



The Southern Regional Assembly announces the commencement of an exciting research project entitled “Achieving Regional Equality – Urban Rural Dynamics in Ireland’s Southern Region”. This project is led by Carla Maria Kayanan, University College Dublin.

The [National Planning Framework \(NPF\)](#) and its corresponding documents—the [Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies \(RSES\)](#) and the [Metropolitan Area Spatial Plans \(MASP\)](#)—present the opportunity to strengthen Ireland’s four cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford to achieve regional parity and balanced regional development. However, a challenge exists in moving from a competitive co-existence between each of these cities and metropolitan areas to one based on collaboration in pursuit of shared goals. Furthermore, little guidance to navigate the process exists.

Through a case study of Ireland’s Southern Region, this project observes, documents and theorises the development of metropolitan areas as they unfold to offer insight into historic and contemporary roadblocks to implementation of national and regional objectives.



Overall Objectives Include...

- To examine tensions and opportunities between securing balanced regional growth, a strong urban structure at the metropolitan scale and vibrant rural areas.
- To assess the financial, societal and political transformations required to foster collaboration between Ireland's regional cities as engines of growth for the regions.
- To explore how new regional planning ambitions, competences and practice intersect with local development planning and identify points of challenge and opportunity.
- To examine the extent to which Ireland's regional cities can collaboratively form a defined and recognisable counterbalance on the southern/western seaboard to the dominance of Dublin and the east.



Research Questions Include...

- What have been the historic barriers to effective implementation of regional and national plans in Ireland?
- What institutions, experts and perspectives are required to support the realisation of ambitious territorial agendas?
- How do variations in the discourse and policy intervention around cities and metropolitan areas outside of the capital impact spatial development and policy?

Get Involved..

Interviews with local authorities and regional assembly members, as well as policy workshops with stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the RSES and the MASPs, will take place from May – December of next year. Your involvement is critical. Keep an eye out for updates and invitations on your website and social media platforms.

Further Information..

More information on this project can be found at the following link:

<https://www.ucd.ie/geography/research/schoolresearchprojects/achievingregionalequality/>

This project is funded by the [Irish Research Council Enterprise Partnership Scheme](#) in partnership with the Southern Regional Assembly.

This is a two-year project and will conclude August 2023. Updates on progress during this project and final project report will be posted on our website.

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