying prisoners who were or would have been released under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement	Displaced persons, i.e. those who have involuntarily moved from areas of violence or from interface areas, or communities in which there is a concentration of such displaced persons	Young people, women and older workers, insofar as they have been prevented from fulfilling their potential in society or in the labour market	Former members of the security and ancillary services facing additional employability needs	Other groups / communities not included above but which are clearly relevant to the framework for the application of the Peace II programme
Young Citizens in Changing Societies				✓		
EuroLink-Carrefore Ulster	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partnership for Progress	✓			✓		✓
Shared Learning	✓		✓	✓		
WSN – Women Networking				✓		
Youth Work in contested Spaces				✓		
North West European Network	✓		✓	✓		
Community Foundations in Divided Societies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fermanagh Social Economy Network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ICBAN Region Higher and Further Education Tech Transfer				✓		✓
Connect	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Linking Early Childhood Services				✓		
Learning Together				✓		
Supported Employment						✓
Local & International Mummung Networks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
B2B Connect		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Civic Leadership	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enterprise Network Europe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
The Messines Peace Network		✓	✓			
Forest Link						
Donegal Tourism Research Programme						
North West Food Consortium				✓		

Appendix D: Overview of aims, objectives, results and learning from the projects

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
Young Citizens in Changing Societies	£212,168	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to develop an international programme to establish best practice methods in civic youth work in Northern Ireland, with young people and youth workers developing active collaborative relationships with international counterparts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the establishment of standards of best practice in civic youth work in Northern Ireland. Establish a framework for international standards in youth work that addresses the civic contribution of youth work. Create resources for youth workers, other professionals and young people that assist them in fulfilling their civic potential. Provide the opportunity for the exchange of staff personnel. Develop ICT based communication between young people and workers in the countries involved in the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project created a community of international learning and international collaboration with respect to best practice standards in civic youth work. It supported both youth workers and young people from regions which had experienced conflict. The Basque region, United States, South Africa, Israel, Palestine, Croatia and Serbia were the main countries engaged within the project, along with the Aland Islands (Sweden). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project created strong networks and initiated both academic and practitioner discourses about the importance of engaging young people in the rebuilding and transformation of troubled societies. It developed a range of tools and resources to disseminate and embed some of the learning with respect to best practice standards in youth work. In summary the project made a good start to the long and difficult on-going efforts to bring a democratic ethos, cross-cultural understanding and youth civic engagement to conflict and post-conflict societies. It was evident that staffing and other issues meant that perhaps there was not as much recording and follow-up as anticipated and therefore some of the benefits/ outcomes are not yet fully researched.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
Eurolink & Eurolink Fast Track	£477,641	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to promote trans-national activity across a wide range of sectors through the provision of an infrastructure that promotes co-operation through the introduction of additional European partners, projects and models of good development practice to both statutory and non-statutory organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the capacity of single identity, cross-community and cross-border groups and networks to more fully exploit developmental opportunities presented by the European Union. To maximise the economic, cultural and social benefits of trans-national co-operation by increasing participation in wider European programmes, initiatives and networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main activities implemented by the project included information, training, seminars, conferences, partner searches, study visits, placements, e-mail alert services. The activities were 'two-way' – that is supporting Northern Ireland based organisations to interact with EU regions and vice versa. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eurolink was established prior to Measure 4.1 as a member of the Carrefour Rural European Information Network. The Measure 4.1 funding allowed Eurolink to consolidate on this strong base. In particular they raised awareness and capacity at 'grass-roots' levels as to how EU programmes work and how to network and partnership, within an EU arena. For many of the beneficiaries involved this was their first experience of learning from the EU and applying practical insights to their own situation. Activities were implemented on both a cross-sectoral and cross-border basis.
Partnership for Progress	£1,009,195	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to develop a trans-national programme to explore international models of best practice, to support social partnership representatives and to advance a common policy agenda on the development of social partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support social partnership representatives on bodies associated with structural funds. To advance common agenda through policy development and research and advise on the development of social partnerships. To develop a trans-national programme to explore learning and disseminate best practice across the social partner sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project promoter Concordia is a social partnership that combines four partner organisations representing business, agricultural, trade union and community sector interests. The project was successful in achieving targets in relation to two of the three main aims – the transnational programme and research and policy work. It hosted a range of study tours (across the EU and internationally); facilitated seminars and the production of joint policy papers. The focus of the project was fairly broad in terms of networking themes, including sustainable development, waste management, childcare, and migrant workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project provided opportunities for participants to come together on a cross-sectoral and cross-community basis, and to network outside Northern Ireland on a range of themes. It encountered practical difficulties in terms of balanced uptake of study tour opportunities across the four sectors. That said, it provided an important unified 'policy voice' for the four sectors, to drive the relevant agendas forward, although this may have been easier in a devolved government environment. Looking back there may have been an opportunity for a more strategic approach across the thematic areas and greater cohesion between the strands.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
Shared Learning	£1,183,895	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to develop new, and build on existing networks which address diversity and conflict management and social and cultural regeneration that support reciprocal learning between Northern Ireland and the European Union (EU), accession countries and the Commonwealth of Independent States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing networks in key thematic areas that support reciprocal learning between Northern Ireland and selected countries within the European Union, accession countries, and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Creating sustainable long-term partnerships between relevant stakeholders in Northern Ireland and in targeted EU and greater European states and regions. Promoting applied policy learning in Northern Ireland and Europe. Encouraging cross-sectoral trans-jurisdictional learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project delivered 71 activities in more than 24 countries in Europe and beyond and engaged circa 2,000 beneficiaries in transnational and cross-sectoral learning. These beneficiaries ranged from 'grass-roots' community activists, through practitioners, senior policy makers to elected officials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Diversity and Conflict Management strand of the project clearly enhanced the 'offer' of INCORE within the University of Ulster, particularly in respect of 'learning into' Northern Ireland on diversity issues. It also facilitated comparative exchange between regions at different stages in the conflict transformation 'journey'. There was a healthy demand for lessons emanating from the cultural regeneration strand, both at policy and practitioner level reflecting the fact that the development of creative industries and the concept of cultural regeneration are fairly embryonic in Northern Ireland.
Women Networking	£409,088	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to consolidate and further develop a strong regional network in Northern Ireland of women's organisations and to encourage a structured approach to participation by women's organisations in wider European and international networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate and further develop strong regional network in Northern Ireland of women's organisations working on gender equality and women's human rights issues. Encourage structured approach to participation by Northern Ireland women's organisations, centres and projects in wider European and international networks. Develop series of 'sub-projects' and initiatives allowing dissemination of good practice models and the transfer of information and expertise between public bodies, women's organisations and NGOs on a cross-border and global basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project clearly sustained and consolidated the Northern Ireland based regional network of women's support organisations. Indeed the majority of work implemented under the measure was delivered internally across their own network to support core activities and develop the capacity of member organisations. That said, the project allowed for structured networking between member groups based in Northern Ireland and comparative interests in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain. Networking themes included gender equality, social economy, global feminism and 'women in conflict'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essentially the Measure 4.1 funding enabled the WSN to consolidate core activities, at a time of considerable change and restructuring within the women's sector. Accordingly some of the lessons emanating from the EU and global networking may have even more applicability once the sector 'settles down' and the changes are embedded.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It also focused on training and dissemination internal and external to Northern Ireland (for example, Spain, Belgium, China), linked to the above networking themes. 	
Youth Work in Contested Spaces	£172,279	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to develop a body of knowledge around good practice in youth work to build the capacity of the youth sector in Northern Ireland through contributing to international best practice to prepare young people for life in a divided society, conflict transformation and active citizenship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build the capacity of the youth work community in Northern Ireland. Create an international learning community of youth work professionals, policy makers and academics. Develop an internationally agreed framework for effective practice in youth work that addresses the legacy of conflict and the challenges of citizenship. Support collaborative research addressing the commonalities and differences in approach in different countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was a joint project between the Youth Council, the University of Ulster and Public Achievement. It brought together models of good practice in youth work in relation to working in areas of conflict. This was achieved by three conferences a series of study visits; placements; establishment of a website and research and guidance materials. The main countries/regions involved included South Africa, the Balkans, Israel, and Palestine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has resulted in publication of a 'book of stories' derived from all over the world where youth workers describe what it is like to live and work in conflict areas. The other publication arising from the project was an academic journal of methods of how to work in conflict situations with young people. It is evident that the project has clearly changed attitudes and explored new models of best practice in youth work. However similar to some of the other youth projects in the Measure it is clear that while the project has made a great start in respect of bringing together a multi-national network of youth workers engaged in cutting-edge practice, and identifying the principles of effective youth work practice in societies experiencing conflict, much of the learning has yet to be fully captured and implemented.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
North West European Network	£159,904	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to bring the North West closer to Europe by creating a network of information, expertise, research and knowledge on European issues, by implementing a series of collaborative projects with other regions in Europe and developing local capacity to identify development opportunities for the Northwest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish strategic linkages between the North West and other sub-regions in Europe. Build the capacity of local development organisations within the sub-region to benefit fully from collaboration with other European regions. Identify local expertise and share knowledge on local development, on European linkages, opportunities and programmes. Identify and implement collaborative programmes of activity with other European Regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project established a formal network of local development expertise across the North-West region, which in turn initiated ten collaborative programmes with other EU regions. Themes of activity including e-government, cultural tourism, urban regeneration, sustainable development and heritage management. The project also supported information and capacity building on EU issues in the public sector and wider community, through public events and information centres. Furthermore circa 15 inward fact-finding delegations from the EU to the North West region were hosted by the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the Measure 4.1 support the North West region was able to demonstrate to other EU regions how business and government operate in a post-conflict society. It operated both at the level of the business community and policy-makers and at a more micro-level with schools and the general public. One of the main outputs from the project has been the ability to portray Derry and the North West region in a more positive light internationally.
Community Foundations in Divided Societies	£173,211	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to share learning and develop models of best practice which could be implemented in Northern Ireland, and encouraging other regions to learn from the conflict resolution experience in Northern Ireland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a shared expertise among Community Foundations in divided societies, working on issues of peace-building and social inclusion; To build a network of Community Foundations that will, in turn, benefit the community-based grantees of such Foundations who have suffered from the worst effects of division and the impact of conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The network, which was initiated by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, has now an established membership of community foundations in nine countries (Bangladesh, two in India, Sri Lanka, Columbia, South Africa, Israel, New York and Serbia). It has supported a two-way process of learning and dialogue around peace building, social justice and reconciliation. The network has been sustained post the Measure 4.1 funding, in part through leveraging additional programme funds (for example, for a victims empowerment project) which member organisations can participate in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process to establish the network with an appropriate structure, operations, principles and common vision was time-consuming. That said, the network has achieved a unique level of global reach and acts as a forum for acknowledging different approaches. In due course there is further potential for real 'in-country' differences through direct application of different models. This project has been effective because networking was centred on specific peace building issues and because the membership was small.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
Fermanagh Social Economy Network	£109,587	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to focus on the development of sustainable social enterprises, partnership working and the community foundation model in County Fermanagh through learning from other regions by engaging in networking activities to explore international best practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage key community organisations and key influencers from USA and Sweden in establishing networks dedicated to exploring international best practices in social economy enterprises, community foundation building, women's development and cultural diversity practices. Pool local people from the broad social economy sector to investigate social economy enterprises and new working solutions. To develop a fuller appreciation of difference, pluralism and develop possibilities for meaningful exchanges of opinion where non-violence is viewed as the only means of setting historic divisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project established functioning networks under the two project themes dedicated to exploring international best practice in areas of: social economy enterprises; community foundation building; women's development; and cultural diversity. It engaged deprived areas such as South East Fermanagh and Devenish, Enniskillen, and facilitated study visits and exchanges to Sweden, USA, Belgium, and the UK. It also hosted inward visits from Ukraine, Bulgaria, Palestine, Sweden and UK. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the main this project was centred on 'learning into' Northern Ireland from other regions. However it also made a clear contribution to 'learning out' from Northern Ireland, largely in the form of involvement in the Democratising Kiev project. This resulted in training being delivered in Kiev across the regions and hosting of a study visit in Northern Ireland, from which the lessons learned were written up and circulated across the regions involved in community foundation building. Thus this project illustrates that Northern Ireland has much to 'export' in respect of building a democratic society with respect for cultural diversity.
ICBAN Region Higher and Further Education and Technology Transfer	£318,640	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to develop and support technology transfer and research and development (R&D) in order to raise the innovative capacity of the ICBAN region using international linkages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consult with key agents in local economic development and identify between four and six sectors upon which the project should specialise. To promote the project and identify potential beneficiaries and research with would be accession countries as potential beneficiaries along with local delivery agents. The productive and effective business growth using new tech transfer, new knowledge and technologies. To understand models of best practice in peripheral areas which achieve high technology and knowledge economy led industries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project was centred on technology transfer and innovation in the ICBAN region. It was delivered through a series of bursaries and exploratory visits to link business, academia and other organisations to conduct R&D, look at innovation and best practice. Various sectors from the ICBAN region were supported including by way of examples software, construction, furniture, tourism, food and health care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project represented the first time in the ICBAN region that individuals from HE/FE institutions, industry and enterprise organisations collaborated to learn and benefit from a structured externally focused business development initiative. The collective learning from the project was captured through an innovation conference and formed the groundwork for the development of a regional Cross-Border innovation strategy for the region (which was presented to SEUPB to inform the EU programming period 2007-2013).

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
Connect	£352,400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to support links with other European Regions to facilitate the exchange of best practice in the context of approaches to economic, social, urban development and local governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage a more constructive dialogue with the metropolitan regions of Europe and the accession countries. To actively engage in European networking projects with Eurocities members to facilitate a more outward and forward-looking region. Facilitate exchange of expertise and experience, and be proactive in contributing towards shaping EU policy and directives which impact upon the region. To work collectively with other metropolitan regions to ensure that urban affairs are placed high on the European Union's policy agenda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project involved the five metropolitan councils within the BMAP area and facilitated networking and exchanges with four cities in Europe – Valencia, Stockholm, Rybnik and Vilnius. The overall theme of the project was governance with a sub theme of urban regeneration, which in turn had three pillars – economic, social and environmental. The project examined how cities transform their urban areas via the city's governance structures. A series of structured outward and inward visits were facilitated by the project, which engaged politicians, policy makers, NGO's and social partners across all of the cities involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project achieved a 50/50 balance between 'learning into Northern Ireland' and 'learning out of Northern Ireland'. There were several examples of international models and lesson being implemented in the COMET region during the life of the project. Furthermore given the emphasis on every outward visit being matched by an inward visit, the project made a real contribution to portraying a positive image of Northern Ireland internationally. This was further aided by the hosting of the Final Conference of the CONNECT project, which involved all the international partner regions and was attended by 150 delegates, including the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service who inaugurated Northern Ireland's European Strategy at this event.
Linking Early Childhood Services at a European/international Level	£377,585	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to provide opportunities for early years services in Northern Ireland to share best practice at a European and international level through the establishment of an international network, and to expose early year's practitioners/staff to first hand experience in Italy and USA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce the High/Scope and Reggio Emilia approach to 20 early childhood settings. To link Northern Ireland early childhood services with best practice at European and international level. To expose Northern Ireland practitioners to first hand experience of practice in Italy and USA. To create an International Network of early childhood practitioners. To share best practice with Eastern European early childhood workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the project NIPPA established an international network of early year's practitioners internationally. The network partners included: the High/Scope Education and Research Foundation (USA), Reggio Emilia (Italy) and CCF International (a network with early years practitioners from regions in transition in Eastern Europe). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project brought learning into Northern Ireland and also outwardly disseminated Northern Ireland's experience in the contribution of quality early childhood services to peace building. Through the project NIPPA hosted the first ever Working Forum, with the World Forum Foundation in Belfast in November 2004. 'Working Forum Belfast' brought together early childhood leaders from 13 countries to explore the theme of early childhood education and the contribution of programmes to peace and reconciliation.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through membership of the Organising Committee of the World Forum, NIPPA promoted the work of their organisation and the early childhood sector internationally. This project clearly illustrates that Northern Ireland has much to 'export' as a region in this arena.
Learning Together	£90,060	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to complete a European Comparative Study on Young People and Rural Development involving partners in three other European countries; and the completion of a study on cultural diversity involving similar groups in Latvia and Ireland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote peace and reconciliation through the sharing of ideas and experiences within and across four European Countries. Establish a network across the European Union that will create a sharing and learning forum and maximise opportunities for the future development of programmes. Develop a greater understanding and sharing of experiences with regard to rural young people's issues. Collate a range of resources and training materials which will provide good practice models underpinned by equity, diversity and interdependence principles. Complete a cultural diversity study between Northern Ireland, Ireland and Latvia to culminate in a performance by young people that visually depicts cultural diversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The geographic focus of the project was on South Armagh & South Tyrone, two areas that has suffered acutely during 'the Troubles' and are still adjusting to a more peaceful environment. Sectors targeted were youth and rural. The direct beneficiaries of the project were the marginalised young people and community activists from these border regions. The project also impacted on these beneficiaries through an ongoing process of sharing and implementing best practice, with Latvia, Sweden and Republic of Ireland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project facilitated a process of comparative learning between a region in Eastern Europe (Latvia) which was perhaps less sophisticated in rural and youth policy; Northern Ireland and Ireland; and regions in Northern Europe (Sweden) which tended to be more sophisticated in rural and youth policy. It clearly broadened the horizons and experiences of participants, particularly given that the project targeted rural young people with parochial attitudes who came from close knit communities with little opportunities easily accessible to them.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
Supported Employment Home and Away	£213,332	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to develop the participation of NIUSE in the wider European Union of Supported Employment and to develop links with Eastern European countries to promote Supported Employment models in these countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain and develop Supported Employment network at a local/regional level, European network through European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE) and assist in providing support to Eastern European Countries. To provide an opportunity for NIUSE to strengthen and develop its links with the EUSE through participation at EUSE Board and Council Meetings and Conferences. To develop links with one Eastern European country and provide support and expertise in developing Supported Employment practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project not only built the capacity of local supported employment networks in Northern Ireland through bringing them into a formal club; it also provided training for supported employment practitioners from the Czech Republic. Thus it facilitated shared learning with a country that had experienced years of social and economic deprivation as a result of political conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project created sustainable benefits for those with a disability in Northern Ireland, by developing the local/regional supported employment networks into a 'formal club' Northern Ireland and by placing NIUSE at the heart of the European Union of Supported Employment. This further enhanced the profile of NIUSE as an expert body on supported employment. In turn this has strengthened ongoing efforts to achieve mainstream funding for supported employment in Northern Ireland. Furthermore through the project NIUSE were able to share expertise with the Czech Republic – a country that had experienced years of social and economic deprivation as a result of political conflict. Interestingly it was reported that the Czech Republic was ahead of Northern Ireland in terms of policy (because supported employment policy is mainstreamed there) but lagged behind Northern Ireland in terms of practice on the ground. By contrast Northern Ireland was viewed to be stronger in terms of practice on the ground but lagging in terms of policy.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
Local and International Mumming Networks	£314,433	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to establish a network of cross-community mimmers from County Fermanagh and County Down to increase knowledge and understanding of a shared cultural heritage, and to integrate this local network into a European network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish local, national and international mumming networks within which cultural diversity and best practice in terms of peace building and reconciliation will be explored and disseminated. To enable communities to be more outward and forward-looking. To maximise the socio-economic benefits associated with mumming in deprived areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has strengthened the Mumming network within Northern Ireland (on a cross-community basis); it also built Mumming networks between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (involving Sligo, Leitrim and North Co. Dublin). Internationally networks were built with Sardinia and Bulgaria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main beneficiaries of the work conducted under the project were ordinary, working people who thought Mumming was an exclusive Irish tradition. The project has 'europeanised' the whole Mumming tradition, by building a strategic wing to a localised activity. It has given local people recognition of what they do in a wider European heritage setting. Furthermore, the project has established a Mumming museum in Fermanagh based on learning gained from a similar project in Sardinia, where it has been synonymous with the village and the marketing of it as a point of interest. Accordingly, the Mumming festival in west Fermanagh in December is now marketed as a cultural point of interest, which distinguishes it from other events internationally, and which derives significant economic impacts for the rural economy of the area. In terms of sustainability post Measure 4.1, the project has joined up with France, Bulgaria and Sardinia in applying for the culture 2007 programme, which would provide 50% funding for future activity with the balance to be derived from commercial revenue.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
EU B2B Connect	£368,028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to provide hands on support for local companies to identify global opportunities and partners that will provide them with competitive advantage, to proactively seek out opportunities for growth, to establish joint venture opportunities, or technology transfer opportunities into and out of Northern Ireland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve the export potential, technology transfer and internationalisation of sector specific SMEs across Northern Ireland with other EU and Eastern European Regions through exploiting the existing structure of the European Business Innovation Centre Network, (EBN) and utilising the Enterprise NI network. Recruit Northern Ireland companies to participate in a Europe-wide network of co-operation of B2B opportunities. Utilise better the existing network of BICs across Europe, including those in the transition countries of Eastern Europe, to better develop international and inter-regional linkages. To create awareness and to promote a more positive image of Northern Ireland as a region of business excellence and expertise throughout Europe and to encourage companies to work together to achieve this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project developed a support mechanism to assist small-medium enterprises (SMEs) in Northern Ireland to access a business to business (B2B) network, created by the EU Business and Innovation Centre (BIC) on a Europe wide basis. It developed and provided proactive hands on support for an "internationalisation club" of SMEs. It engaged genuine potential/ first time exporters from across Northern Ireland, with a particular emphasis on participation from new TSN target areas. From a sector perspective, a new network was established for the creative industries, with an underlying emphasis on technology/ digital media/ knowledge based economy issues. Around 80% of the focus was on companies with potential in respect of intellectual property. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given that the companies were micro-businesses/ SMEs, they were genuine first time exporters, the majority of the learning was learning into Northern Ireland. That said, there were some examples of external dissemination. In particular the project hosted a seminar for 40 representatives from four countries (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic & Slovakia) - discussing ways to encourage small businesses to look outside their own regions/ surrounding areas, and recognise opportunities to break into other areas.
Civic Leadership	£256,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to assist capacity-building of local civic leaders to improve their ability to build better relationships within and between communities in Northern Ireland and to positively contribute to peace-building and good relations through learning from international best practice in the areas of policing and community relations and diversity and the city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing positive capacity-building opportunities in support of reconciliation. Expand the success of previous international networking to include a wider audience and broaden participation in East-West and European Networks. Develop understandings of the challenges to social stability faced by communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project facilitated a series of two-way study trips (to Boston, Belgium, Macedonia) around the following themes:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Community policing; ➢ working with the community; ➢ restorative justice; and ➢ diversity and division (and how outreach affects division in society). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project encouraged the participants to think more inclusively and more widely and locate Northern Ireland in the wider Europe and wider world. Specifically the engagement with external regions brought a new and different perspective on situations faced by civic leaders in Northern Ireland. It also created a 'safe space' for dialogue, creativity and shared learning.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity-building opportunities for Civic Leadership project participants to investigate; adapt and utilise other regions' experiences and knowledge of conflict resolution and peace building. Development of programme to address community-related policing. Maximising opportunities for creative learning from existing relationships with American and Dutch-based conflict resolution practitioners. 		
Enterprise Network Europe	£309,909	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project's aim was to support network development through exchange of best practice; direct staff study visits; development of electronic media to facilitate information exchange, dissemination of information on a European level on issues, facilitate contact between micro-businesses in Northern Ireland with export opportunities in Europe as a means of improving competitiveness and accessing new markets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish a formal partnership between Enterprise Northern Ireland, Business Enterprise Scotland, the National Federation of Enterprise Agencies and CESCE. To develop a Partnership Programme which supports the development of a network, facilitates staff exchange and capacity building, develops electronic media and enables the publication of a newsletter. To implement a Research and Policy Programme. To implement a Business to Business Programme to facilitate direct contact between 60 micro enterprises from Northern Ireland, UK, ROI and Europe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project resulted in outputs in two main areas. Firstly with respect to micro-businesses, where 180 jobs were affected by 'export awareness' through training and market visits to the Czech republic and Poland. Secondly from the Local Enterprise Agency (LEAs) perspective representatives from across the 32 LEAs were supported to meet with counterparts in Estonia, Slovenia, Slovakia and Hungary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has enabled an understanding of best practice in micro-business support. It has also enabled comparative benchmarking in terms of enterprise support across the EU. Finally it directly supported micro-businesses to develop external trade from learning gained through the project.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
The Messines Peace Networks	€150,040	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project aimed to promote the Messines Peace Initiative as an International Centre for Peace Networking and establish at least three Peace Networks. The Networks will involve the “key influencers” from both sides of the community from areas most affected by the conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote the Messines Peace Initiative as an International Centre for Peace Networking, to key individuals and groups in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland most affected by the conflict and who are the critical ‘influencers’ in the peace process in Northern Ireland; To establish three Messines Peace Networks involving community leaders from areas affected by violence and community tensions; To hold at least 11 Network meetings, three of which will be held in the International Centre for Peace Networking at Messines; To promote the Messines International Centre for Peace Networking within Europe and internationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the first year the project supported networking between 12 schools, three Catholic, three Protestant, three from the Republic of Ireland and three from Flanders (in Belgium). The age range of participants was 15-18 years. The general theme for the programme and networking activity therein was ‘war and peace’ (particularly in the context of World War 1 in Flanders) and educational field work at the sites, memorial and graves of WW1. The field work was carried out with the support of the International School for Peace studies in Messines. The schools were organised in groups of four schools, one Catholic, One Protestant, one from the Republic of Ireland, and one from Flanders to maximise the exchange of experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project clearly acted as a catalyst for changing participant mindsets and encouraged cross community / cultural co-operation on a Northern Ireland, cross border and international basis.
Forest Link	€329,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project focused on the creation and enhancement of linkages, examination of international models of best practice and development of an awareness of best practice with regard to adding value to timber and the creation of community forests in County Donegal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination of international and regional models of best practice in relation to the development of forestry in Donegal. This will include five initial visits to identify key projects/models of best practice. 30 contacts developed. 3 research visits per year. Organisation and participation in European and International networks to include cross-border networking. Hosting of International forestry workshop in Donegal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project supported putting a coordinator in place, research into models of best practice Europe wide in terms of two elements of forestry (community forests and the wood supply chain). It supported six international research visits (for example, to Scandinavia Scotland and Wales). The project hosted a flagship international conference in Donegal attended by 150 delegates. This resulted in the production of a conference directory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a sense this project was ahead of its time. It looked at the development of bio mass and the wood supply chain in countries like Denmark and Sweden who are circa 20 years ahead. There is ample evidence within this project of good practice from elsewhere being actively implemented during the lifetime of the project.

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of linkages with European institutions to promote collaborative partnership approaches to projects – approximately 10 partnerships developed. 		
Donegal Tourism Research Programme	€55,800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tourism Research Programme was set up with the purpose of establishing a central information resource for the tourism sector within Co. Donegal that will guide the future development of the industry and inform policy at national, regional and county level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure tourism development is market driven and sustainable whilst meeting the needs of the community. To build research capacity in Co. Donegal to capture, collate and evaluate localised baseline tourism data To be a central resource contact point, gathering information that can help to inform decision making and policy development in a strategic manner. To strengthen links between academic institutions, public sector organisations and industry. To develop and participate in networks of, and strategic alliances with, organisations working in the tourism sector with a particular reference to tourism and related research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has facilitated a range of actions to stimulate tourism on a cross-border basis between the North Coast of Northern Ireland and County Donegal. It also provided training to the tourist sector on a cross-border basis in terms of e-marketing, IT, and co-operative marketing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existence of the border and the conflict in Northern Ireland had clearly been a major barrier to implementing a collaborative north/south approach to promoting the North West region of Ireland as a tourism destination. The project has made significant progress in this context, It has challenged previous negative perceptions about linking Donegal with Northern Ireland and it has further helped to build practical solutions to 'channel' visitors from the North Coast of Northern Ireland to Donegal and vice versa (for example, through the conception of the Atlantic drift driving route). As a result of the project there is now increased potential for Donegal. It is now in the top five counties for tourism in Ireland.
North West Food Network	€149,940	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aim of the project was to "assist in the establishment of a progressive and receptive food sector network through facilitating access to best practice and building enduring links between North West food enterprises and their European Counterparts, thereby enhancing the sustainability of participant businesses". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assist the establishment of a food sector network for the North West region. 50 businesses from four counties together with key stakeholders recruited to the project To promote an outward looking and progressive food sector by encouraging adoption of best practice within the food sector. To organise six best practice visits over the life of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project was modelled on an initiative (the Fuchsia Food Brand) in West Cork, with a view to developing a comparative 'brand position' for the food industry in the North-West region (Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim and Cavan). Essentially it was a 'scoping project' because food micro-enterprises in the region were not ready for a full launch. The project organised a series of best practice visits over the life of the project (to Birmingham, Paris, Boston, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project made good progress in establishing progressive and receptive food sector network in the participating counties, through facilitating best practice and building enduring links between North West Food enterprises and their European Counterparts, with a view to enhancing the sustainability of participant businesses. In terms of future sustainability the network is still functioning post Measure 4.1 funding, and intending to secure INTERREG

Project	Funding	Project Aim	Objectives	Results	Learning
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver four networking events incorporating presentations from "experts" on issues of particular importance to the industry • To embed and realise the benefits of these visits and events by providing follow up mentoring support to participants <p><i>To ensure the sustainability of the network in the longer term</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undertake an initial audit of the business, creating a benchmark against which the impacts of the projects can be measured and the business case made (to both businesses and mainstream support providers) for continued involvement in the network. • To establish an exchange forum and cohesive network for members to build links, share experience and undertake joint commercial activity • To undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the initiative • To explore alternative funding sources and mainstreaming potential for the network. 	<p>Belfast, Amsterdam; Italy and France). It also organised a number of cross-border networking events. Membership of the network grew steadily over the life of the project and now stands at circa 40 small food businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The topics for networking were almost all around food branding and how this worked elsewhere. 	<p>funding for the future. A key success factor was the existence of an executive (this was funded by IFI) who facilitated the network; provided training and helped with the implementation of ideas from the visits.</p>

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