

Citizens Summary

Implementation of Ireland's ERDF funded Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020

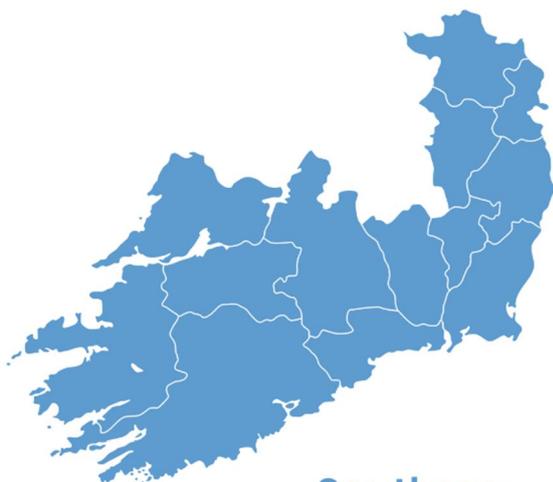
In 2016

Programme Objective

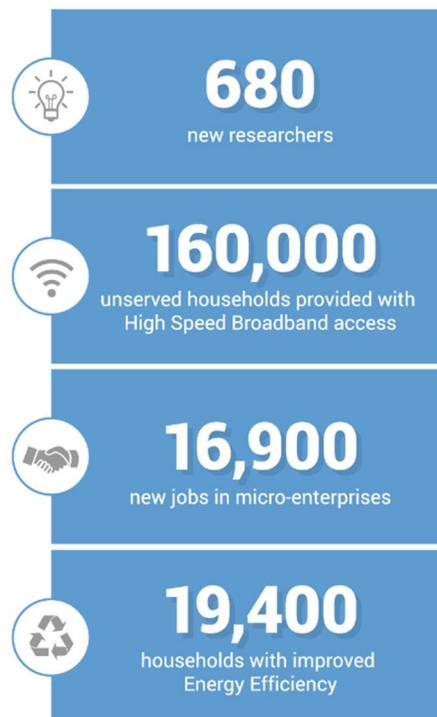
To support the region's

- **research and innovation,**
- **information and communications technologies (ICT),**
- **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**
- to promote a **low carbon economy,** and
- to support **integrated actions for sustainable urban development.**

Contributing to the objectives of Cohesion policy and, in particular, the Europe2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.



Southern
& Eastern



Timeframe for Programme Implementation



1st January 2014 to 2020 (Implementation until 31st December 2023)

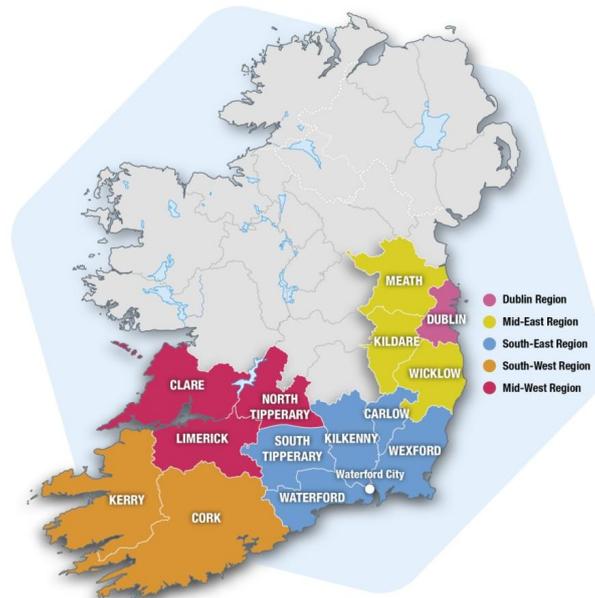
Funding Sources



- ➔ **€249 Million ERDF** allocation for 2014-2020
- ➔ **€498 million total Programme volume**
- ➔ **€249 million in national contribution**

The S&E ROP 2014-2020 was approved by the European Commission on 15th December 2014 and launched in Wexford on 3rd July 2015 by Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform. The total ERDF allocation over the 7-year programming period amounts to €249m for the S&E ROP 2014-2020. Another €249m in national funding is envisaged to be contributed which brings the total funding for the S&E ROP 2014-2020 to €498m over the 7-year period.

The Region



Map of the Southern & Eastern Region

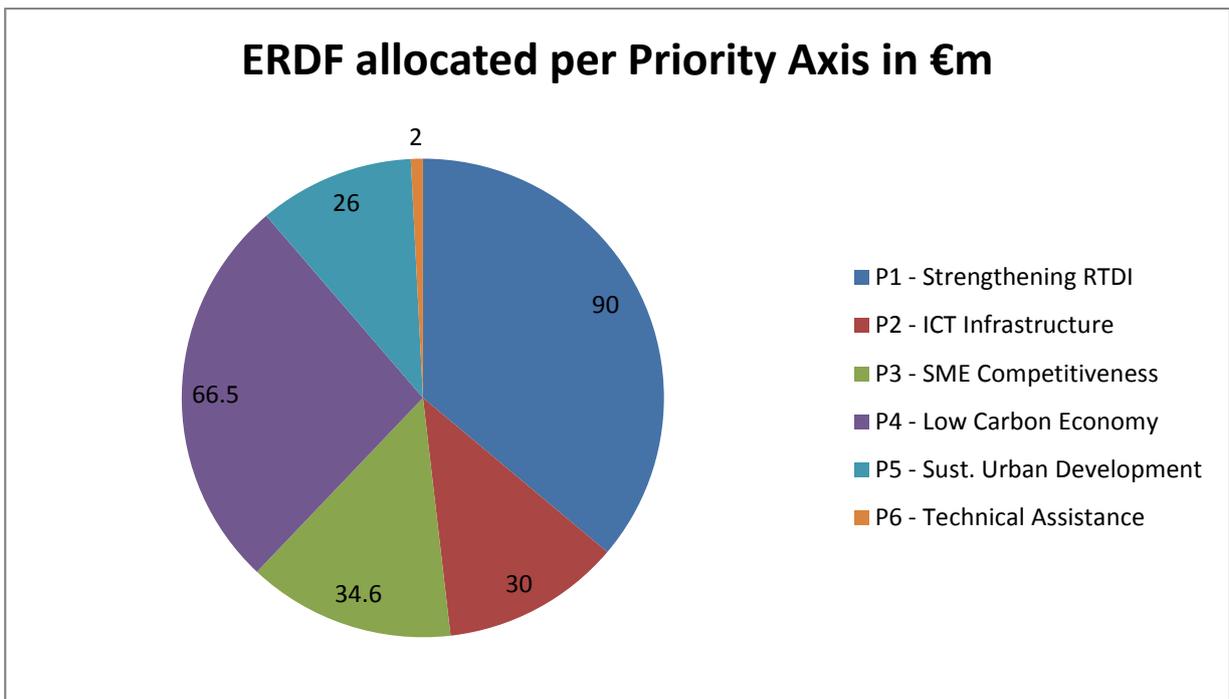
The eligible region as covered by this ROP is called the Southern and Eastern (S&E) Region which is a NUTS II region. The S&E region accounts for 53% of the land area of Ireland, 73% of the population and 81% of GVA. As of the 1st June 2014 the S&E Region consists of the following 17 Local Authority areas:

Dublin City, Cork City, Limerick City & County, Waterford City & County, and Counties Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, South Dublin, Clare, Carlow, Tipperary, Wexford, Kilkenny, Cork, Kerry, Kildare, Meath, Wicklow.

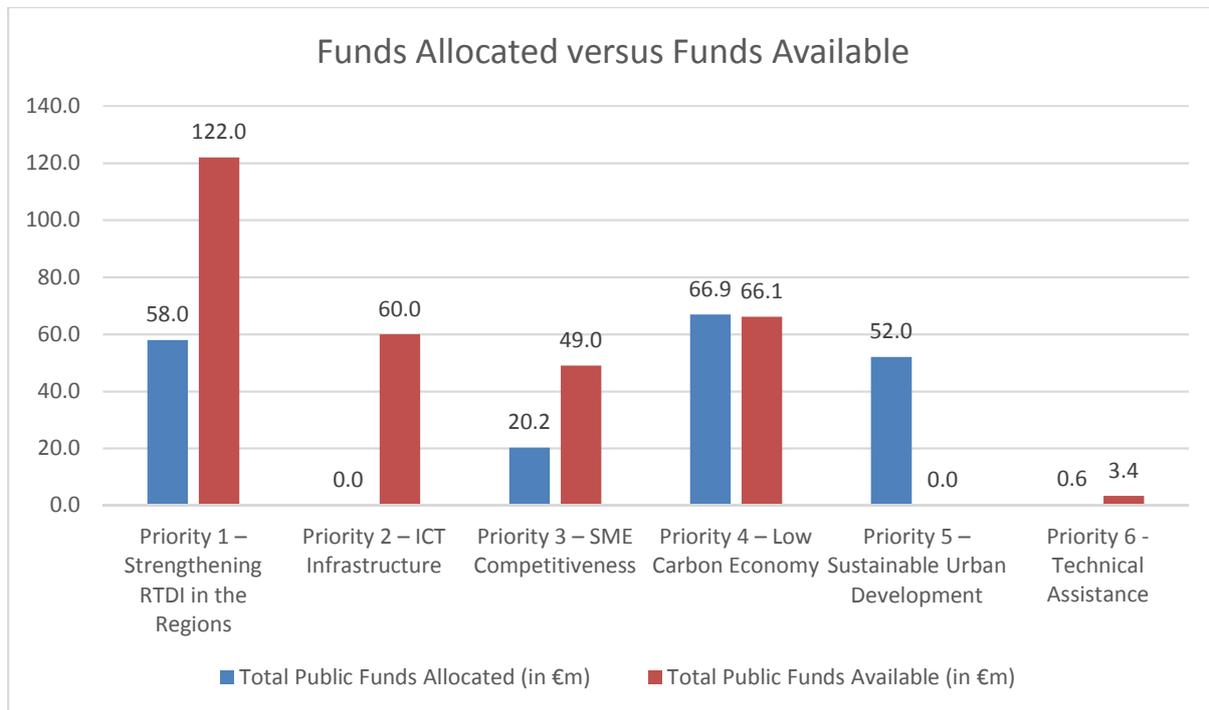
Arising from planned reforms of local and regional administration in Ireland announced by the Irish Government in October 2012, the two existing Regional Assemblies and eight Regional Authorities were re-configured into revised Regional Assemblies following the European and Local elections in mid-2014. Ireland has applied to Eurostat to re-define the NUTS classifications based on the revised regional structures but these will not come into effect until 2018. In compliance with Articles 90 and 99 of the Common Provisions Regulation, the existing NUTS II classifications must therefore be used for programming purposes for the 2014-2020 programme period. The Southern and Eastern region has been classified as a 'more developed region' for the 2014-2020 programme period, having a GDP per capita which was above 90% of the average GDP of the EU 27 over the 2007-2009 reference period.

Funding Priorities

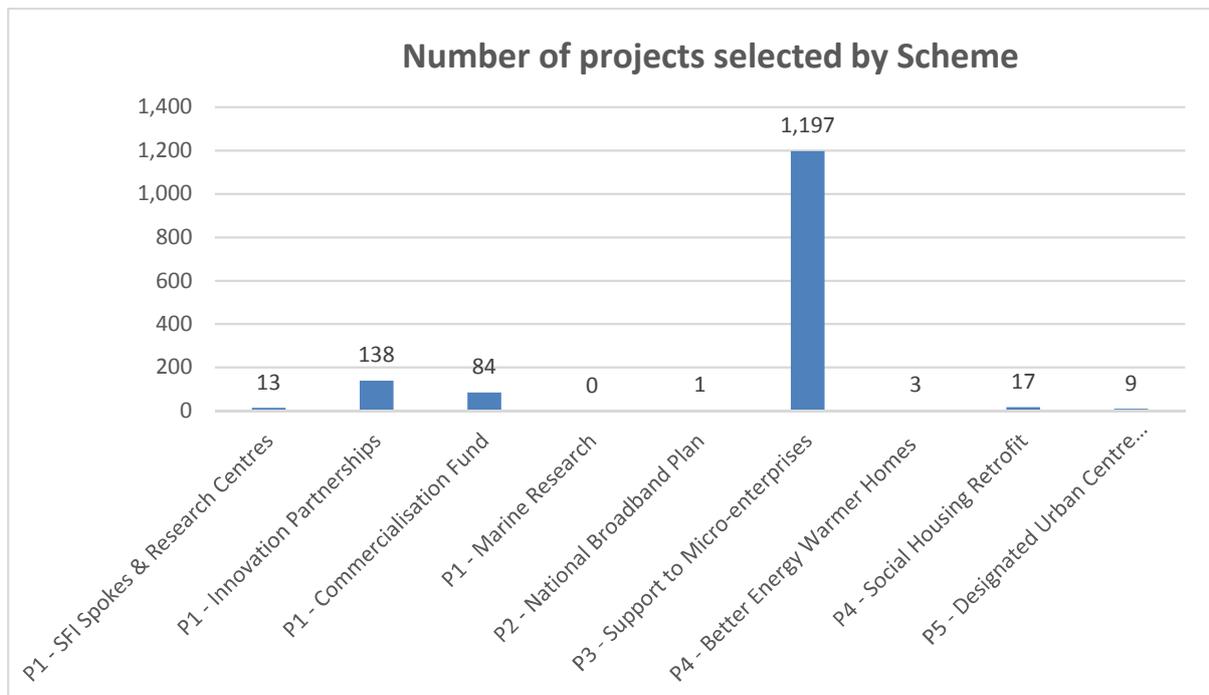
The S&E ROP 2014-2020 is focused on the following funding Priorities during the programming period:



Funds allocated to projects v. funds available



Number of projects by co-funded scheme



Who is involved in the delivery of the Programme?

The Irish Government, as set out in the Partnership Agreement for the European Structural and Investment Funds has decided that European Regional Development Funds made available to Ireland under the EU's Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 will be delivered through separate Regional Operational Programmes (OPs) for the BMW and the S&E Regions. The Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly has been designated by the Government to be the Managing Authority for the S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 and is responsible for its preparation and delivery, in accordance with the Common Provisions Regulation.

Schemes included in the Operational Programme are administered by a variety of departments and state agencies:

- Enterprise Ireland,
- Science Foundation Ireland,
- Marine Institute,
- Local authorities in the region, including Local Enterprise Offices,
- Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland,
- Department of Communications, Climate Action and Energy,
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government,
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Who benefits from the Programme?

Beneficiaries receiving grant funding under the S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 include public sector, academic and private sector organisations in the Southern & Eastern region, such as: Local Authorities, State Agencies, Universities, Institutes of Technology, Local Enterprise Offices, micro-enterprises, medium sized and large enterprises. Lists of operations and beneficiaries will be updated on a six-monthly basis on the Southern Regional Assembly's website with the first list to be published later in 2017.

Progress and Main achievements to date

Priority 1: Strengthening RTDI in the Regions

The overall objectives of this Priority are to increase the level of research taking place in the S&E region with company engagement by supplying applied research and to increase the level of commercialisation of research by the higher education institutions in the region. This priority seeks to enhance research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and to build the capacities to develop R&I excellence while promoting centres of competence. It also has a focus on promoting business investment in R&I through developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector. The priority has been aligned with Ireland's identified priority research areas as set out in the Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3). The priority comprises 2 investment priorities (1a & 1b) and includes 5 individual schemes around research centres, marine research, and commercialisation of research. Up to end December 2016, €58m has been allocated to a total of 161 projects. This is 32% of the overall allocation to the priority. Except for one scheme included in investment priority 1a (Marine Research), all schemes included in priority 1 are progressing in accordance with agreed targets and reported output indicator achievements range up to 60% of the agreed target values. Overall, achievements are in line with targets and expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the profile. As regards the Marine Research scheme, to date no expenditure or achievements have been reported and the Intermediate Body is currently reviewing the scheme. Overview on progress with individual schemes included in Priority 1:

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Research Centre Programme

The scheme is managed by SFI and aims at developing a set of world-leading, large-scale research centres to link scientists and engineers in partnerships across third level institutions with industry. Over a period to December 2016, four awards were made under the Research Centre programme in S&E Region with total expenditure of €15m allocated for ERDF co-funding. Projects selected were CONNECT (centre for future Networks/Communications), ADAPT (dynamic research centre), LERO (Irish software research centre), and iGRAG (applied geosciences).

SFI Spokes Programme

The scheme is managed by SFI and aims at promoting the further development of existing SFI Research Centres to incorporate new areas of research, new industrial and academic collaborators, allowing the Centre to expand and develop in line with new priorities and opportunities. This scheme allows smaller regionally based institutions to collaborate with larger research centres in Universities. In the three-year period that ended on 31 December 2016, 10 awards were made under the Spokes Programme of which one did not progress in 2016. The 9 remaining projects are progressing well with total expenditure of €2m allocated for ERDF co-funding. Between the two SFI schemes (Research Centre Programme and Spokes Programme), 384 new researchers have been employed in the supported Higher Education Institutions.

Marine Research Programme

The scheme is managed by the Department for Agriculture, Food and the Marine as well as the Marine Institute. Overall objectives consist of providing assistance for appropriate marine research activities that support the goals of the national policy 'Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth'.

No expenditure was reported for 2014-2016 because the Marine Institute is currently reviewing the activities that should be ERDF co-funded in the 2014-2020 programming period.

Enterprise Ireland (EI) Commercialisation Fund

The scheme is managed by Enterprise Ireland (EI) and aims at providing support to researchers in third level institutions and research performing organisations for applied research generating outputs for commercial exploitation for the benefit of the Irish economy. The scheme does not support applied research for companies.

By end 2016, 84 projects with lead applicants from the S&E region were funded by EI. A total of €20m was awarded to the selected projects. To end 2016, EI have reported that 27 High-potential-start-up companies and 38 Spin-out companies have been set up from research outputs of the Commercialisation Fund scheme.

EI Innovation Partnership Programme

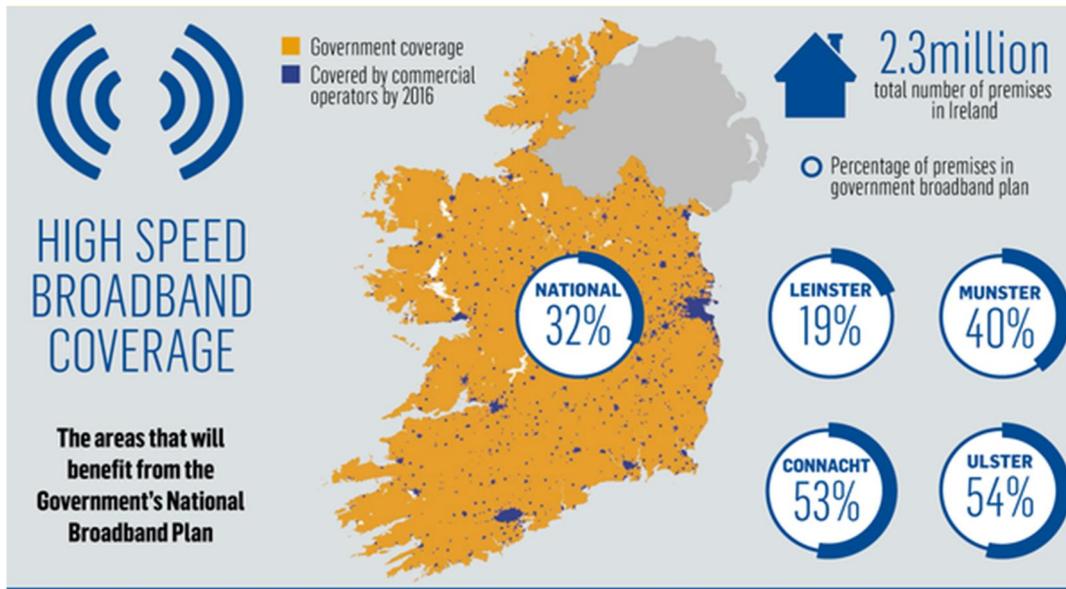
The scheme is managed by Enterprise Ireland (EI) and aims at encouraging Irish-based companies to work with Irish research institutes resulting in mutually beneficial co-operation and interaction. Companies benefit in terms of growth, evolution of strategic R & D and the creation of new knowledge. Research institutes benefit in terms of developing skill sets, intellectual property and publications. EI funding is paid to the research performing institution.

The programme continues to be rolled out successfully with 159 enterprises in the S&E region having received support (non-financial) through Innovation Partnership projects funded by EI in the period from 2014 to 2016. The total EI funding awarded to research institutions involved in Innovation Partnership projects amounted to €20m.

Priority 2: ICT Infrastructure

The intervention that will be supported under this Priority is a targeted State led investment providing broadband infrastructure in those areas that will not be covered by the commercial sector. This will facilitate the widespread availability of reliable and guaranteed high speed broadband which is a key component in delivering the objectives of the National Broadband Plan and the National Digital Strategy.

The National Broadband Plan reflects Government objectives to deliver new opportunities for jobs, growth and social inclusion. Furthermore, it aims to underpin and support wider public policy objectives and initiatives both nationally and within the European context. The scheme is managed by DCCAIE and aims at providing high speed broadband to all un-served towns and villages in the Regions (as identified in mapping exercise). It is foreseen that a min. of 30 mbps of broadband at current market rates will be delivered by the scheme. The project has been in the planning and procurement stages during 2014 to 2016. On 22/12/2015 Minister Alex White TD, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, formally launched the Procurement Process with publication of the Project Information Memorandum and the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ).



<http://www.broadband.gov.ie>

A formal procurement process, based on competitive dialogue has been continued in 2016 to select a company or companies to roll-out the new high speed broadband to the State Intervention area. The extensive procurement process is to ensure the delivery of a future-proofed network that provides access to high-speed broadband to all premises within the Intervention Area for at least 25 years.

Priority 3: SME Competitiveness

The Entrepreneurship in Micro enterprise scheme is delivered through the 18 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) located in the Southern and Eastern region. The focus of the intervention is to increase the rates of business start-up and expansion, and enhance management capability, competitiveness, innovation, technological adaptation and the export-orientation of microenterprises. The specific objective of this priority is to increase employment levels in micro-enterprises in this region by supporting business start-ups, business expansion and higher innovation levels in micro-enterprises. This investment priority is supporting innovative and growth-oriented SME start-ups and expansions through the provision of business information, advisory services, capacity building, mentoring and financial supports. Some major developments of the LEO microenterprise support initiative in 2016 include for example the delivery of the Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur Competition (IBYE). The IBYE Competition is a 2016 Action Plan for Jobs action and targets the development of young entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 35. Another example is the LEO Competitive Fund aiming at groups of LEOs coming together to bid for funding for projects to support job-creation initiatives in their areas. In addition, in 2016, a Food Academy programme was rolled out, helping to develop Ireland's artisan food industry through support for new and early-stage food business owners. Up to end 2016, a total of €20 million was paid to beneficiaries who were awarded funding under the scheme. Significant achievements were reported against all agreed output indicators in accordance with agreed targets. By the end of 2016, 20,340 micro-enterprises received support (financial & non-financial), including an employment increase of 2,682 jobs in the S&E region. During the period 2014-2016, 36,291 participants took part in enterprise training programmes organised by the LEOs in the S&E region. The scheme is managed by Enterprise Ireland and the 18 LEOs in the S&E region.

Priority 4: Low Carbon Economy

The overall objective of the Priority is to support the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors in the S&E region. Specific objectives include improving energy efficiency in the housing stock by focusing on supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructures, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector. Overall, implementation is well advanced with the exception of the apartment scheme which is due to commence in 2017. Achievements are in line with targets and expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the profile. By end 2016, €67million had been spent on the co-funded initiatives by the participating schemes. This amount represents approximately 50% of the overall allocation to the priority. The schemes are progressing well with the energy consumption classification having been improved for 16,365 households during 2014 - 2016.

The priority comprises 2 initiatives that are managed by different Intermediate Bodies:

- The Social Housing Retrofit initiative is managed by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and is targeted at both large apartment complexes in the major cities in S&E Region and conventional local authority housing schemes throughout the regions which have poor building energy ratings.

Scheme 1 – Apartment Complexes

The scheme is targeted at 2,000 older flat complexes located in Dublin, Cork & Limerick which are seriously thermally deficient. The scheme will not commence until 2017.

Scheme 2 -Social Housing Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme

The principle objective of this scheme is to meet Ireland's commitments in relation to carbon emissions reduction and energy reduction targets for 2020. Energy savings in buildings will contribute 45% of Ireland's total energy savings targets for 2020. A key objective of the scheme is to provide funding to local authorities that have the greatest social housing targets and whom can return the maximum number of units to a lettable, energy efficient condition at reasonable cost. Minimising voids is a targeted measure that focuses exclusively on vacant properties with the objective of returning these to productive use as quickly as possible. The scheme focuses on retrofitting of the fabric of the dwelling (insulation of walls/roofs, window/door replacement, heating system improvement) and applies to all local authorities in the S&E region. Up to end 2016, 5,475 vacant units were retrofitted in the S&E region with total expenditure of €26.85 million reported under the scheme. The average energy efficient work cost per unit in 2014 was €5,543, €5,929 in 2015, and €6,034 in 2016.

- The Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme is managed by Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. It targets low-income households at risk of energy poverty. The scheme aims at improving the energy efficiency of the household at risk and in the process, reduce the amount of expenditure that is required to be spent on energy. By the end of 2016, 11,376 low-income households in the S&E region have had their energy efficiency improved. This was funded with €40m through the scheme.

Priority 5: Sustainable Urban Development

Under this theme, local authorities for the designated growth centres in the Southern and Eastern region were invited to submit projects which fit with their integrated strategies to tackle the social, economic, environmental, climate and demographic challenges affecting the urban centres, in accordance with Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, and which support the overall development strategy for the urban area concerned.

Following submission of project applications by the 9 participating Local Authorities, 9 projects were selected by the designated Steering Committee for the scheme in early 2016 with a total ERDF allocation of €26m. A high profile national launch event took place in Dublin attended by a number of Cabinet Ministers in early 2016. During 2016, the participating Local Authorities have progressed implementation of their respective projects. All participating Local Authorities have started implementation in 2016 and have reported project related expenditure. Projects were approved in the S&E region's four Gateway cities: Dublin, Cork, Limerick/Shannon & Waterford and in the Hub towns: Ennis, Kilkenny, Mallow, Wexford, Tralee – Killarney.

All grants will have to be matched to 50% by local authority own resources and Local Authorities will have up to three years to complete the projects from date of project approval.

Four projects were selected for the Dublin Gateway – one per each Dublin Local Authority – with a total ERDF allocation of €7m. Projects consist of: Forbes Street Pedestrian & Cycle Bridge in Dublin City; Regeneration of the pavilion baths site in Dun Laoghaire- Rathdown; Swords Castle Cultural and Civic Quarter in Fingal; and works on the Dodder Valley Greenway in South Dublin.

ERDF funding of €5m was allocated to the Cork Gateway. Selected projects consist of the Development of the Marina Park area to provide a contemporary City Park in Cork City; a dedicated cycle and pedestrian bridge across the North Channel of the River Lee linking Merchants Quay to Harley Street; and the redevelopment of the Mallow town hall as an Arts and Cultural Mallow Hub Centre.

ERDF funding of €4.5m was allocated to Limerick / Shannon Gateway. In Limerick City, an Urban centre revitalisation project on O'Connell Street, starting at the Denmark Street junction and end at the Barrington Street junction was selected.

In Shannon, the selected project consists of the redesign of an existing space called Rineanna Park by incorporating circulation footpaths linking the town centre to the schools and community facilities to the South and to the estuary walks.

ERDF funding of €4m was allocated to the Waterford Gateway. The selected project consists of the creation of an all-weather space in the Apple Market in Waterford City. A continuous mostly pedestrianised 'retail spine' will run for over a ½ kilometre and this will be connected to the Viking Triangle by public realm improvements and traffic management measures.

In Ennis, €1m in ERDF funding was allocated to construct a new county library on site adjoining the existing Arts Centre.

In Kilkenny Hub, €1m in ERDF funding was allocated to the development of the Abbey Creative Quarter (formerly the Smithwicks brewery site), including the creation of a new Riverside Garden.

In Tralee, €1.5m in ERDF funding was allocated to the redevelopment of former Denny Factory site in centre of town for mixed uses and public park, and to enhance the linkages to the rest of the town centre.

In Wexford, €1m in ERDF funding was allocated to the regeneration of the Crescent Quay focusing on the area from Crescent Quay to Trinity Wharf aiming at improving the economic vitality, ease transport and facilitate pedestrianisation.

Priority 6: Technical Assistance

During 2016, the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA), as MA for the S&E ROP, has been engaged in detailed liaison with the various Intermediary Bodies and the Department of Public Expenditure on the design of the architecture surrounding the various schema contained within the ROP and on getting the required IT system in place. Issues surrounding the procurement process, overseen by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, caused some delays but it is hoped that a functioning system will be in place by Q3 2017. Throughout 2016 the Regional Assembly has engaged in several communications activities such as the required Major Event, held in the form of site visits to a number of Research Centres co-funded under the Research Centres Scheme in May / June 2016 by Regional Assembly members and staff. Regional Assembly staff also gave presentations to several outside bodies on ERDF related activities. Expenditure on these activities was €421,033 during the calendar year 2016. Having regard to the recent reconfiguration of regional bodies in Ireland, the Technical Assistance Priority will also cover the approved costs of the Midland and Eastern Regional Assembly in relation to their participation in any of the above activities. The Technical Assistance Priority will cover the appropriate costs of the ERDF Audit Authority, as well as the costs of the management controls undertaken by the Managing Authority, in accordance with the provisions of Art. 59 of the Common Provisions Regulation.

Useful Links

European Structural and Investment Funds in Ireland 2014-2020

<http://eufunds.gov.ie/>

EU Regulations:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/legislation/regulations/

S&E ROP Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020:

<http://www.southernassembly.ie/eu-programme>

Consultation on the Draft S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 and Environmental Report

<http://www.southernassembly.ie/eu-programmes>

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement

<http://www.southernassembly.ie/eu-programmes>

Partnership Agreement Ireland 1 January 2014 – 31 December 2020:

<http://www.per.gov.ie/en/>

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