

**Expression of Collaborative Interest**  
**ESPON Priority 1: Small and Medium Sized Towns in their Functional Territorial Context**

ICLRD ([International Centre for Local and Regional Development](http://www.iclrd.org)) is interested in becoming a **Project Partner** in the Priority 1 project: Small and Medium Sized Towns in their Functional Territorial Context.

We are particularly interested in undertaking case study research focussed on small and medium sized towns and their functional territories in a cross-border context (i.e. Republic of Ireland/Northern Ireland). As indicated below, ICLRDR has developed significant expertise in this area, working from an applied spatial planning perspective.

ICLRDR has extensive experience and expertise in working with, and profiling, border communities in the Irish border region; with members of the team also having extensive experience of working with government and communities in Eastern Europe. In association with its 'sister organisations' – namely the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis in NUI Maynooth and the All-Island Research Observatory – ICLRDR has built a reputation of being best placed to provide independent joined-up research and policy advice on cross-border and all-island spatial planning, as well as local and regional, development issues. The centre also assists local governments and communities in translating policy into 'on the ground' action. Related projects include ICLRDR's research programmes on *Fostering Mutual Benefits in Cross-Border Areas* (2008); *Rural Restructuring: Local Sustainable Solutions to the Rural Challenge* (2009); *Delineating Functional Territories Across The Island of Ireland: An Initial Scoping* (2010); and *Applying the Functional Territories Concept: Planning Beyond Boundaries* (forthcoming), the outputs from which can be downloaded from the ICLRDR website at [www.iclrd.org](http://www.iclrd.org)

The research work of ICLRDR has been informed by ESPON results and concepts to a great extent, particularly in relation to the analysis of functional regions and cross-border territorial governance.

ICLRDR is committed to collaborative and collegial research. We welcome discussions with potential partners.

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## **ICLRD Profile**

Based in Armagh, Northern Ireland, the ICLRDR is a North-South-US partnership that brings together practitioners, academics, researchers and policy makers to explore and expand the contribution that local and regional development can make to the peace and reconciliation process and improve the lives of people on the island of Ireland and elsewhere. The ICLRDR draws upon the inter-disciplinary expertise of its partner institutions that include:

- the [National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis](#) (NIRSA) at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth;
- the [School of the Built Environment at the University of Ulster](#); Northern Ireland.
- the [Institute for International Urban Development](#) in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and
- the [Centre for Cross Border Studies](#) in Armagh, Northern Ireland.

The ICLRDR also collaborates with other academics and researchers and EU research groups focused on cross-border collaboration.

Since its formal establishment in 2006, the ICLRDR has built-up a strong track record of securing funding for projects with a focus on territorial development and cohesion. Specialist thematic areas of expertise include strategic spatial planning, cross-border territorial cooperation, and comparative urban and regional policy and governance.

ICLRDR plays an active role in INTERREG IV projects focussed on cross-border and multi-level territorial governance, including examining the opportunities for enhanced collaboration among local governments in the Irish border region in (a) policy alignment as it relates to spatial planning, (b) environmental managements, with a specific focus on river basin planning, and (c) the roll-out of shared services.

## **Further Information**

International Centre for Local And Regional Development website ([www.iclrd.org](http://www.iclrd.org))

National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis website ([www.nuim.ie/nirsa](http://www.nuim.ie/nirsa))

All-Island Research Observatory – the spatial data portal and research infrastructure developed and supported by NIRSA - ([www.airo.ie](http://www.airo.ie))