

Cross Border Emergency Management Group

Terms of Reference

1.0 Background

The incidence of emergencies and disasters caused by natural and/or human made factors such as the recent severe weather events has increased significantly in recent years. These have led to loss of lives, property and environmental destruction and have resulted in the loss of social and economic activities in the affected areas. These emergencies and disasters can occur anywhere on the island of Ireland and do not respect borders. In all of these emergency or disaster situations, the authorities on both sides of the border have to respond by deploying resources necessary to contain the respective disaster in order to minimise the suffering and to safeguard the lives of the affected communities.

It is essential that the statutory agencies with responsibility for emergency management prepare for and respond to the emergencies or disasters that occur along the border areas in a coordinated and effective manner.

The statutory agencies with responsibility for emergency management in both jurisdictions operate within their own emergency management structures, frameworks and legislation that have evolved separately.

In the Republic of Ireland the statutory agencies operate within the Major Emergency Management Framework¹ that was established by the Government in 2006. National, regional and local groups have been established to deal with major emergency management.

In Northern Ireland, the statutory agencies operate primarily within the Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework² (2005), whilst some are duty bound by the Civil Contingencies Act (2004)³. Non statutory sub regional groupings have been established to co-ordinate a multi agency emergency management response.

Good cross border co-operation has existed between the principal response agencies on an organisational level for many years resulting in some cases in Memoranda of Understanding and other formal arrangements. While this is vital and will continue, there is a need for greater collaboration between all of the agencies on a collective basis to plan for and deal with the consequences of emergencies or disasters that may occur along the border area.

Reference is made in the Major Emergency Framework (ROI) and the Civil Contingencies Framework (NI) to increased cooperation in the emergency management area. The North South Ministerial Council⁴ has also identified emergency planning as one of their key areas for improved cross border collaboration. This is reinforced at European level within the European Community Civil Protection Mechanism⁵.

Therefore the need has been identified to establish a Cross Border Emergency Management Group that can increase co-operation between all of the statutory agencies involved in emergency management and that can develop strategies and procedures for emergency and disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response within the border corridor.

2.0 Name of the Group

The group will be called 'Cross Border Emergency Management Group.

3.0 Purpose

“To act as a multi agency group for agencies involved in emergency management on a cross border basis.”

4.0 Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives of the Cross Border Emergency Management Group are to:

- act as a multi-agency emergency planning group for the statutory agencies in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland;
- enhance cross border co-operation and resilience in Emergency Management and Civil Protection consistent with the principles of the emergency management cycle^{1,2}.
- develop joint protocols, training and the sharing of information in line with the parent emergency management framework documents;
- strengthen and coordinate cross border emergency management arrangements in the areas of risk assessment, prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response;
- further the development of a support network between the respective agencies;
- ensure as far as possible the interoperability of major emergency plans and response arrangements both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

5.0 Mandate

The mandate of the Cross Border Emergency Management Group is to:

- The identification and implementation of best practice in Civil Protection and emergency management on a cross border basis in the areas of risk management, preparedness and response;
- The development and maintenance of procedures for notification, activation and ongoing communications during a major emergency event in the border region.
- The development of ongoing cross border joint training and exercise programmes.
- Participation in cross border projects as appropriate with a view to improving sustainable cross border emergency management.
- Reporting back to their own respective organisations and to other regional structures on the work of the Group.

6.0 Governance Arrangements

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, Civil Contingencies arrangements are governed by the Civil Contingences Group, CCG (NI). This group is chaired by The Executive Office. Reports on the activity of the CBEMG are delivered at both the Northern and

Southern Sub Regional Emergency Preparedness Group (EPG) meetings. A summary of developments and issues requiring escalation is provided as necessary to the Sub regional Civil Emergency Preparedness Group) (SCEP), a sub group of CCG (NI).

Republic of Ireland

In the Republic of Ireland a report on the activity of the CBEMG is included as a standing item on the agenda of the North East and North West Regional Working Groups, Regional Steering Groups and National Working and National Steering Group meetings.

7.0 Membership

There should be equal representation from both jurisdictions on the Cross Border Emergency Management Group.

Representatives to the Group should be nominated from the respective parent government departments and the regional emergency management groups in each jurisdiction.

The composition of the Cross Border Emergency Management Group will contain representatives from the following agencies:

Northern Ireland

From Northern Ireland, there are representatives from the Southern Emergency Preparedness Group and the Northern Emergency Preparedness Group. The following organisations are represented:

- Local Government Emergency Planning Representatives from Southern and Northern Emergency Preparedness Groups. These areas include the following local government areas: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Ards and North Down District Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council).
- Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
- Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS)
- Public Health Agency & Health Social Care Trusts (Western & Southern Trust)
- Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS)
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Republic of Ireland

From the Republic of Ireland representation is primarily from the North West MEM Regional Working Group (representing Sligo, Leitrim, and Donegal) and from the North East MEM Regional Working Group (representing Cavan, Monaghan, Louth and Meath). The following principal response agencies (PRAs) are represented:

- An Garda Síochána (AGS)
- Local Authorities (including Fire Service)
- Health Service Executive (including NAS)

The following organisation is also represented:

- Irish Coast Guard

Other members may be co-opted to the group on a temporary basis to compliment the strategic objectives as stipulated within the Terms of Reference.

It is recognised that this group is intrinsically linked to national and regional policy makers from both jurisdictions, therefore representatives from the respective parent government departments are invited to participate in the work of CBEMG. These Departments include:

Northern Ireland

The Executive Office

Police Service of Northern Ireland (Emergency Planning Headquarters)

Republic of Ireland

National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management

An Garda Síochána Headquarters

HSE National Representation

8.0 Geographical Area Encompassed

The geographical area encompassed by the group extends to the areas detailed in Section 3.1.1, a map of which can be viewed in Appendix 1.

9.0 Governance Arrangements

The Cross Border Emergency Management Group will carry out its mandate within the existing emergency management structures in each jurisdiction and report to the their respective sub regional working /preparedness groups. A schematic of these reporting structures are outlined in Appendix 2. Approval of any protocols, documents, plans or other documentation will be sought at the appropriate governance level in both jurisdictions.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, Civil Contingencies arrangements are governed by the Civil Contingences Group, CCG (NI). This group is chaired by The Executive Office. Reports on the activity of the CBEMG are delivered at both the Northern and Southern sub regional emergency preparedness group meetings. A summary of developments and issues requiring escalation is provided as necessary to the SCEP (sub regional civil emergency preparedness group), a sub group of CCG (NI).

Republic of Ireland

In the Republic of Ireland a report on the activity of the CBEMG is included as a standing item on the agenda of the North East and North West Regional Working Groups, Regional Steering Groups and National Working and National Steering Group meetings.

10.0 Standing Orders

Quorum

The minimum number of attendees at any meeting of the Group should be 50% plus one with at least three representatives being present from each jurisdiction.

Chairperson

The Cross Border Emergency Management Group will elect a chairperson from within each jurisdiction for a period of two years. The Northern Ireland nominee will chair meetings in NI and the Republic of Ireland nominee will chair meetings in ROI.

Frequency of meetings

Minimum of two meetings per year but more as required. Meetings are to be alternated between jurisdictions.

Sub Groups

Sub Groups may be established to progress various areas of work as and when required. Terms of Reference will be developed for each sub group.

Review

The Terms of Reference may be reviewed to take account of changes in legislation, guidance or structural changes within organisations in either jurisdiction.

11.0 Consultation Process

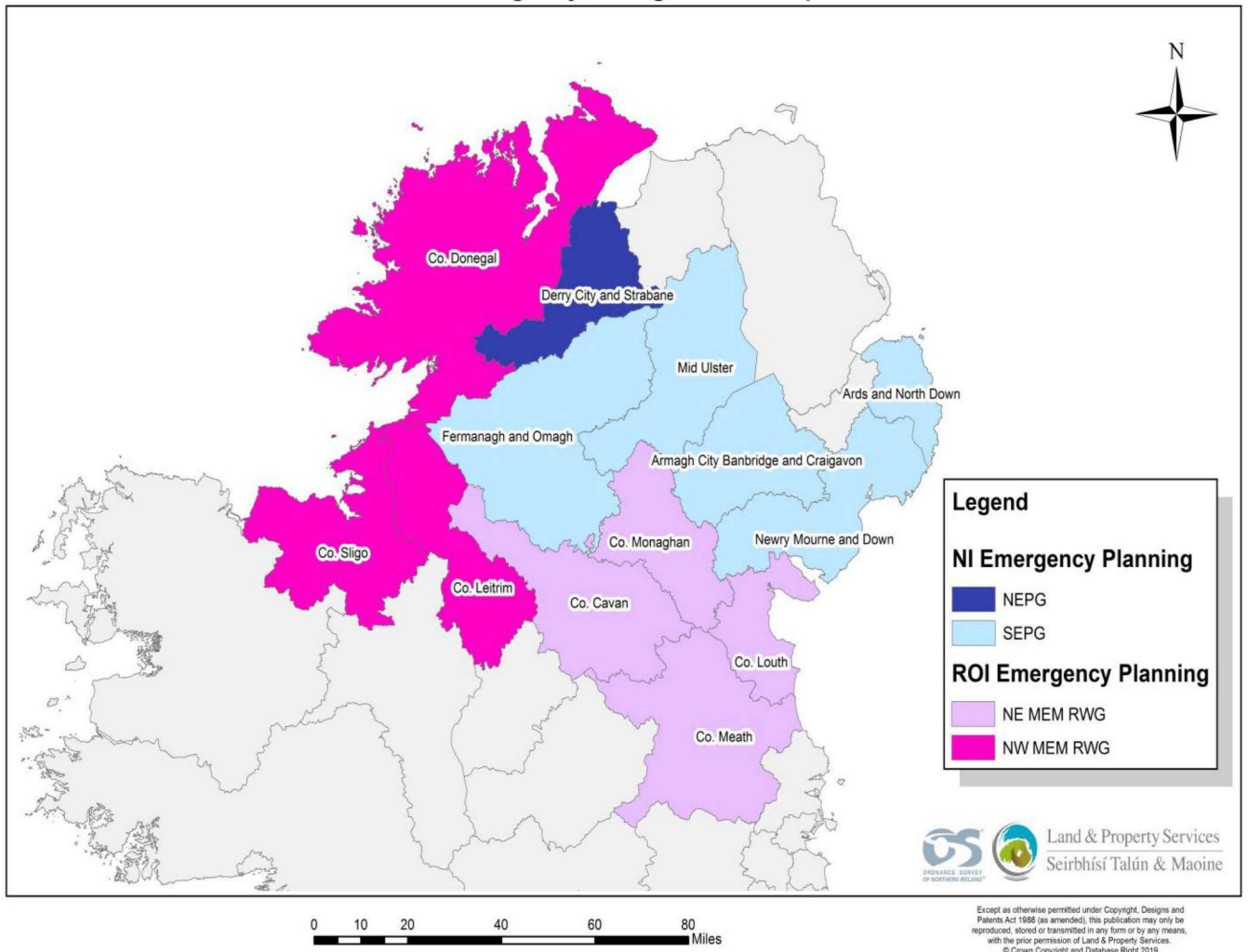
Appendix 3 outlines the consultation process to be followed by the group and its sub groups when developing/updating plans and documentation. Adhering to this process will ensure all member organisations are given adequate opportunity to provide comment and input into the development and approval of all plans and documentation.

References:

1. Department of the Environment Community and Local Government (DoELCG) - Major Emergency Management Framework 2006
2. Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) – The Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework 2005
3. Civil Contingencies Act (2004)
4. North South Ministerial Council, Areas for Co-operation (Accessed 2014)
5. EU Council Decision 2007/779/EC, establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism

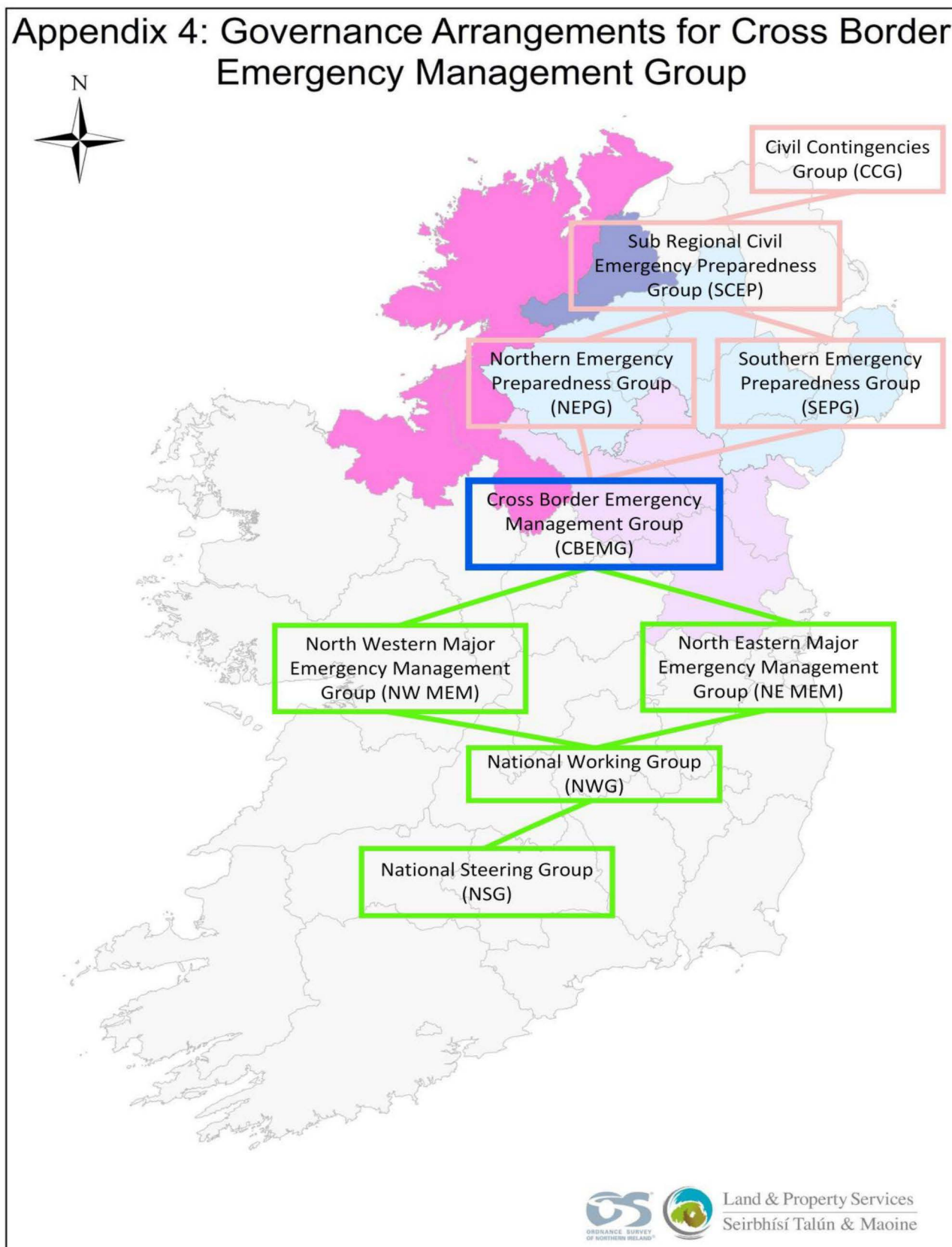
Appendix 1

Cross Border Emergency Management Group Boundaries



Appendix 2

(Extracted from Appendix 4 of the Cross Border Emergency Management Group's Strategic Plan 2015-2018)



0 12.5 25 50 75 100 Miles

  Land & Property Services
Seirbhís Talún & Maoine

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Appendix 3

Process of Consultation and Approval for Documents/Protocols Developed by the CBEMG.

1. All documents will be developed in accordance to the requirements outlined within the CBEMG Strategic Plan by the dedicated sub group.
2. Each sub group will have Terms of Reference approved by the CBEMG
3. All products developed by the sub groups will be submitted in draft form to the CBEMG for consideration and approval.
4. To ensure all agencies are afforded an opportunity to consult within their own organisation a period of consultation will be facilitated. This will normally be 8 weeks, or within the timeframe of the next meeting date, whichever is the longest. All documents will be emailed by the Chair of the relevant sub group to each organisation's representative on the CBEMG and this will be recorded using a standardised template incorporated into each document.
5. All feedback received will be considered by the sub group, relevant revisions made and the document re submitted to the group for final approval.
6. On approval by the CBEMG, all documents will then require endorsement by each of the inter agency MEM/EPG groups in both jurisdictions. If regional/national multi-agency endorsement is required, this should be escalated through established channels.

Standardised Template for Consultation

Name of Document/Version				
Organisation	Designated Contact	Date circulated	Comments Received Yes/No	Date Process Complete (Signature of Chair)