



**Northern
Periphery
Programme**

2007–2013

Innovatively investing
in Europe's Northern
Periphery for a sustainable
and prosperous future



REPORT

Phoenix 2010 Partenariat

20-21 April 2010 - Portrush, Northern Ireland

In the unfortunate absence of the Secretariat and delegates from the other eligible regions due to the recent flight restrictions, the Department of Finance and Personnel Northern Ireland was pleased to host a revised Partenariat for representatives from a range of organisations from Ireland and Northern Ireland. As preparation for group discussions, participants received presentations on (these are available on the programme website):

- Approaches and strategies taken towards the creative industries in Ireland and Northern Ireland by Ian Brannigan of the Western Development Commission and Stephen McGowan of the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, Northern Ireland.
- Background on the Northern Periphery Programme by Teresa Lennon, Regional Contact Point for Northern Ireland and Michael O'Brien, Regional Contact Point for Ireland.
- Summary of the preparatory projects CYNERGY and PEMP by the Regional Contact Points.

Summary of Discussions

Challenges and Opportunities for the Creative and Traditional Sectors

- There is an issue of accessibility between the creative and traditional sectors to create the opportunities for them to engage and narrow the gap between them.
- There is a lack of understanding in the traditional sector about the role that the creative sector can play in promoting innovation and creativity in traditional sectors.
- Increased fusions between the traditional and creative industries could result in higher added value jobs and economic output which would be valuable in Northern Periphery regions particularly in the current climate.



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- The traditional sectors such as farming, engineering and manufacturing will benefit from new techniques and practises to ensure their future sustainability.
- Marketing, innovation training and skills development are vital ingredients to help both traditional and creative industries to advance. The higher education sector is key to this.
- The creative sector is often made up of very small companies which could gain from the business skills and capacity which can be more established in the traditional sector.
- Education is important to ensure that young people are educated to become creative and that the importance and potential of creative sector skills in the economy are recognised.
- Many local and regional authorities who are only at an early stage of recognising the potential of the creative sector may require a preliminary audit to identify all existing stakeholders and the current capacity of the creative sector in their region.
- Greater use could be made of existing facilities within business parks, innovation centres and higher education institutions to advance the sectors.
- Project Kelvin is a €30m cross border telecommunications project funded by the Interreg IVA programme to provide high speed cable network connectivity between the southern border counties, Northern Ireland and North America. The project entails a high capacity submarine cable link directly to North America thereby avoiding often congested routes around London and New York. This provides a significant resource and major advantage for creative industries in these regions of the Northern Periphery.

Potential Project Ideas

- **The Western Development Commission with NUI Galway** are developing a project which aims to focus on creating and piloting a practical platform for the sustainable growth of regional creative industries, primarily through export development and increased interaction with the wider regional businesses across NPP areas. Craigavon Borough Council expressed an interest to looking at this proposal further and the Western Development Commission is seeking other partners from across the NPP area.
- **Design Thinking Transfer across the Northern Periphery:** Data collection would be carried out to provide information on the creative assets of each participating region. It would provide detail on existing innovation in each region and an overview of the broadband capability of each region. The data would identify the gaps between the creative industries and traditional industries in each region. The project would then involve data analysis and match making and then the development of pilot schemes. These pilots would be in the form of 'industrial placements' from the creative industry to the traditional industry and vice versa. They would focus on business development and allow each sector to benefit from the skills practised in the other. Queen's University, Digital Circle, NUI Galway and ERNACT to explore taking this forward as a preparatory project.



- **ERNACT** is proposing an idea to increase the capacity of business parks and innovation centres in the North West of Ireland/ Northern Ireland through collaboration with Nordic science and technology parks. The aim of this project would be to build upon the capacity and added value activities of innovation centres located within the higher education sector in the region by engaging with new and emerging creative firms throughout the NPP.
- **Coleraine Borough Chamber of Commerce** proposed that the increased high speed communications infrastructure in the North West enabled by Project Kelvin would serve to attract Creative experts to the region who could deliver specialised services across the Northern Periphery and to a worldwide marketplace. Alongside this, increasing the technical capabilities of micro enterprises and creative entrepreneurs in the North West would allow to service the creative needs of large Multi National Corporations in the US and worldwide. There are known isolated cases in Northern Ireland of very specialised resident hi-tech experts in the fields of digital media, digital animation and multimedia delivering very specialised contracts from Northern Ireland for large US Film & Movie Production Companies such as Walt Disney.
- **Belfast Metropolitan College** highlighted the potential of incubator space within Northern Ireland's third level colleges. The availability of incubator units and animation suites such as the facility at Belfast Metropolitan College (which serves all of Northern Ireland) could attract small pre trading creative companies which could be nurtured through a transnational programme of tailored mentoring, training and other business supports. The expertise of Scandinavian institutes and models of Nordic best practise would be an important part of such a proposal.

Existing Preparatory Projects

- **Digital Circle and Queen's University** expressed an interest in the PEMP project and will make direct contact with Per Holm from Media Centre about this project.
- **ERNACT** expressed an interest in the CINERGY project and will be in contact with Gustav Malmqvist to discuss further.
- **Craigavon Borough Council** expressed an interest in looking at the possibilities of engaging with the CINERGY project.

Follow Up

Participants were advised that a note of their discussions would be passed to the Secretariat and would be available on the website to those unable to attend and others. They would also be kept informed of further developments and follow up activities and could avail of assistance from the RCPs and the Secretariat to develop their ideas into project partnerships for applications.

