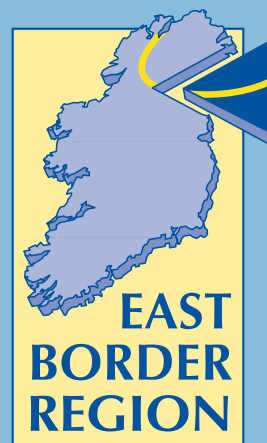




Belfast



Ireland / N. Ireland

**Cross Border
Co-operation
in a Pandemic**

**Annual Report
2020 – 2021**

Dublin

Chairman's Report



Cllr Kyle Savage

WHEN I was appointed EBR Chairman in December 2019 I could not have envisaged that by March 2020 both Ireland and Northern Ireland would be in lockdown in response to the Covid-19 global pandemic. Due to these exceptional circumstances, it was agreed at the AGM in 2020 that the position of Chair, Vice-Chair and Vice-Chair of the Members Forum would carry forward into 2021 to provide stability and consistency within the organisation. As a result I am the first Chairman of EBR to serve two consecutive years.

The pandemic necessitated that citizens and businesses adapt to a new way of life in the short term. East Border Region is no different. I am happy to report that the staff of EBR have been working remotely and have been able to draw down monies for all of the Projects in which we are involved. This has meant that our sixty project Partners have not been adversely affected in respect of claiming monies spent from the INTERREG VA Programme.

In 2019 and again in 2020 EBR received funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Reconciliation Fund. This money assisted us in building capacity across the region. We undertook capacity building activities with elected members, council officials and key stakeholders. The result was the EBR Charter and Associated Protocols.

EBR has always adopted a pragmatic and flexible approach to cross border co-operation and the Charter reflects this. The Charter has been endorsed by elected members from all six Local Authorities and represents a renewed mandate for EBR to work on a cross border basis on behalf of the Region.

The highlight of my chairmanship was the official launch of the EBR Charter in June 2021. This was a hybrid event which presented an

opportunity to showcase to a wide audience the innovative nature of the Charter and the ongoing work of EBR in respect of cross border cooperation. The event was attended by Finance Minister, Mr Conor Murphy MLA, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Mr Simon Coveney TD, joined the event via video-link.

Whilst conditions have not been ideal, I would like to thank my elected member colleagues across the six Local Authority areas for their continued support and cooperation.

They have demonstrated that East Border Region is resilient in the face of adversity.

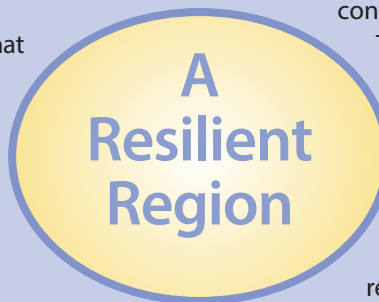
However, cross border co-operation works best when people meet face to face and I hope that the Board of EBR can return to face to face meetings in the near future.

Can I take this opportunity to congratulate Erin McGreehan, Vice-Chair of EBR who was appointed to the Seanad and Cllr Michelle Hall, Louth County Council who took up the position of Vice-Chair vacated by Erin.

I would also like to pay tribute to two long term former members of EBR who passed away in 2020; Terry Brennan, Louth County Council and a former Senator and Patsy Toman, former member of Down District Council. Both gentlemen were consistent champions of cross border co-operation.

Lastly can I thank the staff of EBR who quickly adapted to the 'new way of working' and who continue to provide an effective, efficient, and professional service.

Cllr Kyle Savage, *Chairman*



Chief Executive's Report



Ms Pamela Arthurs

IN my role as Chief Executive of East Border Region I have had to face many challenges.

Working in the field of cross border cooperation along the Ireland/ N Ireland border challenges are to be expected. In my report a few years ago I talked about a 'Perfect Storm' impacting on East Border Region. However, the onset of Covid 19 in early 2020 and the subsequent lockdown in March 2020 will no doubt rank as one of the greatest challenges faced by, not just myself but also, the Board and staff of East Border Region. Almost overnight we had to radically change our whole concept of work from 100% office based to 100% home based.

As a project partner on eight large strategic INTERREG VA projects valued at €104m it was essential that EBR staff continued to work with our 60 partners to ensure that all claim deadlines were met and that partners received their monies from SEUPB in a timely manner. Jobs and livelihoods were dependent on our ability to deliver. I am happy to report that once again EBR staff rose to the occasion, indeed to date not one deadline has been missed. I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank the staff of EBR for their commitment and endurance during what has been a very difficult eighteen months.

The EBR Board members also rose to the occasion and Board meetings continued online illustrating the commitment from elected members from all political parties to the aims and objectives of EBR. I would also like to acknowledge the support of EBR Board members since the onset of Covid 19. Their unwavering support has made my job easier. In the following pages you can see just how well all of the INTERREG VA Projects, in which EBR is a partner, have adapted to these exceptional circumstances.

Despite the many challenges associated with the global pandemic and with Brexit I am happy to report a number of notable developments. The innovative EBR Charter outlining a blueprint for cross border cooperation in the East Border Region was formally approved by the six member councils. This endorsed the role of EBR to work on a cross border basis, within the parameters of the Charter, across the region. As Lead Partner we also began the implementation of the FASTER project which will install 73 fast chargers across the entire INTERREG VA eligible area by June 2023.

EBR is actively preparing for the PEACE PLUS Programme 2020–2027. This exciting Programme is valued at €1.1 billion and offers much needed support across a range of thematic areas.

Congratulations to SEUPB Chief

Executive, Gina Mc Intyre and her staff who have worked consistently over the last few years to secure this much needed investment which will benefit all the people of the eligible area.

During this period EBR welcomed the financial support from the Irish government's Shared Island Fund towards two strategic cross border projects in our region, Narrow Water Bridge and the Ulster Canal.

East Border Region currently plays a pivotal role in cross border economic development. These are challenging times which require people to dig deep. I have no doubt that elected members, officials and staff of EBR are committed to promoting the balanced and sustainable development of our cross border region which will impact positively on all of our citizens for many years to come.

Pamela Arthurs *Chief Executive*



East Border Region Charter



An Roinn Gnóthaí
Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade

CROSS BORDER CO-OPERATION in the East Border Region has always taken place against the backdrop of the European Union. Throughout the last 40 years EBR has displayed a resilience and taken a pragmatic approach to the various challenges which it has faced particularly in respect of the hostile political situation in the 1970's and 1980's. The Good Friday Agreement enabled cross border cooperation to become more popular and cross border relationships were formed.

The decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union in 2016 therefore represented a substantial challenge to EBR, a genuinely cross border organisation, because for the first time one half of the region would not be part of the European Union. EBR needed to address this issue immediately. The result was the East Border Region Charter.

This innovative Charter outlines the detailed working arrangements for ongoing strategic cross border cooperation between the six EBR member local authorities namely: Ards and North Down Borough Council, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

EBR was delighted to have been able to officially launch the Charter on 23rd June 2021, this was a hybrid event which included keynote speakers Finance Minister Mr Conor Murphy MLA, and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence Mr Simon Coveney TD. EBR was particularly pleased that a number of members were able to attend the event in person.

The Charter is elected member led and represents a renewed mandate for East Border Region to be a principal mechanism for cross border co-operation on behalf of the six member local authorities. Each member local authority has endorsed the Charter at full council in the form of a Declaration of Commitment. The Charter demonstrates a strong commitment to cross border co-operation within the Ireland/Northern Ireland East Border Region.



Launch of the Charter in the Canal Court Hotel, Newry.

Above: EBR Chair Cllr Kyle Savage and Ms Pamela Arthurs with Senator McGreehan at Leinster House, Dublin.



East Border Region Charter

Local Authority Declaration of Commitment

We, the member authorities of the East Border Region hereby declare our joint commitment to continue to work together to address the issues arising from the Ireland/Northern Ireland border in order to protect and improve the prosperity of the citizens of the Region and the public and private services that they can access.

Experience across Europe shows that border regions tend to be less prosperous and to have poorer public and private services than more metropolitan regions. Experience also shows that these disadvantages can be reduced or overcome by active engagement of national, regional and local authorities and their public, private and community partners on both sides of a border.

The 6 member local authorities of the East Border Region namely: Ards and North Down Borough Council, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council and Newry, Mourne & Down District Council in Northern Ireland and Louth, Meath and Monaghan County Councils in the Republic of Ireland will continue to work with national and regional authorities, local communities and with public, private and community partners to achieve this end.

The authorities re-commit to the established aim of

“a smart, competitive, sustainable and inclusive cross-border Region

This will be implemented by a programme of work covering 3 Priorities:

- **A Smart, Competitive Region**
- **A Sustainable Region, and**
- **An Inclusive Region.**

The principal mechanism by which these priorities will be delivered is East Border Region Ltd, a not for profit Company Limited by Guarantee, jointly owned by the 6 local authorities.

The priorities will be resourced by European, national, local authority and community funding.

EBR local authorities in Ireland and in Northern Ireland acknowledge and recognise that the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union presents both new challenges and new opportunities. We commit to working together to overcome the challenges and to realise the opportunities arising from Brexit.



Kyle Savage

East Border Region Ltd: Chairperson Kyle Savage



Kevin Savage

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon:
Lord Mayor Kevin Savage



Ards and
North Down
Borough Council

Trevor Cummings

Ards and North Down: Mayor Trevor Cummings



D. Minogue

Louth: Cathaoirleach Dolores Minogue



David Gilroy

Meath: Chairperson David Gilroy



Colm Carthy

Monaghan: Cathaoirleach Colm Carthy



Laura Devlin

Newry, Mourne and Down: Chairperson Laura Devlin

AEBR



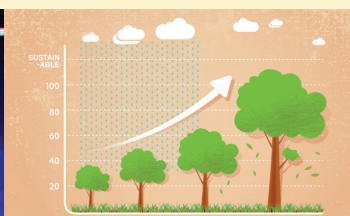
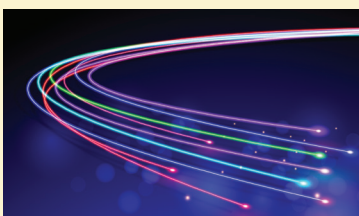
EAST Border Region have been an active member of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) since the mid 1980s and were delighted to attend the Annual Conference in Arnhem, Netherlands in 2021 which celebrated 50 years of cross border co-operation across Europe.

AEBR was founded in 1971 and It acts for the benefit of all European border and cross border regions.

The objectives of the AEBR are:

- to implement programmes and projects to apply for funds and to receive and to dispose of them;
- to organise events that deal with cross-border problems;
- to help to solve cross-border problems and to support special activities;
- to prepare and implement common campaigns within the networks;
- to inform European political bodies and the public about cross-border issues.

INTERREG VA



EAST Border Region have formed strategic Partnerships with a range of key stakeholders across the eligible area and are currently involved in the implementation of 9 INTERREG VA Projects to the value of €104.37 million. This represents a substantial amount of the overall INTERREG VA Programme which is valued at €258million, thus EBR are playing a significant role in the implementation of the Programme.

These projects cover a range of thematic areas including: Infrastructure, Economic Development, Biodiversity, Research and Innovation and Sustainable Transport.

These projects are impacting positively across the entire INTERREG VA Eligible area which include Northern Ireland, Border Counties of Ireland and Western Scotland.

INTERREG VA Projects

Local Authority Projects

Carlingford Lough Greenway	€3.46m
Ulster Canal Greenway	€4.95m
CANN (Biodiversity)	€9.40m
Co-Innovate	€22.44m
FASTER	€6.40m
Sub Total	€46.65m

Commercial Opportunities

SWELL	€35.04m
Source-to-Tap	€4.90m
Sub Total	€39.94m

Tender Opportunities

Eastern Corridor Medical Eng Centre	€8.36m
Center for Personalised Medicine	€9.42m
Sub Total	€17.78m

Total	€104.37m
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FASTER

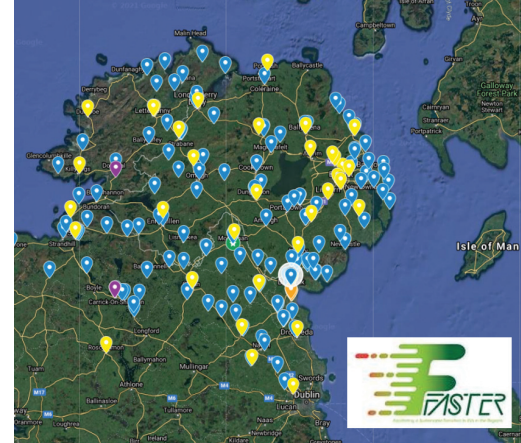


EAST Border Region Ltd are delighted to lead on the FASTER Project which provides much needed electric vehicle charging infrastructure. 73 Rapid Charging Points (50KW capacity) will be installed across Northern Ireland, the border counties of Ireland and Western Scotland.

Led by East Border Region, the cross border consortium includes; Ulster University, South West College, University of Strathclyde, HiTRANS, Louth County Council and Dundalk Institute of Technology.

The Consortium are also working with a range of Local Authorities across the three jurisdictions as Associate Partners along with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, and IT Sligo to identify suitable locations for this much needed infrastructure.

The project will reduce reliance on fossil fuels by encouraging increased use of more environmentally-friendly forms of transport and



also seeks to address some of the barriers to greater public uptake of electric vehicles.

The charging network will be installed on a phased basis and will be supported by a series of public awareness and community engagement events, promotional campaigns and initiatives to encourage confidence in, and uptake of electric vehicles.

There are a number of remaining barriers affecting electric vehicle uptake, including cost, range anxiety and the current public charging provision. The FASTER project will help alleviate the concerns of motorists and help them recognise that the benefits of electric vehicles outweigh the challenges.

The project launch was held on 'World Electric Vehicle' day; 9th September 2021 with keynote addresses from: Minister for Infrastructure, Mrs Nichola Mallon MLA, Minister for Environment, Climate & Communications; Mr Eamon Ryan TD and Minister for Transport Mr Graeme Dey MSP.





A recent survey in order to gauge public perception of the transition to Electric Vehicles in the region found that:

“ 52% of motorists are considering a move to Electric Vehicles



“ 95% of all respondents believe that the existing public charging infrastructure is insufficient

Project highlights to date

- Dedicated website www.fasterevcharge.com
- Social media channels are live – facebook, Instagram, linkedin, Tik Tok and youtube
- Site investigation is underway in Ireland and Northern Ireland
- 24 sites have been identified in Scotland and procurement for installation of chargers commenced
- Communication and Public Engagement strategy is ongoing.



Co-Innovate



THE Co-Innovate Programme provides support to SMEs and micro-businesses in Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland, and Western Scotland. It has the primary aim to increase the number of businesses actively participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects and give SMEs and micro-businesses access innovation capability development and help to implement enhanced R&I activity.

The Co-Innovate partnership is led by Inter-Tradelreland and includes Scottish Enterprise, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Enterprise Northern Ireland, the Local Enterprise Offices in the border counties of Ireland and East Border Region Ltd.

Key Outputs:

- 1,412 companies have attended innovation workshops
- 100 individual business health checks undertaken
- 408 innovation assessments for SME's.
- 100 businesses have taken part in an intensive 10-day mentoring session

Over 40 SMEs are currently active on research and innovation projects in cross-border partnerships with academia business with academia projects. Viltra Manging Director Colm Gribben, commented: *“I found Co-Innovate extremely beneficial to our company. Partnership with an academic institution allowed us to gain expertise and resources that would not be been available to us, or would have been difficult and costly to source.*

“The opportunities Co-Innovate brought to our business and the support provided was invaluable. It's like having an expert team, devoted to helping grow your business and promote new ideas, on hand 24/7.

Co-Innovate provides support for Business to Business Partnerships and Cluster projects. All projects are on a cross-border basis and will receive grant assistance for their co-operative



R&I activity to develop a new product / process / service / system.

Hero Shield is a cross-border partnership that worked together with support from Co-Innovate to repurpose their manufacturing facilities and supply chains in order to prepare for production of face shields in response to Covid-19.

None of the partners had prior experience of producing face shields. cross-border partners include Northern Ireland companies Shnuggle Ltd; Crossen Engineering; Denroy Plastics; Minprint; and Ad-Vance Engineering, with support from Queen's University Belfast; and among the Irish cohort includes Xtru Pak in Cavan and Glen Dimplex in Dublin. The project partners made the design available to companies worldwide on an 'open source' basis so that the product can be re-created wherever it's needed.

Adam Murphy, CEO of Shnuggle, said: *“Hero Shield was born when we heard about the desperate need for PPE. We saw an opportunity to use our collective skills and knowledge of precision engineering, plastics and manufacturing to create a low-cost, fast-manufacture face shield. We wanted these to be distributed free of charge or at-cost. We will sell some product at a small profit to private companies, which will raise funds to make even more Hero Shields, allowing us to continue operating as a not-for-profit company. Funding from Co-Innovate has provided us with the financial support to keep this amazing venture running for the benefit of all in society.*



CANN



WORK continues apace with a total of 23 out of 27 Conservation Action Plans drafted along with all the species survey work, mapping and landowner consultation that is associated with this process. The project has also produced two wildfire management plans, one for Cuilcagh and one for Sliabh Beagh in partnership with the Pau Costa Foundation in Spain. Workshops in wildfire planning have been delivered online and, in the field.

Conservation land management continues on over 3000ha of land including placement of thousands of dams blocking kilometres of

drains across lowland raised bog in Tyrone and Antrim, and upland raised bog on Sliabh Beagh and Cuilcagh. Peatland restoration involving reprofiling and use of Coir log dams has been successful on Cuilcagh. Vegetation control including rhododendron, cherry laurel, pines and Japanese knotweed on Peatlands Park, the Lecale fens, Islay, and Sliabh Beagh have been very effective.

The CANN project has also been engaged in a range of outreach work from practical training to online workshops and community events to the development of guardian structures, all these activities will help the legacy of CANN to live on.



Wildfire planning and training



Volunteer pulling rhododendron from Peatlands Park

Placement of plastic dams Fairywater bog



Carlingford Lough Greenway



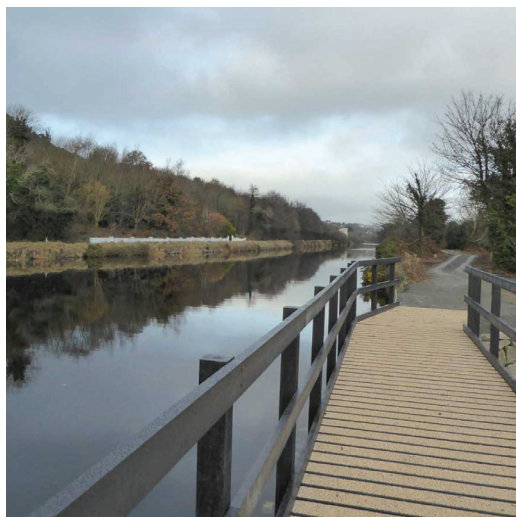
THE Carlingford Lough Greenway project, led by Louth County Council, has been awarded up to €3.46 million to open up a new sustainable travel route for both cyclists and pedestrians.

The project will create 10.1km of new cross-border greenway linking Newry in Northern Ireland to Carlingford in Ireland. It will also create and implement a promotional marketing campaign to raise awareness of the benefits of walking and cycling for everyday commuters. When completed, the Carlingford Lough Greenway will provide a world class cross-border green travel route. The project extends for approximately 20 km from Newry City to Carlingford, providing a much-needed recreational facility for this area. It will link with the existing Newry/ Portadown Cycleway/Towpath resulting in a total length of 52km of Greenway along the East coast of Ireland enabling walkers and cyclists to travel off-road between Belfast and Dublin using Sustrans Route 9 (The Great Eastern Greenway)

During 2021 site clearance completed and trial holes and boreholes carried out along the entire length of the proposed route. Doran Consulting are continuing with detailed design and further topographical surveys were carried out as part of this work.

The CPO process has started and Louth County Council submitted the CPO for Section II lands to An Bord Pleanála, and engagement is continuing with landowners in Northern Ireland. Part 8 Planning process has been completed for the 6.85 km of greenway from Victoria Lock to the Border and the Planning application was submitted in August 2020 for the remaining section in Northern Ireland.

The Greenway was featured on an episode of 'Iarnród Enda' on RTÉ One which was an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of the project.



Ulster Canal Greenway



THE Ulster Canal Greenway Project led by Waterways Ireland seeks to open up a new sustainable travel route for both cyclists and pedestrians. Greenways are corridors of land that are recognised for their ability to connect people and places together. They enhance existing outdoor recreational opportunities and can be used equally by cyclists, walkers and joggers. The project will create 22km of new cross-border greenway between Co. Monaghan and Co. Armagh. The new greenway will follow the route of the disused Ulster Canal from Smithborough through to Monaghan town, across the Armagh border at Ardgonnell and extended onwards to Middletown.

The Greenway will connect with many residential areas, educational centres and local employers along the route, and as the Greenway develops the project will engage with local communities, schools and employers to

encourage people to use the Greenway for everyday journeys.

The Ulster Canal Greenway reached an important milestone in the project with Part 8 Planning approval for the Monaghan to the Border section granted by Monaghan County Council in July 2021. A planning application for the border to Middletown section was submitted to ABC Borough Council in March '21 and it is expected that planning approval will be granted before the end of the year. Negotiations with landowners are ongoing but the formal land acquisition process will commence once planning approval is in place.

Planning documentation for the Monaghan to Smithborough section is currently being prepared and it is expected that a Part 8 planning application will be submitted before the end of the year or early next year.



Towpath along canal
Carson's bridge



Swell



SWELL – a major cross-border project aimed at improving water quality in Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle through the upgrade of key wastewater assets on both sides of the border – has had a busy year with NI Water commissioning its four projects and Irish Water breaking ground and making excellent progress on site.

Part of the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, the €35m SWELL (Shared Waters Enhancement & Loughs Legacy) project is being led by NI Water working in partnership with Irish Water, the Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute (AFBI), Loughs Agency and East Border Region. The four-year project will culminate in the development of a unique ecosystem model that can be used to identify how further water quality improvements can be made in these shared waters.

Despite challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, NI Water successfully completed all four of its wastewater upgrades within the Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle catchments. This was possible thanks to the joint effort of the entire delivery team, swift adjustment to new ways of working and clever use of technology for communication and training. This enabled successful handover of the sites to NI Water's operational division between October 2020 and February 2021.

The compilation of Irish Water and NI Water Drainage Area Plans (DAP) – key elements of the modelling data gathering process – were however affected by the pandemic. Nonetheless, through collaborative working between partners and SEUPB, an extension to the overall completion date was granted, which will enable the post-improvement sampling programme to be undertaken.

The commitment and effort from the SWELL Irish Water delivery team has resulted in the commencement of construction works in the summer of 2021 at Lifford, Killea and Carrigans sites in County Donegal, where significant

progress has been made. In Omeath, County Lough network upgrades got underway in November 2021.

Beneficial use of Irish Water's new assets – whereby the flow is going through the new treatment process – and which is required by AFBI prior to post-construction sampling, is now expected in January 2022 with completion of all four Irish Water upgrades expected in Q2 of 2022.

AFBI and Loughs Agency have shown great dedication and flexibility to the project working with their modelling contractors to accommodate the Covid-related programme changes and are continuing with as much of the sampling programme as possible. Fortunately, the pre-construction sampling was completed in March 2020, ahead of the Covid-19 pandemic. Post-improvement sampling commenced on Carlingford Lough in June 2021, following the completion of the major SWELL sites in that catchment and got underway in parts of Lough Foyle in September 2021, in order to mitigate tight deadlines.

EBR have supported NI Water, Irish Water, AFBI and Loughs Agency throughout their respective tender and procurement phases and continue to provide invaluable help and advice to SWELL partners as the project progresses.



Source to Tap



AWARENESS raising about the connection between our rivers and lakes and the water that comes out of our taps, is an important aspect of the aims of the Source to Tap project and this has been carried out in a number of ways:

Riverfly Training

Source to Tap have trained 43 volunteers to carry out Riverfly Monitoring safely and correctly in the Erne and Derg catchments. The Riverfly Monitoring technique involves collecting a sample of invertebrates from the bed of a river and recording what is found. By training these volunteers it not only provides learning and empowers individuals in communities but it also provides a legacy from the project.

Education

Source to Tap is working to raise awareness of the connection between our rivers and lakes and what comes out of our taps through an education programme in local schools and through information exchange events & roadshows for local communities.

Pilot Land Incentive Scheme

Work on the pilot Land Incentive Scheme (LIS) intensified during 2021 with 117 land owners

benefitting from the scheme which grant aided measures such as: installation of fencing; repairing broken concrete tracks, installing guttering and downpipes and provision of herbicide storage units. All these measures will protect the water quality in the Derg catchment as well as benefit the farm business.

Peat Restoration Pilot

Work to restore an area of around 29 hectares of formerly afforested land back to peatbog was completed in 2021. The site at Tullychurry forest is owned by Forest Service NI and is located next to the internationally designated Pettigoe Plateau site. The learning from the work carried out at the pilot site will inform future work in drinking water catchments and elsewhere and a knowledge exchange visit was held in June 2021 to allow interested stakeholders to see first hand the work that had been carried out.

Forestry Pilot

Work on the monitoring of the measures in the forestry pilot ended in March 2021 and since then work has focused on analysis of the data and writing up the forestry report. Other inputs include a series of pdf files which summarise how to install each measure and a video which shows the measures in situ.

Solar powered pump for drinkers in the Derg installed as part of the pilot Land Incentive Scheme

Virtual classroom delivery of an education unit

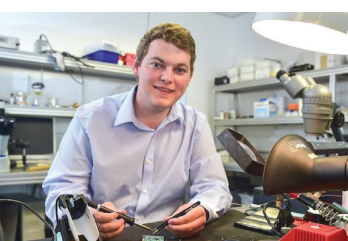
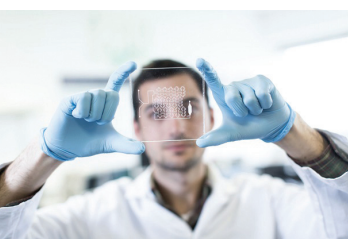
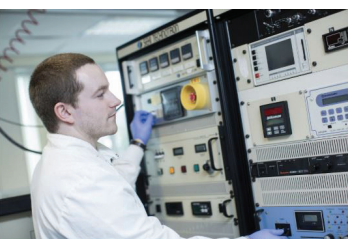
Riverfly volunteers being trained Summer 2021

Tullychurry cell bunded area at October 2021

Stakeholders looking at a geotextile dam on a Coillte site, Sept 2021



ECME



THE Eastern Corridor Medical Engineering Centre (ECME) is a collaborative research project focusing on improving cardiovascular health. It is a partnership between five leading academic research centres and Southern Health & Social Care Trust. It received funding of €8.4m from the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

Primary research impacts include 81 publications in peer-reviewed, high-impact scientific journals in Europe and the US. This scientific literature creates lasting impact for our partner institutions by generating further research income and enhancing their academic stature.

Publications create secondary impacts across clinical, business, and healthcare policy as new scientific theory, methods and techniques are developed that will lead to new clinical protocols, new products and new policy imperatives for government. These papers were co-authored by the 24 PhD students funded under ECME who will graduate from the programme and go into industry, research, government and healthcare as future leaders.

ECME staff regularly brief government on policy and some have been involved in national initiatives around COVID including on the NHS front line and through large scale COVID data analysis projects. And one of our research projects at the Southern Trust indicated that the UK health service could save up to £50m annually on the cost of angiograms to diagnose coronary artery disease.

ECME had two primary mechanisms for working with industry. Firstly, through non-direct financial



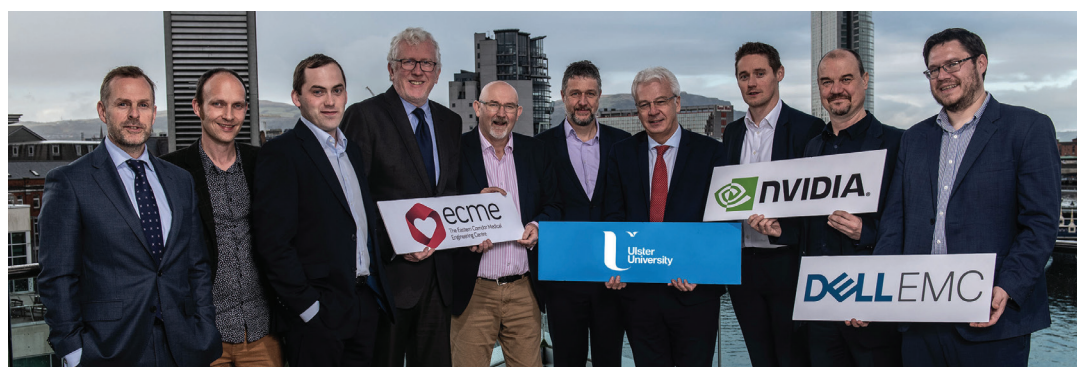
support in the form of training, expert advice, student placements and access to equipment etc. By enhancing the expertise of local companies through our workshops on Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Big Data Management, Communications and User Centric Design ECME have created real impact across more than 30 companies who took part in these initiatives.

Secondly, Direct Financial Support (Grants) were delivered through our Mini Projects. ECME awarded nine companies a total of €300,000 for projects focused on COVID-19.

Highlights from the Mini Projects include:

- 42 Genetics Ltd were able to use their grant as a springboard into further research funding totalling £700K from Innovate UK.
- Anaeko Ltd have already secured new contracts worth £75,000 and have submitted bids for business worth £250,000.
- ProAxis Ltd, who used their ECME funding in developed an assay for detection of the biomarker Cathepsin in COVID-19 patients, have become part of one of only two consortia from Northern Ireland to be selected for the next stage of the UK RI's Strength in Places Fund (SIPF). The project was awarded seed-corn funding of up to £50,000.

Top: Roger Vance from Ad-vance Engineering in Lisburn whose grant from ECME allowed the company to manufacture up to 10,000 PPE visors per day during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.



CPM

LED by Ulster University (UU) and building on the experience and expertise of partners, the Centre for Personalised Medicine; Clinical Decision Making and Patient Safety (CPM) involves a collaborative partnership between 12 academia, health services and industry organisations. This has evolved to create the perfect environment to promote, investigate and adopt personalised medicine approaches in the partner hospitals in Northern Ireland, Ireland and Scotland. The five research clusters in the CPM apply personalised medicine methods and approaches to heart disease, emergency surgery, acute kidney injury, unscheduled care in diabetes and diagnostic accuracy in dementia. The research clusters aimed to address a major issue preventing effective clinical decision making and/or patient safety in each of the disease areas.

Objectives of the project include:

- Improve the triage of patients to allow appropriate and rapid referral for Coronary Angioplasty.
- Identify determinants of outcomes in emergency surgery to improve care pathways.
- Earlier recognition of acute kidney injury to reduce mortality, morbidity and hospital stay.
- Improve self-management of diabetes to reduce unscheduled care episodes and hospital admissions.
- Develop tools to allow for the earlier diagnosis of dementia.



There has been 39 academic papers published (see <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/cpm/research-clusters>), The CPM project has recruited 10 PhD students, all near completion. A total of 73 PhD years has been achieved, with PhD students and more senior staff from academia, health-care services and private enterprises adding to this output.

Key achievements include:

- The development of an online triage form to assist with real time decision making and audit.
- The development of an Emergency Surgery Registry with over 400 patients to date allowing for the world's first Hospital Emergency Surgery Report.
- Identification of factors influencing hospital conveyance following ambulance attendance leading to a more defined research area for this area
- A study exploring the costs of diabetes in Irish Public Hospitals which heretofore was unknown.
- The development of a cohort of acute kidney and chronic kidney patients to validate commercial CKD and AKI diagnostic panels and using the results to generate a CKD prognostic model.
- The development of algorithms to improve the stages of data pre-processing and analytics for dementia diagnosis, prognosis and treatment/care

PEACE PLUS



The PEACE PLUS programme will contribute to a more prosperous and stable society in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland and will leave a lasting legacy. The programme will achieve this by funding activities that promote peace and reconciliation and contribute to the cross-border economic and territorial development of the programme area. It will build upon previous PEACE and INTERREG Programmes. Provision has been made for an indicative budget of approximately €1.1bn, including proposals from the EU budget, the Government of Ireland, the Northern Ireland Executive and the UK Government.

The PEACE PLUS Programme will run from 2021–2027 and represents an excellent opportunity for Local Authorities and key stakeholders within the East Border Region to access funding for cross border projects which will make a positive contribution to the economic, social and environmental development of the Region.

Throughout 2020 and 2021 EBR have been consulting with our Local Authorities and key stakeholders and have developed thematic working groups which align with the themes of the Programme.

EBR thematic working groups comprise relevant officials, key stakeholders and elected members with a keen interest in each theme:

- Economic Development & Regeneration
- Tourism
- Climate Change
- Biodiversity
- Energy
- Social Inclusion

EBR are continuing to develop cross border projects through the thematic working groups in anticipation of the PEACE PLUS Programme officially opening in 2022.

THEMATIC AREAS					
THEME 1 Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities €250M	THEME 2 Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation €170M	THEME 3 Empowering and Investing in Our Young People €123m	THEME 4 Healthy and Inclusive Communities €172m	THEME 5 Supporting a Sustainable and better connected Future €303m	THEME 6 Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration €52m
INVESTMENT AREAS					
1.1 Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plans €110m 1.2 Empowering Communities €30m 1.3 Building Positive Relations €35m 1.4 Reimagining Communities €75m	2.1 Programme Area SME Development and Transition €25m 2.2 Programme Area Innovation Challenge Fund €65m 2.3 Programme Area Skills Programme €50m 2.4 Smart Cities, Towns and Villages €30m	3.1 Learning Together Education Programme €51m 3.2 PEACE PLUS Youth Programme €47m 3.3 Youth Mental Health €25m	4.1 Collaborative Health and Social Care €97m 4.2 Rural Development and Social Inclusion €50m 4.3 Victims and Survivors €25	5.1 Biodiversity Nature Recovery and Resilience €40m 5.2 Marine and Coastal Management €25m 5.3 Water Quality and Catchment Management €21m 5.4 Water Quality Improvement Programme €32m 5.5 Geothermal Programme €20m 5.6 Sustainable Transport €165m	6.1 Strategic Planning and Engagement €32m 6.2 Maintaining and Forging Relationships between Citizens €20m

Accounts

East Border Region Ltd Reg. No. N1034498

DIRECTORS' REPORT

The Directors present their report and accounts for the year ended 31st December 2020.

Principal Activities

The company's principal activity during the year continued to be the promotion of the East Border Region, with a view to tackling all of the issues that create barriers to economic growth.

Directors

The current directors of the company are listed on page 3 of the full version of the EBR accounts.*

The company is a company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital.

Political Donations

The company made no political or charitable donations.

Disclosure of information to auditors

Each person who was a director at the time this report was approved confirms that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditor is aware of that information.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions in part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

This report was presented to the Audit & Governance Committee on 8th June 2021.

This report was approved by the board on 1st July 2021 and signed on its behalf.



CLlr Terry Andrews
Company Secretary

* A copy of the full version of the accounts for the year ending 31st December 2020 is available on request from the East Border Region.

East Border Region Ltd Reg. No. N1034498

AUDITORS' REPORT

Opinion on the Accounts

In our opinion the accounts:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31st December 2020 and of its result for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

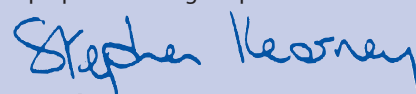
In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the directors' report for the financial year for which the accounts are prepared is consistent with the accounts; and
- the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the accounts are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the directors were not entitled to prepare the accounts in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemption in preparing the directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report .



Stephen Kearney FCA
Statutory Auditor

for and on behalf of Fitzpatrick & Kearney Limited
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors

10c Marcus Square, Newry, Co. Down BT34 1AE
1st July 2021

PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNT

for the year ended 31 December 2020

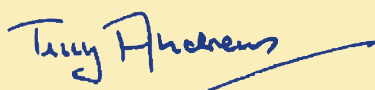
	Notes	2020 £	2019 £
Turnover		497,311	429,043
Administrative expenses		(497,311)	(429,043)
Operating profit		—	—
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation		—	—
Tax on profit on ordinary activities		—	—
Profit for the financial year		—	—

BALANCE SHEET

as at 31 December 2020

	Notes	2020 £	2019 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	4	10,388	6,092
Current assets			
Debtors	5	102,503	103,869
Cash at bank and in hand		429,693	502,743
		532,196	606,612
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	6	(497,527)	(571,943)
Net current assets		34,669	34,669
Total assets less current liabilities		45,057	40,761
Provisions for liabilities		(10,390)	(6,094)
Net assets		34,667	34,667
Capital and reserves			
Profit and loss account		34,667	34,667
Shareholders' funds		34,667	34,667

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.



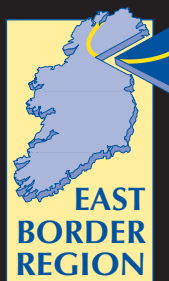
Cllr Terry Andrews
Director

Approved by the board on 1st July 2021



EAST BORDER REGION

Comprising
Counties Louth, Monaghan and Meath,
Newry Mourne and Down District
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough
Ards and North Down Borough



Ireland | Northern Ireland

EAST BORDER REGION

2 Monaghan Court, Newry, Co. Down
Northern Ireland BT35 6BH

Tel: (NI) 028 3025 2684
(RoI) 048 3025 2684

Email: hello@eastborderregion.com
www.eastborderregion.com
www.twitter.com/east_border



Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin**
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council



**Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon**
Borough Council

**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council