



Tionól Réigiúnach an Deiscirt  
Southern Regional Assembly



Ireland's European Structural and  
Investment Funds Programmes  
2014-2020  
Co-funded by the Irish Government  
and the European Union



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019





## Mission Statement

"The Southern Regional Assembly commits to facilitating greater cooperation and coordination between local, regional, and central government and other State agencies. The Assembly will strive to drive social, economic and sustainable development of the Southern Region"

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# Cathaoirleach's Message

I am delighted to introduce the Annual Report and Financial Statement for 2019, as Cathaoirleach of the Southern Regional Assembly.

The Assembly was extremely active during 2019, with many achievements under the EU programmes and projects, and in relation to Regional Planning.

The highlight of the year was the adoption of the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region. Following extensive work by the Assembly staff and engagement with stakeholders and the public, the Assembly voted to adopt the RSES in December. I would like to thank those who worked so hard on delivering this strategic development framework for the Region and I look forward to seeing its successful implementation over the coming years.

The Assembly had another busy year in its role of managing and promoting regional development through EU funding. I was delighted to represent the Assembly at a number of events to highlight the benefits and achievements of the Southern & Eastern Regional Programme 2014-20. In particular, it was a highlight to attend the official launch of the Mary Elmes Bridge in September. The bridge was delivered for the people of Cork City with funding from the Regional Programme's Sustainable Urban Development scheme, which the Assembly manages. The pedestrian and cycle bridge in the heart of the City, highlighting an increasing focus on multi-modal forms of transport, is estimated to be used by up to 11,000 people daily.

The Assembly continued its valuable involvement in EU projects in 2019, with two new projects starting – Blue Green Cities and COHES3ION. I had the pleasure of representing the Assembly at the “Race Against Rob” challenge in Cork City, where participants used different kinds of sustainable transport to beat World Champion and Olympic Medallist, Rob Heffernan. Starting at Kent Station and crossing the Mary Elmes Bridge, the highly successful event was organised by the Assembly's MATCH-UP project to raise awareness of sustainable forms of transport.

I would like to thank my fellow Assembly Members for their invaluable contribution during the year. I also wish to thank Leas-Cathaoirleach Cllr. John Brennan for his assistance and support.

I also wish to extend my sincere thanks to the Assembly's Director, David Kelly and his team for their continued work during 2019.

*Cllr. Joe Carroll*  
Cathaoirleach



# Directors's Statement

I am delighted to present the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Southern Regional Assembly for 2019. The report details a busy year of achievements to contribute to the objectives of our Corporate Plan 2015-19.

A highlight of the year was the making of the final Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region - a 12-year strategic development framework to support the programme for change under Project Ireland 2040, ensuring strong and coordinated regional link between national and local policy delivery and the strengthening of the regional tier of government. Our Members agreed to make the RSES in November for finalisation in early 2020. I would like to thank the Members, staff and stakeholders for their valuable contribution to the delivery of a strong strategic development framework to secure the future physical, economic and social development of the Southern Region.

Our role in promoting and supporting balanced regional development through the management and oversight of EU funding has been equally busy during 2019. The Assembly continued to manage the delivery of over €500 million of investment through the Southern & Eastern Regional Programme 2014-20 in areas such as energy efficiency, research & innovation and micro-enterprise supports. The successful delivery of the Mary Elmes Bridge in Cork City, Crescent Quay in Wexford Town, and Shannon Town Park under the Sustainable Urban Development priority were highlights for the Programme.

The Assembly continued its involvement in Interreg programmes, particularly Interreg Europe, Interreg North-West Europe and the Ireland Wales Programme. Our First Level Control team audited EU project claims worth over €7 million to Irish partners during the year. The Assembly is a partner on six Interreg Europe projects, all working with stakeholders to implement action plans on issues relevant to the Region, including energy efficiency, sustainable transport, innovation, and green and blue infrastructures.

The Assembly continued active engagement with the Government in 2019 through feedback on draft proposals for the 2020-27 EU budget and legislative package. The proposed package aims to address key challenges, such as climate change, innovation & competitiveness and migration. Proposals are ongoing, set against challenges, such as Brexit, and potentially reduced EU resources.

The local elections in May saw a newly nominated Assembly meet for the first time in July. I welcome the new and returning Members and I look forward to working together to further the regional agenda within the government structures. I would like to thank our Cathaoirígh, Cllr. Jason Murphy and Cllr. Joe Carroll, for their time and expertise during what was a very busy year.

I welcome new members of staff who joined the Assembly in 2019 and thank those who have moved on for their commitment and enthusiasm. I congratulate Derville Brennan on her appointment as Assistant Director with responsibility for EU Division during 2019.

Finally, I would like to express thanks to the Assembly staff for their commitment to achieving so many goals in 2019. I look forward to the challenges and opportunities offered by the expanded roles for Regional Assemblies in strengthening the regional tier of government.

*David Kelly*  
Director



# Background

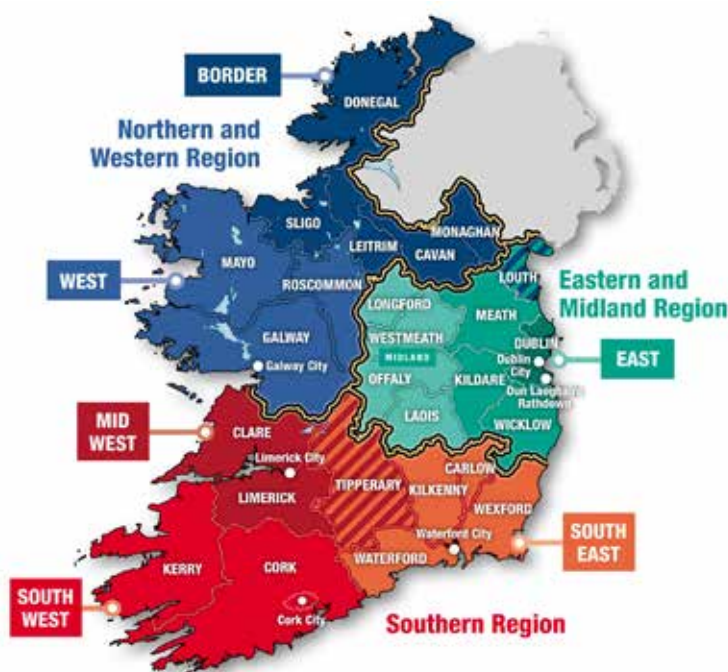
*The Southern Regional Assembly is one of three established in January 2015 under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 to represent the three Irish regions.*

The Southern Regional Assembly has a remit for the Southern Region of Ireland and operates in coordination along with the Eastern & Midland and the Northern & Western Regional Assemblies as the regional tier of government.

The Regional Assemblies have regional-level powers in relation to spatial planning and economic development through the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES). It also is involved in the management and promotion of EU structural funds.

Part of the Local Government sector, the Southern Regional Assembly has a number of key functions, including:

- To coordinate and support for strategic planning and sustainable development of the Region;
- To link local and national policy goals through regional planning and the development and implementation of the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region;
- To promote effectiveness in local government and public services in the Region, in conjunction with the National Oversight and Audit Commission;
- To promote balanced regional development through the management of EU programmes under the European Structural & Investment Funds, including management of the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-20, processing project payment claims and involvement in the management of a variety of Interreg programmes;
- To support the Region through participation in EU funded projects on issues of relevance to local, regional and national policies.



The Regional Assembly aims to forge links between spatial and economic planning and EU funding for the benefit of the Southern Region.

regional  
economic  
and spatial  
planning

the management  
of European  
Regional  
Development  
Funding

development  
implementation and  
promotion of regional  
development policy  
and activities

acting as national  
contact point  
for EU-funded  
transnational  
programmes

The Assembly  
coordinates  
actions to support  
effectiveness in  
Local Government  
and public services

The local authorities of the Southern Region appoint 33 Local Councillors to the Regional Assembly for a 5-year term - 27 from constituent local authorities and six appointed as members of the Committee of the Regions. The Assembly Members meet monthly as the regional tier of government.

The Assembly interacts with a wide variety of Government Departments, agencies, local authorities and stakeholders from the private the third sectors to fulfil its role in implementing the RSES and supporting EU programmes and projects.

# Profile of the Southern Region

The Southern Regional Assembly incorporates nine counties and 10 local authorities - Cork City, Cork County, Clare, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, Wexford, Kilkenny, Carlow, and Waterford.

Its landmass covers 40% of the total country and over a third of the national population lives here.

While it has a strong urban structure, with three of the country's five cities and a strong urban structure, it is still a largely rural region with contrasting landscapes that range from the Atlantic seaboard to rich productive lands and river valleys.



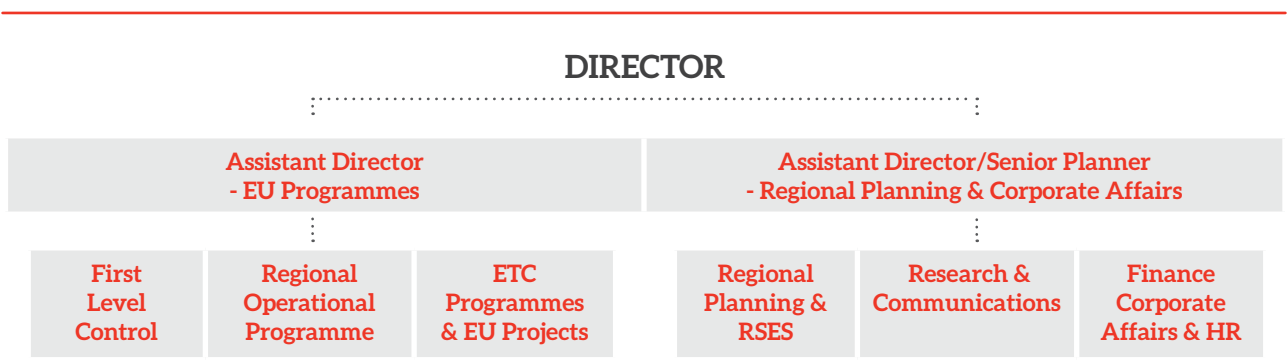
# Members Structure

The Assembly operates through its 33 Members in relation to overseeing the EU funding programmes and projects and the Regional Planning function, working in partnership with the Assembly staff.

## Southern Regional Assembly Members



# Staffing Structure



# Meet our Team



**David Kelly**  
*Director*



**Kevin Lynch**  
*Asst. Director / Senior Planner*



**Derville Brennan**  
*Assistant Director*



**Dominic Walsh**  
*Regional Planning Officer*



**Robert Fennelly**  
*Regional Planning Officer*



**Bryan Riney**  
*Regional Planning Officer*



**Sharon Murray**  
*Programme Executive,  
Finance & HR*



**Vincent Dunphy**  
*Programme Executive  
Financial Management  
& Control*



**Enda Hogan**  
*Programme Executive  
Financial Management,  
Monitoring & Evaluation*



**Michael Buckley**  
*Auditor*



**Siobhán Rudden**  
*Acting Programme Executive  
– Communications & Research*



**Rita McGarvey\***  
*National Contact Point,  
Interreg North-West Europe*  
\*Rita has moved on and this position  
will be filled in 2020





**Samantha Richardson**  
*Development Officer*  
*Ireland-Wales Programme*



**Breda Curran**  
*Development Officer*  
*Ireland-Wales Programme*



**Karen Coughlan**  
*EU Projects Officer*



**Rose Power**  
*EU Projects Officer*



**Eve Hayden**  
*Senior First Level Controller*



**Marie Harnett**  
*Senior First Level Controller*



**Edel Hunt**  
*Acting Senior First Level*  
*Controller*



**Róisín Kiely**  
*Assistant Staff Officer*



**Yvonne Cooney**  
*Acting Assistant*  
*Staff Officer*



**Colm Walsh**  
*Clerical Officer*



**Anna Higgins**  
*Clerical Officer*



**Elaine Gallagher**  
*Clerical Officer*



**Joanne Toomey**  
*Clerical Officer*



**Susan Lee**  
*Clerical Officer*

# *Southern Regional Assembly*

## Members Update

*The Membership of the Southern Regional Assembly consists of 33 Local Councillors. The ten local authorities of the Southern Region appoint 33 Local Councillors to the Regional Assembly for a five-year term, 27 from constituent local authorities and six appointed as members of the Committee of the Regions.*

The Members usually meet on the second Friday of the month at Assembly House in Waterford as the regional tier of government. Members also attend Strategic Planning Area committee meetings in each of the SPA areas (South-East, South-West and Mid-West).



*Meeting of the Southern Regional Assembly, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019*

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## Meetings 2019

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The Members had a busy year, with 10 meetings and an average attendance rate of 59%. A highlight of the year included the Members agreeing to make the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region at the meeting on 29th November following comprehensive engagement with stakeholders and the public. A variety of speakers addressed the Assembly during the year on a variety of topics of relevance to the Region. The minutes of Assembly meetings 2019 are available on the Assembly website.

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<b>11th January</b>	Thomas Ryan, IFA Environment Committee - IFA Climate Mitigation Measures
<b>8th February</b>	Paddy Phelan, CEO 3 Counties Energy Agency
<b>6th March</b>	Michael McGrath, Dept. of Public Expenditure & Reform - Update EU Post 2020 negotiations
<b>26th April</b>	Presentation on Directors Report on Submissions to the Draft RSES
<b>10th May</b>	Consideration of the Director's Report on Submissions to the Draft RSES
<b>12th July</b>	Annual General Meeting – election of Cathaoirleach
<b>13th September</b>	John Moran, Chairperson of the Land Development Agency
<b>11th October</b>	Niall Cussen, Planning Regulator, Office of the Planning Regulator
<b>8th November</b>	RSES – Seminar for new Members and presentation on Directors Report
<b>29th November</b>	Consideration of Director's Report on Submissions on the Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft RSES

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## Cathaoirligh & Leas Cathaoirligh 2019

### CATHAOIRLIGH 2019

January to July

Cllr. Jason Murphy

July to December

Cllr. Joe Carroll

### LEAS-CATHAOIRLIGH 2019

January to July

Cllr. Oliver Walsh

July to December

Cllr. John Brennan

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# Membership of the Assembly

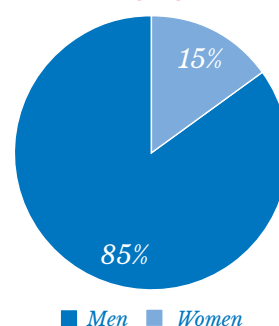
*Following the local elections in May 2019, the 10 local authorities of the Southern Region nominated 27 Members to a new five-year term of the Regional Assembly. A further six Members are appointed to the Assembly due to their nomination to the Committee of the Regions by the Government. In November, the Government announced new nominations with appointees taking their posts in 2020.*

## COUNCILLOR

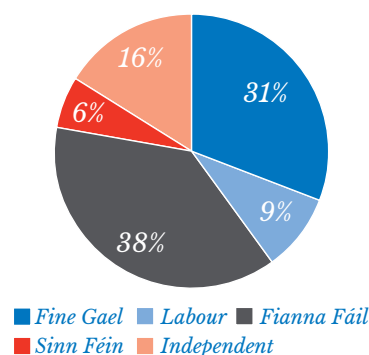
## LOCAL AUTHORITY

Cllr. Ken Murnane	Carlow County Council
Cllr. Thomas Kinsella	Carlow County Council
Cllr. William Patton	Carlow County Council (CoR Alt Member)
Cllr. PJ Kelly	Clare County Council
Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan	Clare County Council
Cllr. Shane O'Callaghan	Cork City Council
Cllr. Deirdre Forde	Cork City Council (CoR Member)
Cllr. Kieran McCarthy	Cork City Council (CoR Member)
Cllr. Terry Shannon	Cork City Council
Cllr. Joe Carroll	Cork County Council (Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. Seán O'Connor	Cork County Council
Cllr. Deirdre O'Brien	Cork County Council
Cllr. Gerard Murphy	Cork County Council
Cllr. Gillian Coughlan	Cork County Council
Cllr. Robert Beasley	Kerry County Council
Cllr. Michael O'Shea	Kerry County Council
Cllr. Séamus Cosáí Fitzgerald	Kerry County Council
Cllr. John Brennan	Kilkenny County Council (Leas-Cathaoirleach)
Cllr. Andrew McGuinness	Kilkenny County Council
Cllr. Frankie Daly	Limerick City & County Council
Cllr. Michael Collins	Limerick City & County Council
Cllr. John Sheahan	Limerick City & County Council
Cllr. Noel Coonan	Tipperary County Council
Cllr. Siobhán Ambrose	Tipperary County Council
Cllr. Michael O'Meara	Tipperary County Council
Cllr. Hughie McGrath	Tipperary County Council (CoR Alt Member)
Cllr. Michael Murphy	Tipperary County Council (CoR Member)
Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness	Waterford City & County Council
Cllr. Declan Clune	Waterford City & County Council
Cllr. Thomas Phelan	Waterford City & County Council
Cllr. Maura Bell	Wexford County Council
Cllr. Oliver Walsh	Wexford County Council
Cllr. Pip Breen	Wexford County Council

## Gender Breakdown 2020



## Political Breakdown 2020





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## Conferences & Seminars Attended 2019

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Our Members represented the Regional Assembly at the following conferences and seminars during 2019.

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Event	Location	No. Members
Employment Incentives for SME's & Cross-border Workers seminar	Dundalk	1
Creating Economic & Business Opportunities from Climate Change conference	Tullamore	5
CAP Strategic Plan SWOT Analysis Stakeholder workshop	Tullamore	1
Centre for Cross-border Studies annual cross-border conference	Dundalk	1
All Ireland Smart Cities Forum conference	Dublin	4
Rural Development Project Representative - Monitoring Committee	Celbridge	1
Emerging Threats & Persistent Conservation Challenges for Freshwater Biodiversity	Clonakilty	2

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## Association of Irish Regions

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The Association of Irish Regions is the national representative organisation of the three Regional Assemblies in Ireland. Its objectives are to express the collective view of its membership on matters concerning their constitution and the functions for which they have statutory responsibilities, and to offer advice to Government on matters pertaining to economic and social development, including matters relating to balanced regional development. It also aims to facilitate the exchange of information and experience between its members, including arranging meetings, conferences, and seminars and producing publications to further the objective of improving the quality of service, which members can give to their authorities and to the public. The Association is composed of the current Cathaoirleach, immediate past Cathaoirleach, and Directors of the three Regional Assemblies.

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# Corporate Activities

*The Southern Regional Assembly had a very busy 2019, with some very exciting achievements across our EU programmes, projects and in regional planning.*

## Election of Cathaoirligh

Cllr. Jason Murphy was elected Cathaoirleach by Assembly Members at the meeting in January for a six-month term. Cllr. Murphy was nominated from Waterford City and County Council. Cllr. Murphy is a Fianna Fáil elected representative.



*(L to R) Cathaoirleach Cllr. Jason Murphy, Outgoing Cathaoirleach Cllr. Séamus Cosai Fitzgerald and David Kelly, Director*

Cllr. Joe Carroll succeeded Cllr. Murphy at the Annual Meeting on 12th July for a 12-month term. Cllr. Carroll represents Cork County Council on the Southern Regional Assembly. Cllr. Carroll is a member of Fianna Fáil.



*(L to R) Outgoing Leas-Cathaoirleach Cllr. Oliver Walsh, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Joe Carroll and David Kelly, Director*

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## Annual General Meeting 2019

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The Annual Meeting took place on 12th July in Waterford, which saw the election of Cllr. Joe Carroll as Cathaoirleach for a 12-month term. It was the first meeting of the new Assembly since the local elections took place in May and we welcomed both newly nominated and returning Members.



*Cathaoirleach Cllr. Joe Carroll, the Members and staff of the Southern Regional Assembly at the Annual General Meeting in July*

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*David Kelly, Director, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Joe Carroll, and Bryan Riney, Regional Planner at the Annual General Meeting in July*



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## EU Week of Regions & Cities 2019

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A highlight of 2019 was bringing a joint delegation of Members from the three Regional Assemblies to Brussels during the European Week of Regions and Cities in October. The itinerary included a meeting with Trade Commissioner, Phil Hogan who updated the Members on the EU/UK post-Brexit trade negotiations. The delegation also had an official Brexit briefing from Department of Foreign Affairs as well as a meeting with Irish MEPs at the European Parliament. The delegation used the opportunity to promote the collective views of Irish local and regional authorities. Members were also delighted to attend the formal launch of Galway 2020.

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*The delegation from the Southern Regional Assembly at the European Week for Regions & Cities in October.*

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*(L to R) Cllr. Ken Murnane, Cllr. Thomás Phelan, Seán Kelly MEP, Cathaoirleach Cllr. Joe Carroll and Cllr. William Patton attending meetings at the European Parliament in October.*



*The joint delegation from the three Regional Assemblies attending meetings with MEPs at the European Parliament.*

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## Europe Day 2019

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Europe Day 2019 was certainly a joyful way to celebrate all things European. Organised by the Southern Regional Assembly and Waterford Europe Direct Office, the event marked this important date that celebrates peace and unity across Europe.



*Breda Curran, Yvonne O'Brien & Samantha Richardson,  
Southern Regional Assembly*



*Mayor of Waterford, Cllr. John O'Leary, Sinead O'Higgins,  
Waterford Europe Direct Office, Derville Brennan,  
Southern Regional Assembly & Cathaoirleach Cllr. Jason Murphy.*

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## Director & Assistant Director Appointments

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*The Regional Assembly was delighted to welcome the appointments of a new Director and an Assistant Director in 2019.*

David Kelly was appointed Director in June following 11-year period at the Assembly as Assistant Director. He brings extensive experience to his new role, including managing successive EU-funded programmes and involvement in the development of the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy.

Derville Brennan was appointed in December to the post of Assistant Director with responsibility for the EU Programmes Division. Derville was responsible for Communications & Research at the Assembly, including successive regional programmes and was involved in the development of the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy.



*David Kelly, Director, Tim Hayes, Commission Representation,  
Derville Brennan, Assistant Director, Gerry Kiely Head of Commission Representation,  
Cathaoirleach Cllr. Jason Murphy in May.*

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## Staff Appointments & Leaving 2019

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We also welcomed the appointment of Colm Walsh to the Finance team and Anna Higgins to the Regional Programme team in 2019. We said farewell to three staff during 2019 – Evans Oranja who worked on the Finance team, Joanne Twomey who worked on the Regional Planning team, and Susan Lee who worked on the Regional Programme team. We wish them the very best for the future!

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## Highlights 2019

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The nine Public Consultation events for the Draft RSES took place in **February**

*Pictured: Cork event*



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We hosted the S&E Programme Monitoring Committee meeting at the Assembly in **May**



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Ireland Wales Programme Monitoring Committee meeting took place in Wales - **May**



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Rob Fennelly takes part in a bicycle tour of the Leipzig with the Lord Mayor during the International Transport Forum in **May**





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## Highlights 2019

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We were delighted to host the FIRESPOL project partner meeting at the Assembly in **July**



Leas-Cathaoirleach Cllr. John Brennan represented the Assembly at the official launch of works at the Brewery Quarter, Kilkenny, with co-funding from the S&E ROP – **July**



Participants in the Race Against Rob event in Cork took all types of low carbon transport to catch Rob Heffernan in **September**, organised by the MATCH UP project



Cathaoirleach Cllr. Joe Carroll and Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr. John Sheehan at the official Opening of the Mary Elmes Bridge in Cork in **September**



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## Highlights 2019

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The Cohesion Funds – ERDF, ESF & EMFFF – were out in force to talk all things-EU at the Ploughing Championships in **September**



MARIE project took part in the Responsible Innovation Summit for its final event, Dublin - **October**



SRA staff at a workshop for preparing the corporate plan 2020-24 in Faithlegg - **October**



SRA staff went red in aid of St. Vincent DePaul in **December**





# Corporate Plan {2019} Update

*The Corporate Plan for the Southern Regional Assembly was launched at its annual meeting in July 2016. It sets out how the Assembly will address and deliver on the range of functions and responsibilities devolved to it. The Assembly emerged from the Government's "Putting People First" policy paper and the subsequent Local Government Reform Act 2014. The Plan identifies the Assembly's specific objectives for the 2014-19 period and sets out how its statutory functions are discharged.*

## Corporate Objectives

### Customer Service

To provide a quality service, responsive to all our customers - public, staff, departmental - by:

- Fostering a culture which gives primacy to the needs of our customers;
- Providing improved public office facilities;
- Develop a training programme in customer care awareness for Assembly staff & develop a satisfying and motivating working environment;
- Providing timely, user friendly information appropriate to our customers' needs including further development of our website;
- Liaising with relevant agencies to co-ordinate delivery of services throughout the Region;
- Answer all telephone calls in a prompt, courteous, accurate reliable and efficient manner.

### Consultation & Participation

To work to develop inclusive and appropriate consultative and participative processes by:

- Promote maximum co-ordination between agencies to facilitate synergy and to identify and address problems across the Region;
- Providing specific training for the staff to enable it to undertake effective consultation;
- Adopting a proactive approach to facilitating consultation in relation to policy development, plans and proposals.

### Communications/Information/Public Relations

To improve communication and information internally and externally thus enhancing the perception of the role of the organisation by:

- Raising public awareness of the role of the Regional Assembly and increasing the understanding and appreciation of its' role among the general public;
- Working pro-actively with the media;
- Developing our public relations strategy;
- Provide training in communication skills for staff and elected members if required;
- Further development of the Assembly website.

## Our Staff

To motivate the staff of the Regional Assembly in order to optimise their effectiveness in meeting the corporate objectives:

- Provide a challenging and rewarding work environment where all are respected and valued;
- Enhance performance skills and competencies, based on planned training needs assessments, with the emphasis on customer care, communications, information technology, management skills, delivery of quality services, work performance, networking, leadership and motivation;
- Provide accommodation maintained to a suitable standard;
- Increase investment in staff training and development programmes to 3% of payroll costs;
- Hold regular staff meetings involving all levels of staff;
- Support for the employee assistance programme & co-operation on health, safety & welfare staff matters;
- Improve communications with and encourage suggestions from staff;
- Evaluate and review staff performance appraisal schemes;
- Maintaining a pro-active approach to implementing family friendly policies.

## Corporate Plan Update 2019

### Corporate Goal 1: To promote sustainable economic development and planning in the Southern Region

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Update 2019
1.1	To prepare a Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region	Participate in National Steering Committee to oversee the RSES and National Planning Framework processes in line with Ministerial Directions	Participation ongoing with DHLG
		Establish and support the activities of the Strategic Planning Area Committees with key stakeholder involvement and Technical Working Groups for each Strategic Planning Area	Undertaken as key component of RSES completion in 2019
		Oversee preparation of issue papers in line with population targets and analysis of development needs, infrastructure deficits and potentials	Complete
		Undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (and Appropriate Assessments, if required) and integration of Flood Risk Assessments, as part of RSES processes	SEA/AA/SFRA complete for Material Amendments & finalising RSES
		Engage with economic agencies to define regional economic strategy and identify investment priorities	Consultations undertaken with stakeholders incl. consultation processes for Draft RSES and Material Amendments
		Prepare draft RSES strategy for public consultation and review by the SPA Committees and by the Regional Assembly	Complete
		Finalise and launch Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy	Agreed at November meeting for publication in January 2020
		Put in place an implementation and monitoring framework for the RSES	From 2020
1.2	To ensure the effective implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines	Put in place arrangements for ongoing statutory reviews of pre-draft and draft County Development Plans and variations	Ongoing

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Update 2019
		Make submissions/observations on Development Plans, SDZs, other significant development proposals and draft Ministerial Directions	Ongoing
		Engage with the Regional Planners Network (RPN) on preparation and delivery of Annual Work Plans and monitoring of activities and outputs	Established
1.3	To support the development of Local Economic and Community Plans	Establish agreed arrangements for review of draft LECPs with DECLG, Regional Assemblies and Local Authorities	Completed
		Oversee reviews of draft socio-economic statements, and draft LECPs prepared by the LA's	Completed
1.4	To establish Regional Economic Fora for the Southern Region	Liaise with constituent local authorities to establish Regional Economic Fora for the Southern Region	Pursued through different channels
		Agree a work programme for each Economic Forum to feed into the LECF and RSES processes	Pursued through different channels
1.5	Draft, Commission and Manage the Publication of Policy and Research Papers to Meet the Needs of the SRA Area	Prepare policy submissions on behalf of the Assembly in response to relevant public consultations by Government Departments and Agencies and policy briefings for meetings with Ministers and Departmental Officials	Ongoing
		Monitor the development and implementation of national and regional policies and their impact upon the SRA Region	Ongoing
		Develop appropriate responses to highlight issues impacting the Region	Ongoing
		Foster and promote the development of a Regional Identity	Ongoing
		Make presentations on behalf of the Regional Assembly on relevant policy bodies and at appropriate meetings of regional stakeholders	Ongoing
		Support the work of the Committee of the Regions and provide a regional input into policy positions and opinions of the CoR on regionally-relevant issues	Ongoing
1.6	To make submissions on regionally relevant spatial planning issues	Make submissions, where appropriate, to national strategic planning processes and policy reviews, to align with RPG/RSES objectives	On-going
		Make submissions to local and regional strategies, including Regional Enterprise Strategies and Regional Skills Fora	On-going

## Corporate Goal 2: To Effectively Manage EU Regional and Inter-Regional Programmes

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
2.1	To manage the closure of the S&E Regional Operational Programme 2007-13	Complete all verifications and declarations for co-funded measures	Complete
		Complete an analysis of all revenue-generating projects	Complete
		Facilitate final audits of the Regional OP 2007-13 and make final adjustments	Complete
		Complete and Submit Final Implementation Report and project list	Submitted
		Co-operate with ex-post evaluations commissioned by DG REGIO	Ongoing

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
2.2	To oversee the Monitoring and Evaluation of the S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020	Put in place an IT system to record and store in computerised form data on each operation necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit	Complete
		Prepare Evaluation Plan for the S&E ROP 2014-20	Complete
		Provide training and guidance to Intermediary Bodies and Beneficiaries on the use of the IT system	Ongoing
		Host at least one Monitoring Committee meeting per year with all required reports and support documents	Complete in 2019
		Prepare and submit an Annual Implementation Report by end May each year on the S&E Regional OP 2014-20	Complete in 2019
		Undertake a mid-term evaluation of the S&E Regional OP 2014-20	Complete
		Provide information to evaluations commissioned by DG REGIO on the implementation and effectiveness of EU Cohesion Policy	Ongoing
		Participate in annual review meetings with DG REGIO	Complete in 2019
		Participate in the annual meeting of the National Co-ordinating Committee for European Structural and Investment Funds	Ongoing
		Provide progress reports to the Partnership Agreement Monitoring Committee	Complete in 2019
		Update the Gateways and Hubs Index	No update due to policy change from NSS to NPF
2.3	To ensure the effective financial management and control of the S&E Regional OP 2014-2020	Put in place a system to ensure that all exchanges of information between Beneficiaries and other programme authorities can take place by means of electronic data exchange	Ongoing
		Undertake a fraud risk with Intermediary Bodies for all co-funded schemes and put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures based on the risks identified, and review bi-annually	Ongoing
		Prepare a standard verification checklist to be used by all Intermediary Bodies	Complete
		Prepare a description of the systems in place for the management and control of co-funded schemes in co-operation with Intermediary Bodies	Complete
		Complete an Administrative Agreement with each Intermediary Body	Complete
		Support the work of the Independent Audit Authority in the assessment of the management and control system and the designation of the authorities	Ongoing



No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Update 2019
		Provide training and guidance to all Intermediary Bodies on financial management and control, verification, public procurement, information and communications and eligibility	Ongoing
		Submit declarations of expenditure to the ERDF Certifying Authority	Ongoing
		Facilitate systems and operations audits conducted by the ERDF Audit Authority and collate responses in conjunction with Intermediary Bodies	Ongoing
		Draw up the management declaration and annual summary for the Regional OP 2014-2020	Ongoing
		Participate on the Implementation Group for ESIF Funds, chaired by the Dept. of Public Expenditure & Reform	Ongoing
		Provide annual forecasts of ERDF drawdowns to the ERDF Certifying Authority	Ongoing
		Manage the Technical Assistance priority in relation to preparation, appraisal and monitoring of operations, coordination of OP publicity, financial control, evaluation and audits	Ongoing
2.4	To increase the public awareness and transparency of the Operational programme	Prepare and seek approval for the Communications Strategy for the S&E Regional OP 2014-2020	Complete
		Provide up to date information on the OP and on all relevant regulations and guidelines on the SRA website	Ongoing
		Organise a major annual information activity to disseminate the achievements of the OP	Complete for 2019
		Provide information and communication guidance and training to Intermediary and Beneficiary Bodies	Ongoing
		Publish a list of operations on the SRA website, every 6 months	3 updates in 2019
		Oversee compliance by Intermediary Bodies and Beneficiaries with the Information and Communications Guidelines and correct use of logos	Ongoing
		Commission a public awareness survey, jointly with the Southern Regional assembly, on the awareness of the OP among the general public	Ongoing
		Provide an annual update on information and communications activities and on planned activities to the OP Monitoring Committee	Complete in 2019
		Facilitate study visits to the region from other states	Ongoing
		Participate on the EU INFORM Network to exchange best practises in the promotion of EU Cohesion Policy	Ongoing

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Update 2019
2.5	To Manage the ERDF Gateway & Hubs Fund 2014-2020	Prepare and launch a call for proposals in co-operation with the Steering Committee for the Scheme	Complete
		Assess all proposals received and issue grant agreements for the selected projects	Complete
		Undertake management verifications on all expenditure declarations and submit to the Dept. of Environment	Ongoing
		Prepare progress reports for the OP Monitoring Committee on the ERDF Gateway Fund Scheme	Ongoing
		Publicise the achievements of the ERDF Scheme	Ongoing
2.6	To manage the closure of the Interreg IV A Ireland Wales Operational Programme 2007-13	Complete FLC on all remaining projects	Complete
		Complete checking on all claims and make final payments to Projects	Complete
		Complete remaining on-the-spot and project closure visits	Complete
		Submit Final Interim Claim to Commission	Complete
		Facilitate final audits of the Ireland-Wales OP 2007-13 and make final adjustments	Complete
		Complete and submit Final Implementation Report and project list	Submitted 2017
		Cooperate with ex ante evaluations by DG REGIO	Ongoing
2.7	To co-operate with WEFO as programme partners in the delivery of Interreg VA Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme	Promote the Ireland-Wales Programme and provide support to Irish applicants to the programme	Ongoing
		Assess all proposals received and support the work of the Technical Group and Steering Committee in selecting and approving projects	Ongoing
		Undertake FLC on expenditure declarations for Irish Partners	Ongoing
		Participate as member of the Monitoring Committee	Ongoing
		Participate as member of the Steering Committee	Ongoing
2.8	To Monitor the Impact of EU programmes in the Region	Represent the region by participating on the following Monitoring Committee for EU Funded Programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership Agreement;</li> <li>• Rural Development programme;</li> <li>• ESF programme;</li> <li>• European Fisheries Fund;</li> <li>• Ireland-Wales Programme;</li> <li>• ESPON programme;</li> <li>• North-West Europe Transnational Programme;</li> <li>• Interreg Europe Programme.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
2.9	To fulfil National Contact Point and First Level Control functions for INTERREG Programmes	Promote the Interreg North-West Europe & Interreg Europe programmes and provide support to Irish project partners in applying to the programme	Ongoing
		Carry out first level control checks on all expenditure declarations by Irish partners and lead partners from S&E Region in Interreg NWE, Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme, URBACT Programme, the Ireland Wales Programme, and Interreg Europe Programme	Ongoing

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Update 2019
2.10	To participate in EU INTERREG Projects	Explore potential funding opportunities for the Regional Assembly and the region and participate as partner or lead partner where appropriate	Six projects in train
2.11	To contribute to EU Cohesion Policy Development	Contribute to EU Cohesion Policy review processes, including the post 2020 policy framework	Ongoing
2.12	To support the work of the Irish Regions Office in Brussels	Agree strategic objectives and priorities for the Irish Regions Office (IRO) in Brussels	Ongoing
		Liaise with the region's representative in the Irish Regions Office (IRO) Brussels on an ongoing basis	Ongoing

### Corporate Goal 3: To effectively manage the operational and governance functions for the Southern Regional Assembly

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
3.1	Co-ordinate the Delivery of Public Services	Communicate the role of the Regional Assembly & the needs of the Southern Region to Govt. Departments, regional bodies, local authorities & state agencies	Ongoing
		Address relevant conferences and workshops on the role and work of the Assembly	Ongoing
		Continue formal links with the Committee of the Regions & enhance links with other EU regional networks	Ongoing
		Provide assistance and policy support to the Committee of the Regions members as required	Ongoing
3.2	Support the work of NOAC as required	Provide reports and studies to National Oversight and Audit Commission as and when requested	No requests in 2019
3.3	Implement Operational Issues and statutory functions	Liaise with the Dept. of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the implementation of the regional reform process	Ongoing
		Oversee the recruitment process to fill all vacant posts arising from the regional reconfiguration	Complete
		Develop new corporate identity, headed paper etc.	Complete
		Prepare and publish an annual report on the activities of the Regional Assembly	Ongoing
		Develop and implement the Assembly's Communications Strategy by holding regular meetings of the Communications Steering Group	Ongoing
		Upgrade and regularly update the Assembly's website to make it more attractive and user-friendly	Ongoing
		Implement the Official Languages Act 2003 as it relates to the Assembly	Ongoing
		Update the workplace Safety Statement and keep it under review	Ongoing
		Compile a Training Needs Analysis and provide staff specific training in relation to areas that are necessary	Ongoing



No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
		Co-operate with the Northern & Western, and Eastern & Midland Regional Assemblies on operational issues	Ongoing
		Respond to Freedom of Information requests as they arise and continue to participate in the FOI network	Ongoing
		Continue to respond to requests for information on sources of funding	Ongoing
		Support representatives on all external Monitoring Committees	Ongoing
		Represent the Assembly on all relevant committees	Ongoing
		Facilitate delegations and study groups visiting the Assembly and the Region	Ongoing
		Manage the Assembly's office facilities and arrange the use of facilities by regional and other bodies	Ongoing
		Prepare Annual Financial Statements and budgets	Ongoing
		Provide comprehensive financial administrative support for all Assembly activities	Ongoing
		Participate in the EU Commission Open Days	Ongoing
		Implement the Public Service Agreements as they relate to the Southern Regional Assembly	Ongoing
		Commence engagement with the National Oversight and Audit Commission	Ongoing



# Regional Planning

## INTRODUCTION

*The Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Assemblies) (Establishment) Order 2014 introduced a strong role for the Southern Regional Assembly in relation to spatial planning and economic development of the Southern Region.*

## The Regional Assembly's Strategic Planning Functions

The main strategic planning function of the Regional Assembly is the preparation, adoption and implementation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). In addition, the Assembly has an oversight role for the preparation of Local Economic & Community Plans, the preparation of statutory submissions on Development Plans.

2019 was a significant year and at the November Assembly meeting, it was agreed to make the RSES for the Southern Region, which was published on 31 January 2020.

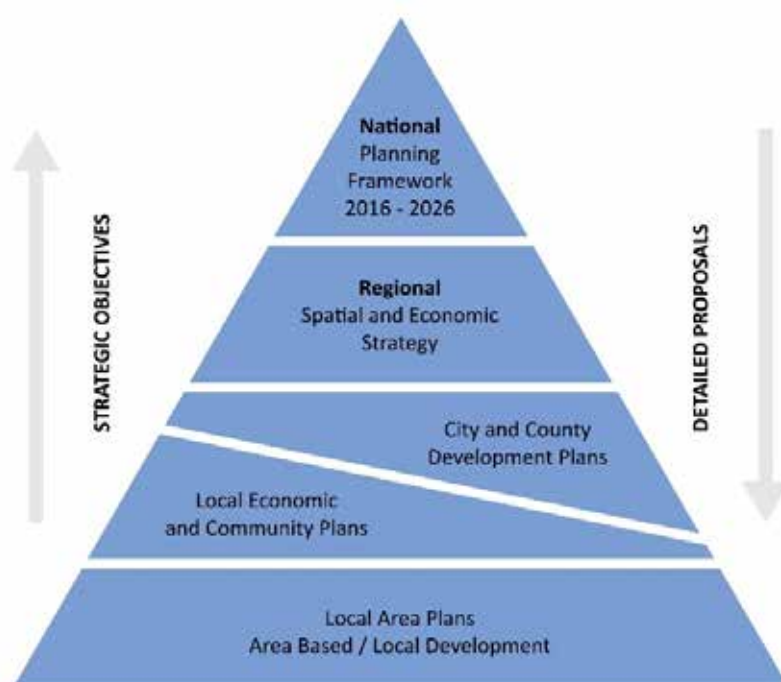
## What is the RSES?

The Southern Region faces an era of great change, challenge and opportunity. Over the next 20 years, our population will grow by nearly 400,000, our age profile and our family structures will transform. We face rapid global change, technological developments and the dramatic impact of climate change.

The RSES is a 12-year strategic regional development framework to guide this change. It establishes a broad framework for the way in which our society, environment, economy and the use of land should evolve. It includes Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) for Cork, Limerick-Shannon & Waterford, and strategies for our Key Towns, towns, villages and rural areas.

The RSES primarily aims to support the delivery of the programme for change set out in Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan 2018-27 (NDP). As the regional tier of the national planning process, it will ensure coordination between the City and County Development Plans (CCDP) and Local Enterprise and Community Plans (LECP) of the ten local authorities in the Region.

While informed by national, EU and international policies, the RSES is driven at the local level by Elected Members, local authorities, stakeholders, community groups and individual citizens who have shaped this shared strategy.



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## Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

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Following the adoption of the new RSES, each local authority within the Region and the public bodies prescribed in the legislation is required to prepare and submit a report to the Assembly every two years, setting out progress made in supporting objectives of the Strategy, relevant to that body.

The Regional Assembly will prepare a monitoring report every two years on the progress made in securing the overall objectives of the RSES, including those specific

actions and outcomes within the responsibility of the prescribed public bodies.

The Regional Assembly will submit its monitoring report to the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) who may make recommendations to the Minister in relation to necessary measures to further support the implementation of the RSES.

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## The RSES in the context of the NPF

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Project Ireland 2040 is an overarching Government policy initiative to make Ireland a better country for all of us, that reflects the best of who we are and what we aspire to be. Project Ireland 2040 is informed by the Programme for a Partnership Government 2016, which recognises that economic and social progress go hand-in-hand, and comprises the NPF to 2040 and the NDP 2018-27.

Key future planning, development and place-making policy priorities for the Southern Region are set out in the NPF. Specifically, for the Southern Region, the NPF projects that by 2040, a population growth of between 340,000-380,000, bringing the population to almost 2 million, and an additional 225,000 people in employment i.e. 880,000 (0.875m) total in employment.

A core innovation is securing long-term transformational and rejuvenation-focused city development through the preparation of MASP for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford Metropolitan Areas. The principles of compact growth and the unlocking of the potential of centrally located sites will be key deliverables of the MASPs. A sustainable approach to capitalising on the potential of underutilised and publicly owned and centrally located sites to boost population and economic outputs of city centre areas. In turn, these areas will act as economic drivers for their wider regions. A challenging proposition of the NPF for the Region is the positioning of the three cities, to accommodate over 50% of the Region's projected

population growth. Balancing their respective combined strengths will create an effective complement to the economic strength of Dublin. Equally in concert with the NPF, the focus must be on ensuring a balanced approach in activating and realising the much-underutilised potential in wider rural towns and dispersed communities.

A responsive Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), along with the rollout of the national hi-speed broadband programme, are key to the safeguarding and sustainable growth of the Region. To copper-fasten that vision, further promotion and development of attractions and capacity, to capitalise on underutilised potential in the tourism and local enterprise areas is essential. Consolidating and growing the dividend from the Region's clean renewable energy and tourism potential is clearly delineated in the NPF, as is the scope to develop a more integrated network of greenways, blueways and peatways to support the diversification of rural and regional economies and promote more sustainable forms of travel and activity-based recreation.

Actions to support significant ready-to-go city, rural town and village and rural rejuvenation can seek support through the competitive Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds, notable transformative vehicles, through which positive and sustainable changes will be wrought in the Region.

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## Project Specific Organisational and Governance Structures

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A Senior Officials Advisory Group, comprising representatives of public bodies, enterprise agencies and national infrastructural providers, was established and helped provide an overarching "whole of Regional Assembly" view of the policy. The RSES was adopted by the Assembly Members following inputs from the three SPA

Committees, Technical Working Groups (involving local authority staff) other public bodies, regional stakeholders, submissions received during public consultations and incorporated national policy objectives from the NPF and other relevant Government policies and objectives.



## Progress and Milestones in 2019

The Assembly commenced pre-draft consultation on the RSES on 27th November 2017 with the publication of an Issues Paper to seek the views and input of stakeholders and the general public on the issues and priorities for the Region. In parallel to this consultation, a Scoping Report on key environmental issues facing the Region was published on the Assembly website in December 2017.

The focus of the Southern Regional Assembly for 2019 was the completion of the RSES process including:

- Consultation on the Draft RSES which ran from 18th December 2018 to 6th March 2019 including public consultation events, presentations, workshops and on line engagement (205 submissions received).
- At the Assembly meeting of the 10th May, the Members considered the submissions, motions, Environmental Reports, the Director's Report and recommendations in relation to the Draft RSES and agreed to make the strategy subject to amendments.
- A number of amendments (145) were considered material and required further public display period. These and accompanying Environmental Reports were published for consultation from 12th September to 11th October (49 submissions received).
- A workshop for the Members, with a focus on briefing new Members who were nominated to the Assembly since the process commenced, was held on 8th November.
- At the Assembly meeting of the 29th November the members considered the submissions, motions, Environmental Reports, the Director's Report and recommendations in relation to proposed Material Amendments and agreed to Make the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy on 31st January.



*Staff of the Regional Assembly at the public consultation day events in Waterford, 15th February.*

### JANUARY

- Consultation process on the draft RSES continue through to 8th March since 18th December 2018.
- Hard copies of the draft RSES documents were put on public display in the reception of the Regional Assembly and the 10 local authorities in the Region. Hard copies of the draft RSES were also available upon request. The Assembly issued a number of press releases to local media to publicise events and the consultation process.
- In advance of the main round of consultation events, a series of presentations, workshops and engagement opportunities were attended to encourage submissions, including the Association of Irish Local Government Conference on 24th January and the Irish Planning Institute Workshop in Cork also on 24th January.



*(L to R) David Kelly, Director, Cllr. Mick Cahill, Cllr. Pip Breen, Dominic Walsh & Siobhán Rudden, Southern Regional Assembly, AILG annual conference, 24th January*

### FEBRUARY

- The Assembly hosted nine public consultation events over three days during February - three for Elected Representatives, three for local authorities and key regional stakeholders and three for the general public, as follows:
  - **Cork, 11th February**
  - **Limerick, 13th February**
  - **Waterford, 15th February**

The events were all day and evening sessions; the daytime events required advance registration, while the evening events were fully open to the public. At each event, the RSES Team presented an overview of the RSES, with time allocated for open Q&A forum and to encourage submissions on the draft.



*Bryan Riney, Southern Regional Assembly, Draft RSES public consultation event, Cork 11th February*

# Strategy

THE SOUTHERN REGION'S STRATEGY IS TO BUILD A STRONG, RESILIENT, SUSTAINABLE REGION BY:





- The Assembly made tailored presentations to different stakeholders including local authorities, education institutes and representatives from the PPN environmental pillar.
- Elected representatives, in addition to their focused information session at each event, were welcome to attend all stages of the consultation events and this resulted in positive input and exchanges.
- Additional consultation events included the Cork Transport Forum, IBEC (Mid-West, Cork and South East branches), meetings with the PPN network in Cork, Carlow and Wexford, presentation UCC Planning Conference and to Kerry County Council (18th February).

## MARCH

- The Public Consultation process concluded on 8th March with 205 submissions received. The number and detail of the submissions reflects the interest in the RSES, an understanding of the importance of the RSES to the future of the Southern Region, and strength of engagement throughout the process. The Regional Planning team reviewed the submissions and a prepared a Directors Report for the Assembly Members.

## APRIL

- Director's Report on Submissions to the Draft RSES was circulated to members on 18th April.
- The Director and Assistant Director presented the Director's Report on Submissions to the Draft RSES at the Assembly meeting on 26th April. No decisions were taken at this meeting; it briefing on the report served to facilitate their decision on material amendments at the next meeting on 10th May.

## MAY

- The Director's Report on the Submissions was considered at the Assembly Meeting on 10th May. Members submitted 94 motions, which were considered together with the Director's Report and recommendations.
- **Members of the Assembly agreed to make the RSES for the Southern Region subject to the amendments.** As a number of amendments were deemed material and would require environmental assessment SEA/AA/RFA and be subject to a further public display period in accordance with the requirements of section 24(8) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended). There were 145 material amendments.



*Kevin Lynch, Rob Fennelly and Bryan Riney at the International Transport Forum, Leipzig, Germany, in May*

## JUNE-AUGUST

- The Regional Planning Team prepared the material amendments for the further public consultation, which included further environmental assessment of the proposed material amendments by consultants RPS and preparation of an updated SEA/AA and RFA.

## SEPTEMBER

- The proposed 145 material amendments to the draft RSES and accompanying environmental reports were published and put on public display from 12th September to 11th October in the reception of the Southern Regional Assembly and the 10 local authorities in the Region. Hard copies of the draft RSES were available upon request.

The material amendments addressed stronger commitments to address climate change, strengthened approach to Key Towns, Limerick-Shannon MASP boundary, planning for diverse areas, collaboration between metropolitan areas, inter-urban networks, Eastern Corridor, regional decarbonisation, lower carbon international connectivity, e-mobility, multi modal travel integration, sustainable mobility targets, volunteering and active citizenship and monitoring the strategy. Strengthened content across each MASP was also provided.

## OCTOBER

- The public consultation resulted in 49 submissions. The Regional Planning Team reviewed the submissions and prepared a Directors Report on the Submissions to the Material Amendments for the Assembly Members (finalised in November). The report summarised the issues raised, the Director's response and recommendation on foot of the submissions on the proposed material amendments.



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## NOVEMBER

- A workshop for Assembly Members, with a focus on briefing newly nominated Members to the Assembly since the process commenced, was held on 8th November. The workshop informed Members on the background context of the RSES, stages in the process to date, key elements of the Draft RSES, the material amendments stage and final steps towards adopting the RSES.
- Director's Report on Submissions to the Draft RSES was circulated to members on 22nd November.
- On 29th November, the Assembly Members considered the Director's Report on Submissions on the Proposed Material Amendments, and resolved to make the final RSES with an effective date of 31st January 2020 to provide for the integration of decisions on material amendments into the final text of the RSES for the completion of all environmental reports.

Staff from the Planning team also represented the Assembly on a number of outside groups such as the Regional Enterprise Plans Monitoring Committees, CFRAMs committees, CASP Monitoring Committee, attended and made presentations at national and regional planning conferences and events.

Staff participated in the International Transport Forum in Leipzig in May and will be a key exhibitor representing the Southern Region and RSES at the Forum, due to be held in Leipzig in 2020 under the theme Transport Innovation for Sustainable Development (Ireland holds the presidency of the Forum in 2020).

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## Summary of Observations made in 2019

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The Regional Assembly in the performance of its functions has worked closely with each of the Region's local authorities and has reported and issued observations on development plans, variations to development plans and, where there are issues of regional significance, on Local Area Plans.

In addition, the Regional Assembly made observations on various draft policy documents issued by Government departments & state agencies during 2019.

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SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS / SUBMISSIONS MADE IN 2019	NO. OF OBSERVATIONS
Observations on Development Plans/ Variations to Development Plans	3
Observations on Local Area Plans & other Local Authority Plans/proposals	8
Observations on Government/State Agency Policy documents & consultations	5

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# Regional Programme Updates

## Progress under the Regional Programme 2014-20

*Since 1999, the Regional Assembly has been involved in the management and monitoring of EU programmes in the S&E region (S&R region) along with promoting regional policy in Ireland. The Assembly oversaw the €4.2bn Regional Programme 2000-06 and the €637m Programme 2007-13.*

Over the past 20 years, the Assembly has engaged with Taoisigh, Ministers, and Senior EU Commission officials to raise issues of concern to the S&E region and has undertaken research and regional initiatives to promote the socio-economic development and investment in the Region. The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are concentrated on implementing community policies and in particular the Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth.

## Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020

In December 2014, the European Commission adopted the 2014-20 Southern & Eastern Regional Programme (S&EROP). A funding package of approx. €500 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Irish exchequer was approved over the programme period. This funding supports a significant programme of investment in research, technological development and innovation, and entrepreneurship in both enterprises and research centres which seeks to improve the region's international competitiveness while boosting job creation.

## Meetings of the Monitoring Committee

The Regional Assembly is the Chair and Secretariat for the Monitoring Committee of the S&EROP 2014-20. The role of the Committee is to satisfy itself as to the progress and impact of the co-financed expenditure and to make recommendations in this regard to the Managing Authority. The Committee meets annually to review the previous years' progress. The sixth meeting of the Monitoring Committee for the 2014-20 Programme was held on the 5th June 2019 at Assembly House, Waterford and approved the Annual Implementation Report 2018.



*Commission site visit to micro-enterprises in receipt of support from the Regional Programme through the Waterford Local Enterprise Office*

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# Overview of Implementation of 2014 – 2020 Operational Programme

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## Key information on the implementation of the Programme Priorities

### 1. Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region

Priority 1 aims 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. It seeks to enhance research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and 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 is aligned with Ireland's priority research areas in the Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3). The priority has 2 investment priorities (1a & 1b) and 5 schemes, namely SFI Research Centres, SFI Spokes, Marine Research Programme, Commercialisation Fund and Innovation Partnership.

Fourteen SFI research centres were supported in 2019. The Commercialisation Fund and Innovation Partnership schemes, managed through Enterprise Ireland, continued to deliver strong results. The Marine Institute launched a Post-Doctoral Fellowship Call in 2019, following the success of the industry call and research call in 2018. All Marine Research scheme projects are now underway.

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### 2. ICT Infrastructure

This Priority supports State-led investment providing broadband infrastructure in those areas not covered by the commercial sector. This will facilitate the widespread availability of reliable and guaranteed high-speed broadband – 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. It aims to underpin and support wider public policy objectives and initiatives both nationally and within the European context. In 2016, the Intermediate Body commenced a detailed dialogue with qualifying bidders in relation to technical, commercial and governance matters.



*Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur 2019 finalists, an initiative rolled out by the Local Enterprise Offices*

On 7th May 2019 the Government approved a recommendation to confer Preferred Bidder status on Granahan McCourt. On 15th November, the European Commission announced their decision to grant state aid approval to the National Broadband Plan. On 19th November the Government signed the contract for the National Broadband Plan.

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### 3. SME Competitiveness

The Entrepreneurship in Microenterprise scheme is delivered through the 18 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) in the S&E region. The intervention focuses on increasing 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 supports innovative and growth-oriented SME start-ups and expansions through the provision of business information, advisory services, capacity building, mentoring and financial supports.

2019 was the fifth consecutive year of employment growth for businesses supported by the LEOs. Enterprise Ireland reported a cumulative increase in employment in supported enterprises in the S&E region for the period 2014-19 of 4,790 amounting to 83% of the OP target.

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### 4. Low Carbon Economy

Priority 4 aims 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. The Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment is the Intermediary Body for the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme, which is delivered by SEAI, targeting low-income households at risk of energy poverty.



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The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government is the Intermediary Body for the Social Housing Retrofit scheme, which is delivered through the 17 local authorities in the S&E region. It comprises (a) the Energy Efficiency Retrofitting programme to improve insulation standards and overall energy performance across local authority houses/apartments and (b) the Retrofitting of Vacant Social Housing Stock programme which provides funding to those local authorities that have the greatest social housing targets and that can return the maximum number of units to a lettable, energy efficient condition, at reasonable cost.

The Intermediary Bodies reported energy efficiency improvement measures had been carried out on 4,161 housing units in the S&E region under the two schemes in 2019.

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## 5. Sustainable Urban Development

Priority 5 aims to revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment in the designated urban centres as part of the integrated urban strategies as well as to support low carbon sustainable, multimodal urban mobility in designated urban centres. There is one scheme under Priority 5 – the Designated Urban Centre Grants Scheme (DUCGS) where local authorities for the designated growth centres in the S&E 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. Nine projects were selected by the designated Steering Committee for the scheme in early 2016 with a total ERDF allocation of €26m.



*Mary Elmes Bridge, delivered by Cork City Council with the funding from the Regional Programme, was launched in May 2019*

Local Authorities: Dublin City Council, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council, Limerick City & County Council, Clare County Council, Kerry County Council, Kilkenny County Council, Waterford City & County Council, Cork City Council and Cork County Council.

There was substantial progress on projects under the DUCGS in 2019, including the completion of the Cork City Council Mary Elmes Pedestrian Bridge, the Wexford County Council Public Realms Works and the Clare County Council Shannon Town Park. Waterford's Apple Market and Public Realm Works was completed in 2018.

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## 6. Technical Assistance

During 2019 the Assembly, as Managing Authority for the Programme, continued to work in close partnership with the Intermediary Bodies and the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform on the implementation of the ROP. An independent Mid-term Evaluation carried out by Fitzpatrick & Associates/RSM and was presented to the Programme Monitoring Committee in June 2019.

Communications activities during 2019 focused on activities to engage directly with citizens about the benefits of EU funding to regions and localities, such as co-hosting a public celebration of Europe Day with the Waterford Europe Direct Office in May and collaborating with other EU funds (ERDF, ESF and EMFF) at the Ploughing Championships in September.

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# PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMME IN 2019

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## Priority 1 – Strengthening RTDI

By the end of 2019, a total of 842 enterprises had engaged with funded **research centres** in the S&E Region. Science Foundation Ireland, Intermediary Body for the SFI Research Centres scheme and the SFI Spokes scheme, reported a cumulative total of 1,035 new researchers in the supported entities against a target of 713. Enterprise Ireland reported a total of 37 licenses, options, and assignments resulting from projects funded under the Commercialisation Fund and the Innovation Partnership schemes in 2019.

The Research Centres Programme aims to develop a set of world-leading, large scale Research Centres that will provide major economic impact for Ireland. SFI Research Centres link scientists and engineers in partnerships across academia and industry to address research questions and foster the development of new and existing Irish based technology companies. They also attract industry that could make an important contribution to Ireland and its economy, attract international research talent and capital and increase the number of SFI trained researchers employed in industry.

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The Research Centres are structured on a hub and spoke model consisting of several targeted projects undertaken in partnership with industry that connect into a central hub containing the platform research and core operations. A key feature of the SFI Research Centres is the creation of a critical mass of internationally leading researchers in strategic areas which become a key attractant to industry and lay the foundation for effective and productive academic and industrial partnerships.

In 2019, fourteen Research Centres (CONNECT, ADAPT, LERO, iCrag, Confirm, iForm, BiOrbic, VistaMilk, FutureNeuro, APC Phase 2, IPIC Phase 2, SSPC Phase 2, MaREI Phase 2 and AMBER Phase 2) across the region were funded under the Regional Operational Programme 2014-20.

The **SPOKES** Programme aims to promote the further development of existing SFI Research Centres to incorporate new areas of research and new industrial and academic collaborators. In 2019, the SFI Research Centre APC Microbiome Ireland was awarded funding under the SPOKES programme for the project "MIMIC - Missing Microbes in Infants born by C-section". This brings to 19 the number of awards under the programme in the region under the current Operational Programme to date.

The **Commercialisation Fund** Programme supports researchers in third level institutions and research organisations in the Republic of Ireland in applied research projects to generate useful outputs for the benefit of the Irish economy. Project outputs are commercialised by licensing agreements with existing companies in Ireland or with new start-up companies spinning out from the Institution. In so doing, the programme fosters a dynamic and commercially aware research community and an environment that promotes entrepreneurship. In 2019, there were 69 Commercialisation Fund (CF) proposals from S&E institutions of which 35 funding awards were approved. 19 of the funding awards were approved under the Bi-annual Calls and 16 were approved under the Invited rolling application process. A total of 57 Commercial Case Feasibility projects were approved.

The **Innovation Partnership** Programme encourages Irish-based companies to work with Irish research institutes resulting in mutually beneficial relationship. Companies can access expertise and resources to develop new and improved products, processes, services, and generate new knowledge and know-how. The participating company benefits in terms of its growth, the evolution of its strategic research and development and new knowledge that it can use to generate commercial advantage. The research institute benefits in terms of developing skill sets, intellectual property and publications. Enterprise Ireland has a final target of 143 companies to receive Innovation Partnership support under the Operational Programme. At the end of 2019, projects involving over three hundred companies in the S&E region had received approval for funding.

The **Marine Research** scheme aims to support capacity building and technology transfer through a range of interventions including PhD scholarships, Post-Doctoral Fellowships, research projects and inward/outward research visits. The Marine Institute launched a Post-Doctoral Fellowship Call in 2019, following on the success of the industry call and research call in 2018. All projects under the Marine Research scheme are now underway with €4.2m awarded in the S&E region.

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## Priority 2 – ICT Infrastructure

On 7th May 2019 the Government approved a recommendation to confer Preferred Bidder status on Granahan McCourt. On 15th November, the European Commission announced their decision to grant state aid approval to the National Broadband Plan. On 19th November the Government signed the contract for the National Broadband Plan. This paves the way for commencement of the roll out of the National Broadband Plan in 2020.

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## Priority 3 – SME Support, Promotion and capability Development

In 2019, the LEOs celebrated five years since their creation and by the end of the year the eighteen LEOs in the region had supported 42,403 enterprises under the micro-enterprise schemes since the beginning of the OP. This included supporting 81,208 participants of enterprise training programmes promoted through the LEOs. Enterprise Ireland reported a cumulative increase in employment in supported enterprises in the S&E region for the period 2014 to 2019 of 4,790 amounting to 83% of the OP target. New and developing initiatives in 2019 include Local Enterprise Week, National Women's Enterprise Day, Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur, Food Academy, Brexit Scorecard, Technical Assistance for Micro Enterprise, LEO Innovation & Investment Fund, Lean4Micro and Trading Online Voucher Scheme.

## Priority 4 – Low Carbon Economy

The Intermediary Bodies reported energy efficiency improvement measures had been carried out on a total of 4,161 housing units in the S&E region under the two schemes in 2019.

The **Better Energy Warmer Homes** Scheme is delivered by SEAI on behalf of the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment. The Scheme is targeted at low-income households at risk of energy poverty. SEAI reported that energy efficiency improvement measures were carried out on 1,973 housing units in the S&E region in 2019. Those households were able to avail of the expansion of the wall insulation measures available to include internal and external wall insulation as standard (as opposed to just cavity wall insulation). This deeper retrofit approach while more expensive will yield greater improvements in energy efficiency per household.

The **Social Housing Retrofit Scheme** comprises the Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme and the Retrofitting of Vacant Social Housing Stock Programme. The Social Housing Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme aims to improve insulation standards and overall energy performance across local authority houses/apartments. Energy Efficiency Retrofitting is undertaken on properties selected by local authorities. The Retrofitting of Vacant Social Housing Stock Programme aims to provide funding to local authorities with the greatest social housing targets and that can return the maximum number of units to a lettable, energy efficient condition at reasonable cost. The Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government is the Intermediary Body for the Social Housing Retrofit scheme - delivered through the seventeen local authorities in the S&E region. They reported that 980 housing units were completed under the Retrofitting of Vacant Social Housing Stock Programme and 1,208 units were completed under the Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme in 2019.

## Priority 5 – Sustainable Urban Development

In early 2016, nine projects in the nine designated urban areas were selected under the scheme with the participating Local Authorities to a total of €52m in public expenditure. All selected projects are aligned to the integrated growth strategies of their respective areas.



Shannon Town Park, delivered by Clare County Council with the funding from the Regional Programme, was launched in December 2019

GATEWAY	HUB	PROPOSED ALLOCATION
Dublin		€7.0m
Cork		€5.0m
Limerick		€4.5m
Waterford		€4.0m
	Ennis	€1.0m
	Kilkenny	€1.0m
	Mallow	€1.0m
	Tralee	€1.5m
	Wexford	€1.0m
<b>Total Gateways</b>		<b>€20.50m</b>
<b>Total Hubs</b>		<b>€5.50m</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>€26.0m</b>

There was substantial progress on projects under the Designated Urban Centre Grant Scheme (DUCGS) in 2019, including the completion of the Cork City Council Mary Elmes Pedestrian Bridge, the Wexford County Council Public Realms Works and the Clare County Council Shannon Town Park.

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## Regional Programme Communications

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The Southern Regional Assembly is the Managing Authority for the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-20 (S&E ROP). Its Monitoring Committee adopted a communication's strategy covering the programming period in 2015 and each year a communications plan is drawn up and implemented, as informed by the strategy.

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### #euinmyregion Campaign

The Assembly takes an active role in promoting #euinmyregion, an EU-wide communications campaign which aims to encourage citizens to learn about the successes of EU funded projects in their own region.



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### EU Day 2019

Europe Day 2019 was certainly a joyful way to celebrate all things European. Organised by the Southern Regional Assembly and Waterford Europe Direct Office, the event marked this important date that celebrates peace and unity across Europe.

The Waterford Bealtaine Choir opened the event with a beautiful rendition of the anthem of Europe, "Ode to Joy" and Deputy Mayor of Waterford, Cllr. John O'Leary led the celebrations with Cathaoirleach of the Southern Regional Assembly, Cllr. Jason Murphy.

Cathaoirleach of the Southern Regional Assembly, Cllr. Jason Murphy spoke about the importance of the EU to Irish people and how it impacts on our daily lives, "In Waterford we have benefitted from EU membership and the results are very visible with the regeneration of the Apple Market and the House of Waterford Crystal completed with co-funding from the Southern & Eastern Regional Programmes.



*Sinead O'Higgins, Europe Direct Office & Siobhan Rudden, Southern Regional Assembly at Europe Day celebrations 2019*



*Derville Brennan, Southern Regional Assembly, talks about the benefits of EU funding to Waterford at Europe Day celebrations 2019*

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## National Ploughing Championships 2019

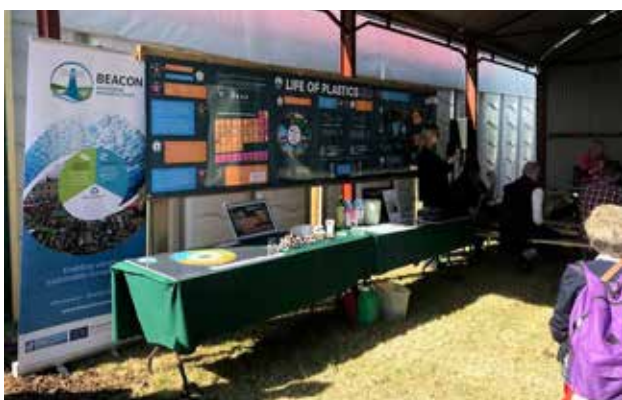
As Managing Authority of the S&E ROP, the Assembly returned to the National Ploughing Championships last September to tell the good news stories of the EU funded projects in the regions as part of the #euinmyregion campaign. The biggest outdoor event in Europe, the Ploughing hosted 1,700 exhibitors and over 350,000 visitors over three days and was very effective way to tell the stories of #euinmyregion to directly to European citizens. Kindly hosted by the European Commission Representation Office in Ireland, the Assembly joined forces with a wide array of EU colleagues to promote the Southern & Eastern Regional Programme, along with the BMW, ERDF, ESF and EMFF programmes amongst other EU initiatives. It was a great opportunity to visit beneficiaries of the S&E ROP who were also exhibiting, such as the Vistamilk and Beacon research centres and the Local Enterprise Offices.



*Representatives of the ERDF, ESF & EMFF programmes at the Ploughing Championships 2019*



*Vistamilk Research Centre showcasing their activity in the Teagasc tent*



*Beacon Research Centre*



*Local Enterprise Village, representing all Local Enterprise Offices in Ireland*

## European Commission Representative in Ireland visits the Apple Market

In June, we were delighted to welcome Gerry Kiely, Head of Representation, to the Assembly to hear about the benefits of EU funding from the S&E ROP and other ERDF programmes.

Part of the visit included a walk around Waterford City Centre to see first-hand the results of the Sustainable Urban Development scheme at the Apple Market and public realm works adjacent to the Bishop's Palace.

*(L to R) Tim Hayes & Gerry Kiely, Commission Representation, Sinead O'Higgins, Europe Direct Waterford, Cllr. Jason Murphy, Cathaoirleach and David Kelly, Director.*



## #EUANDME

The MA participated in a debate on the EU and Me, organised by the EU Commission Office as a citizen's dialogue at the Omniplex cinema in Waterford.

The event showed a number of short films by leading European filmmakers on the tangible benefits of EU membership and the key contemporary challenges facing citizens today. The event was attended by over 60 people of all ages with lots of interesting commentary.



## Presentation to the European Direct Network, Ireland

The MA joined the ESF and the Member State to give an update on EU funding in Ireland to the Europe Direct Office network at their annual meeting in March.

## Online Activity 2019

### Assembly Website

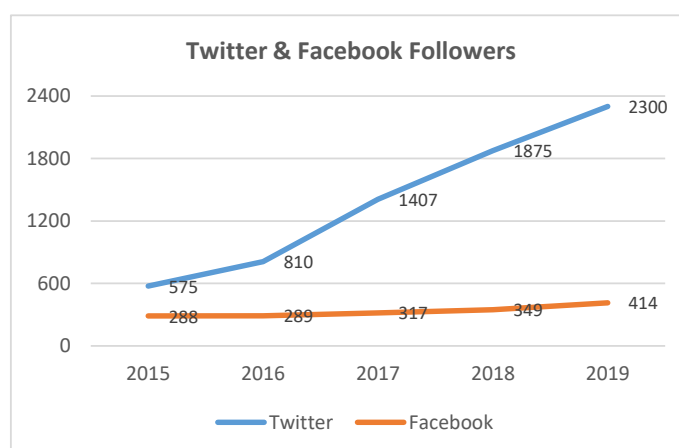
The website is the main online communications tool to promote the results and successes of the Regional Programme and to highlight complementary activities of other EU programmes. Throughout the year, the Managing Authority issued press releases and updates to the news section with relevant EU-related news stories. The news stories generally relate to the ROP, EU programmes and projects, and items of interest to the members of the Regional Assembly and to the wider public.

The number of page views on a year on year basis from 2016-2017 increased. The homepage contains much of the news of the Assembly and the S&E ROP activity which accounts for the higher traffic. With the increased progress in developing the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the Regional Planning pages saw a significant increase in page views between 2017 and 2019.

### Social Media

The Assembly's activity continued on Twitter and Facebook during 2019. A wide variety of EU-related news and project activity was posted and reposted to these accounts throughout the year. Social media has proven a very useful way to keep in touch with the projects funded through the Regional Operational Programme and other relevant organisations.

Both social media platforms saw increased following in 2019. Twitter attracted more significant interest in 2019, a continuing trend for both platforms.



Twitter	2018	2019	Facebook	2018	2019
Impressions	182,548	337,520	Engagements	3,025	10,215
Engagements	2,681	5,906	Unique Users	2,978	149,118
Retweets	315	782	Impressions	806,489	34,5247

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## Regional Operational Programme's List of Operations

As Managing Authority, the Assembly published a searchable and downloadable list of operations funded by the S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-20 on its website following certification of expenditure in compliance with Article 115.2 of Commission Regulation 1303/2013.

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## Print and Radio Advertisements

A number of advertisements were placed in local and regional print media and on local radio during 2019 to highlight the work of the Assembly as the Managing Authority of the Regional Programme.

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## ESIF Communications Network & INFORM Network

The Assembly continued to participate in the joint communications network for European Structural & Investment Funds. The Network consists of representatives from the various ESIF operating in Ireland.

The MA also participates in the INFORM network to communicate with and learn from other programmes across the regions of Europe. The INFORM network is facilitated by DG Regio and coordinates the #euinmyregion campaign. We took part in two INFORM conferences in 2019, in Sicily and Ghent.



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## The Graduate Quiz

The Southern Regional Assembly was one of the sponsors of the Graduate.ie competition in for the 2018/19 academic year, an initiative of the Irish Government, Local Government and the EU-funded Citizenship and Democracy Programme for Irish second level students.

*It aims to engage, inform and inspire young people in a fun way to learn about important local and national topics.*

Students who take part complete an online competition to win education trips. The Assembly sponsorship serves to highlight the successes of the Regional Programme activity to young people in Ireland. Over 8,000 students took part in the competition and 24 were selected as winners. The following are winners whose prizes were sponsored by the Assembly during 2019 and travelled to the European Parliament.

- **Aaron Reid,**  
Scoil Aireagail,  
Ballyhale, Co Kilkenny
- **Ostiniga Galvanauskaite,**  
Colaiste Phobail, Ros Cre,  
Roscrea, Co Tipperary

Further details may be found at  
<http://www.graduatequiz.com/>



# EU PROJECTS Updates



**Interreg  
Europe**

European Union | European Regional Development Fund



*The Southern Regional Assembly participates as a project partner on six EU projects, all of which are part-funded through the Interreg Europe Programme through the European Regional Development Fund. Each project addresses a topic relevant to the Southern Region, such as multi-modal transport, responsible innovation and research, renewable energy and green and blue infrastructures.*



## EMPOWER: More carbon reduction by dynamically monitoring energy efficiency

The Interreg Europe EMPOWER project focuses on reducing carbon emissions by dynamically monitoring energy efficiency. This will be achieved through energy monitoring and exploring innovative methods of financing energy projects, with an overall objective to develop and deliver better public policy in these areas. The partnership consists of nine European regions who are working together to share experience, solutions, and good practice to develop and deliver better public policy to reduce carbon emissions in buildings.

The Irish stakeholders for EMPOWER have been active during 2019 participating in stakeholder meetings, hosting workshops, proposing good practices for our Interregional partners to learn from and also by attending Interregional study visits.

We were delighted to have two Good Practices from the EMPOWER stakeholders in Ireland published on the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform:



**OPW**

Óifig na nOibreacha Poiblí  
Office of Public Works

**Optimising Power@Work – from Office of Public Works**



**Public Sector Monitoring & Reporting Programme - from SEAI**

Because of these publications, representatives of The Office of Public Works were invited to Germany and SEAI were invited to Poland and Spain to provide expert presentations and share more knowledge of these good practices.

With increasing levels of air pollution, CO2 emissions and with buildings alone accounting for around 40% of EU energy needs and 36% of carbon emissions, a need exists to find suitable solutions to respond to this challenge.

The Regional Assembly, as a partner in EMPOWER and along with our stakeholders, have been investigating the good practices in our interregional partner regions to identify good practices that we could adopt and enhance to inspire changes in energy efficiency in the buildings in our Region.



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## EMPOWER's Progress 2019

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### Import Workshop, Cork – March

The Regional Assembly, with the assistance of Cork City Council, hosted a workshop to build on the learnings gained at previous interregional Learning events. It afforded us the opportunity to invite Ruby Ganchou (ALEON, the local energy agency in Lorient, France) to present The Social Dimension of Energy Monitoring, Users Involvement and Behaviour Changes.

We also invited Joao Cleto (Local Energy Management Agency of Almada, Portugal) to present the HERB project – Holistic Energy Efficient Retrofitting of Social Housing in Almada. The workshop included a site visit to view first-hand the social housing units currently being retrofitted by Cork City Council and allowed us to explore how Ireland can affect real behaviour change in energy consumption in social housing and to understand more fully the wider benefits of the retrofitting programme when developing our Regional Action Plan. The workshop was highly participative and provided great insights to the Regional Assembly for the purposes of the EMPOWER project.



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### Interregional Study Visit Florence, Italy - March

This visit was an opportunity to monitor what the project partners have done so far and to share and plan actions and further actions to be achieved in the coming months. Partners actively exchanged information, news, views and experiences.

Discussions focused on the preparation of Regional Action Plans based on interregional learning via peer reviews, study visits and workshops. The Regional Assembly used this study visit to gain further information from interregional partners to assist with the development of our Regional Action Plan.



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### Interregional Study Visit, Waterford - November

The Southern Regional Assembly hosted the Final interregional project partner meeting for the end of Phase 1 of the EMPOWER project in Ireland's Oldest City – Waterford, founded by the Vikings in 914. This sixth meeting was also the opportunity to plan and monitor the Regional Action Plans implementation for the Phase 2 of the project. Partners actively exchanged information, feedback and regional action plans.



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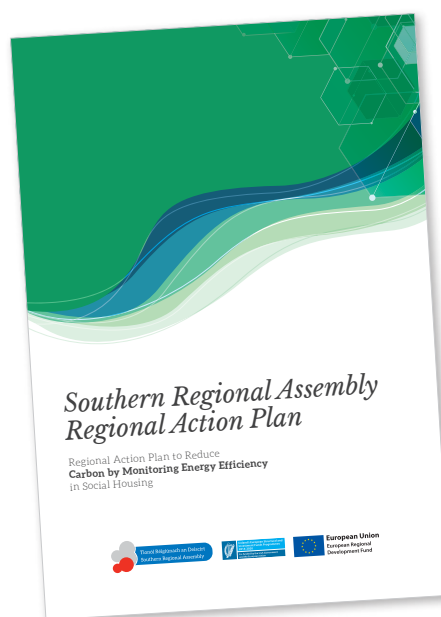
## EMPOWER Regional Action Plan for the Southern Region

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On 31st December, Phase 1 of the EMPOWER project concluded and the Regional Assembly submitted our Regional Action Plan for EMPOWER to the Interreg Europe Union Technical Secretariat for validation.

Our Regional Action Plan seeks to improve the **Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme**, working with **Cork City Council** to implement a pilot to install energy monitoring equipment to calculate the exact energy usage of a number of social housing units before and after a deep retrofit.

On foot of the pilot of energy monitoring equipment as part of the retrofitting of social housing units in Cork City we will seek agreement to allow energy monitoring equipment costs to be incorporated into the overall costs of retrofitting for social housing in Ireland for upcoming calls. This will allow Local Authorities to test the actual energy savings before and after the deep retrofit to ensure real energy-efficiency behaviour change of social housing residents is achieved and thereby reducing CO2 emissions and assisting Ireland in meeting our carbon emissions targets.



For further information about EMPOWER:

**Rose Power is the Project Officer:** [rpower@southernassembly.ie](mailto:rpower@southernassembly.ie)  
**Website:** [www.interregeurope.eu/empower](http://www.interregeurope.eu/empower)  
**Twitter:** @interregempower  
**Facebook:** @Empower0



EMPOWER is part-funded by Interreg Europe through the European Regional Development Fund.

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## MARIE: M<sup>A</sup>instreaming Responsible Innovation in European S3

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MARIE's overall objective is to improve regional public policy that supports delivery of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in design, production and distribution of innovation in Smart Specialisation Sectors (S3). It promotes ways to prevent negative social and environmental impact and contributes to better quality of life.

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### What is Responsible Research and Innovation?

Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) is about trying to get different sectors of society from Research, Business, Policy Makers & civil society to work together throughout the life cycle of the Research & Innovation process to ensure processes & outcomes are aligned with societal values, needs & expectations. RRI is about engaging the public in R&I to encourage more transparency & access to scientific results, the promotion of gender equality and ethics in R&I and promoting science education. Fundamentally, it is about creating high quality science that is more in the public interest.

MARIE promotes responsible research and innovation in key sectors. With a total budget of just over €1.9m (€1.62m ERDF), MARIE brings together ten partners from eight regions; Italy, Romania, Greece, Spain, Finland, Ireland, France and Germany. Commencing in January 2017, the project will run for five years. The Southern Regional Assembly became a partner on the project to help achieve our objective of creating a smart, sustainable and inclusive region.

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## MARIE Progress 2019

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The MARIE project partners had a busy year with two interregional learning events and the final event for phase-1 of the project taking place. These activities helped advance the project ambition of enhancing the capacity of RRI amongst project partners, stakeholders and citizens of the Region.

The Irish stakeholder group continued to engage through the sharing of their knowledge and expertise to enhance RRI capacity of the region. Through their positive work on the project, stakeholders were invited to attend the study visits to further share and build on their knowledge with partners from other regions.

MARIE reached a significant milestone with the publication of our Good Practice 'Broadening the Scope of Impact' on the Interreg Europe platform. The good practice was developed by stakeholder Science Foundation Ireland to not only recognise scientific excellence but to also acknowledge the potential impact of research on areas such as society, population, health & wellbeing, food & energy security issues, environmental protection while supporting Government Policy. Measuring the broader impact increases responsibility resulting in greater accountability to citizens as significant public money is spent on scientific research.



*Partners and stakeholders of the MARIE project*

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### **Interregional Learning Event, Bucharest, Romania, 6th February**

Our Romanian partners hosted the sixth interregional learning event in their 'Impact Hub', an innovation hub that sets the framework and ecosystem for entrepreneurs and innovators in Romania. Stakeholders SEBIC and SFI joined us on the study visit.

The partners had the opportunity to discuss and update on their project activities to date focusing primarily on opportunities for learning from each other and status of their respective regional action plans. A lot of interesting ideas and potential collaborations emerged, with the good practice submitted by SFI being of particular interest to other partners. In the afternoon, all attendees took part in an Innovation Café a concept developed within the Impact Hub, which consists of dynamic and informative events around themes related to innovation and facilitates the further development of the innovation community. The innovation café event focused on 'Responsible Innovation and Social Innovation in Practice'.



*Rose Power, SRA and Carole Thurston SEBIC*



*Panel of speakers at the Innovation Café, Romania*



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## ***Interregional Learning Event, Kiel, Germany, 13th-14th June***

The seventh Interregional Learning event for MARIE took place on the 13th - 14th June in the beautiful city of Kiel, Germany. Stakeholder SEBIC also attended and took part in this study visit. The primary focus of the partner meeting was to allow each partner present the final draft concept of their action plan for consideration by the other partners. It also facilitated building on previous shared learning with much success.

Partners were given the opportunity to attend the Waterkant festival in Kiel which coincided with the meeting.

The festival was home to over 100 keynote speakers, talks and workshops all dedicated to Research & Innovation and to building meaningful connections between business, society and education by facilitating the meetup of startups and influential regional players. Our partner host, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, held a workshop on Responsible Research & Innovation which was very well received, all partners were encouraged to participate.

MARIE partners take a responsible approach to everything and took advantage of the multi-modal travelling options to the festival by cycling to the ferry!



*Partners presenting Regional Action Plans*



*Waterkant festival, Kiel*



*MARIE partners travelling sustainably*

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## ***#MakingWaves final event of Phase 1, Dublin 30th October***

The final event to mark the end of phase-1 of the project took place in collaboration with the Responsible Innovation Summit in the historic Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin on 30th October. With over 200 delegates, the Regional Assembly and partners of the MARIE project joined these leaders of change spanning a variety of sectors to celebrate the positive change promoted through the event. Project partners and stakeholders took part in celebrating positive change by demonstrating 'research in action' via their work and hosting a 'topic table', which took the format of a moderated conversation where innovative ideas were debated within the realms of the project.



*Derville Brennan, Assistant Director, SRA speaking*



*MARIE project partners at the Innovation Summit*

## Interregional Learning Event, Galicia, Spain 28th November

A final partner meeting and learning event hosted by Spanish partner GAIN celebrated the end of phase-1 for MARIE. The afternoon agenda included presentations from a panel of expert speakers followed by interactive sessions to discuss the future of RRI and how it can be integrated into the next EU budget and programming period. The event was moderated by RRI expert Eric Jensen, member of the International Consortium of Research Staff (ICoRSA), who also directed MARIE partners in a round-table discussion on how they see RRI evolving in their regions.



MARIE partners discussing the future of RRI

## MARIE Regional Action Plan for the Southern Region of Ireland

2019 marked the end of phase-1 of the project with the submission of a Regional Action Plan. The Regional Assembly worked with stakeholder SFI, Ireland's largest competitive research funder, to enhance governance of the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-20. Working together, we have adapted the Programme monitoring system to focus further on responsible impact. The Assembly and SFI used learnings from MARIE to negotiate and agree on a revised template for the annual progress report, which was approved by the Monitoring Committee in June.

As a result, SFI will incorporate additional reporting on RRI elements in all their Research Centre and Spokes Programmes. Specifically, they will ask beneficiaries to report on two of the RRI keys: Public Engagement and Science Education. The template informs monitoring metrics and indicators to measure these elements. With this information submitted annually (July 2020 and 2021), the Assembly will be able to assess quantitative changes related to the RRI indicators.

Phase-2 commences in January 2020 for two years, over this time the Regional Assembly will be monitoring the results and impact this enhanced reporting will have to demonstrate the socio-economic benefits of responsible working practices. This policy improvement supports MARIE'S overall objective of improving public policy that supports delivery of Responsible Research and Innovation in design, production and distribution of innovation in Smart Specialisation Sectors (S3). By supporting commitment to responsibility, the project helps to create smart, sustainable and inclusive regions.



Declan McGrath SFI & Karen Coughlan SRA

### For further information about MARIE:

**Karen Coughlan is the Project Officer:** [kcoughlan@southernassembly.ie](mailto:kcoughlan@southernassembly.ie)

**Website:** [www.interregueurope.eu/marie](http://www.interregueurope.eu/marie)

**Twitter:** @marieinterreg

**Facebook:** @MARIEinterreg



European Union | European Regional Development Fund

MARIE is part-funded by Interreg Europe, through the European Regional Development Fund.

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## Blue Green City

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The Southern Regional Assembly is the Irish partner in an Interreg Europe Project called Blue Green City. The project started on 1st August 2019 and has a total budget of €1,348,909.

The project aims to promote green and blue infrastructures as an integral part of a local/regional natural heritage preservation strategy.

Blue Green City seeks to increase awareness and knowledge of the concept of ecosystem services and of the value of green and blue infrastructure through project events such as workshops and training sessions. This will be accomplished through a process of interregional learning and strong collaboration in finding common solutions to common challenges posed by climate change, in particular by sharing experience and exchanging good practices.

It is within this context that Blue Green City aligns with the EU Green Infrastructure Strategy and with the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, referring to the important role that green and blue infrastructures play in protecting, conserving and enhancing the EU's natural capital, by providing functional ecological connectivity between cities and peri-urban protected areas.

In addition, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) states that green and blue infrastructure should be a key concept of a local authority's Development Plan, informing actions and strategy around economic development and placemaking.

# Blue Green City

## Interreg Europe



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund



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## Outputs of the Project:

- Development of Seven Action Plans
- Organization of study visits, thematic seminars, training meetings and an Interregional peer-review workshop
- Communication and dissemination events
- The improvement of public funds allocation (structural funds mainly, but also other funds) directly related to the main outputs (Action Plans);
- The development of best practice recommendations for improving Policy instruments that promote the value of Green Blue Infrastructure as an integral part of a local or regional natural heritage preservation strategy;





## Meet the Partners

Blue Green City includes partners from France, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, UK, Italy and Romania. The Lead Partner is the Metropolis Nice Côte d'Azur, based in Nice, France.



## Kick-off Meeting Nice, France 24th – 25th September

On the 24th and 25th September 2019, the Southern Regional Assembly attended the Kick-off meeting organized and hosted by the Lead partner – Metropolis Nice Côte d'Azur – Euromed Cities Network. At this event, the organizers presented the project, the project partners and expected outputs, defined the concrete contribution of each partner to the implementation of the project, and started the interregional learning and exchange of experience.

The Regional Assembly has since organised a stakeholders meeting with representatives from Local Authorities and Irish Water participating. The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain the practical issues that face stakeholders when incorporating green and blue into projects. There was significant interest from all participants to work as a collective to progress this initiative. In subsequent meetings and discussions, the focus and aims of the group were further defined and we look forward to incorporating interregional learning from the Blue Green City project to find solutions to challenges.



For further information about the Blue Green City:

**Bryan Riney:** [briney@southernassembly.ie](mailto:briney@southernassembly.ie)  
**Rob Fennelly:** [rfennelly@southernassembly.ie](mailto:rfennelly@southernassembly.ie)  
**Dominic Walsh:** [dwalsh@southernassembly.ie](mailto:dwalsh@southernassembly.ie)  
**Website:** [www.interregueurope.eu/bluegreencity](http://www.interregueurope.eu/bluegreencity)



Blue Green City is part-funded by Interreg Europe, through the European Regional Development Fund.



## COHES3ION

The Southern Regional Assembly is the Irish Partner on COHES3ION, an interregional project that aims at improving the PERFORMANCE and IMPACT of SMART SPECIALISATION STRATEGY (S3) and linked ERDF Regional Operational Programmes, in terms of delivery of innovation by Research & Innovation (R&I) actors. This will be achieved through integration of the regional dimension into S3 governance and policy mix, contributing additionally to regional cohesion in terms of Growth and Jobs.

The Assembly is partnered with nine other regions in Spain, Italy, Romania, Germany, Sweden, Poland and Wales. They all share the common challenge of effectively implementing Smart Specialisation at the regional level; COHES3ION aims to tackle this by identifying regional Smart Priorities and strengthening the regional coordination of innovation delivery and support players.

The Southern Region of Ireland has its own unique individual strengths and competitive advantage where priority areas are of more significance to the economy. The integration of a regional dimension into Ireland's S3 will focus the region on recognising and building on its smart priorities through the development of targeted Regional Smart Specialisation objectives. The RSES, published in January 2020, provides a timely opportunity to consider and align Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) strategies in Ireland at the regional level in collaboration with the COHES3ION project.

The project started in August 2019 and will run for three years delivered over two phases with a total budget of €1,874,632.

A local stakeholder group has been established comprising of key innovation players in the region who will contribute their expertise to the project through the provision of good working practices and assist in the implementation of the Regional Action Plan. This stakeholder group will continue to grow and evolve over the course of the project.



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund



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## Kick-off meeting, Bilboa, Spain 8-10th October

On the 8th – 10th October 2019 the Southern Regional Assembly attended the kick-off meeting in Bilbao, Spain hosted by the Lead Partner, Bizkaia Beaz, providing partners the opportunity to meet each other. The Lead Partner gave an overview of the project objectives clarifying the involvement expected from each of the partners.

The second day kicked off the interregional learning with partners being introduced to industry related case studies from the Basque region. Partners were then invited to analyse the case studies with the intention of taking the learnings back to implement in their own region in some capacity. There followed an animated open debate on how to engage SMEs in the transformation process sought in S3 prompting input from each partner. Overall, the meeting proved to be informative and interactive laying the foundation for future collaboration.

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*COHES3ION project partners at the kick-off meeting in Bilbao*

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For more information about the COHES3ION project:

**Karen Coughlan is the Project Officer:** [kcoughlan@southernassembly.ie](mailto:kcoughlan@southernassembly.ie)  
**Website:** [www.interregueurope.eu/cohes3ion](http://www.interregueurope.eu/cohes3ion)  
**Twitter:** @cohes3ion



COHES3ION is part-funded by Interreg Europe, through the European Regional Development Fund.



## MATCH-UP

The Interreg Europe MATCH-UP project focuses on the optimisation of the places where people change between transport modes. MATCH-UP aims to achieve improvements in the interchange between 4 main types of low-carbon means of transport (walking/cycling; rail transport; public transport; green vehicles).

The partnership consists of four European regions - Southern & Eastern Ireland, County of Northrhine, Germany, Municipality of Funchal, Portugal and Timisoara Municipality, Romania who are working together to share experience, solutions, and good practice to develop and deliver better public policy to reduce carbon emissions and support low carbon urban mobility in designated urban centres.

The Irish stakeholders for the MATCH-UP project have been very busy in 2019 participating in stakeholders meetings, proposing good practices for our Interregional partners to learn from and also by attending and seeing first hand good practices in our Interregional partners regions.

We submitted four Irish Good Practices on behalf of our MATCH-UP stakeholders to the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform, their thematic Experts have assessed these good practices and we are delighted that they have decided to publish these good practices as examples for other regions in Europe to learn from as follows:

1. Cycle & Ride Infrastructure associated with the Luas Light Rail from Transport Infrastructure Ireland
2. Cork Transport Mobility Forum from Cork City Council
3. Local Link Rural Transport Programme from Waterford Local Link
4. The Green-Schools Travel Programme from An Taisce

With increasing levels of air pollution, CO2 emissions and traffic congestion in the EU the development of sustainable multimodal mobility is one of the EU key challenges. The Southern Regional Assembly as a partner in the MATCH-UP project along with our stakeholders have been investigating the good practices in our Interregional partners regions to identify good practices that we could adopt and enhance to inspire changes in the sustainable transport strategies for our region.





## Interregional Study Visit Funchal, Portugal – February

The Southern Regional Assembly along with our stakeholders - Transport Infrastructure Ireland attended a study visit in Funchal, Portugal in February 2019 to see first-hand their modal interchange good practices including Intelligent Crosswalks and Pedestrianisation and Road Restriction policies to foster walking.



## Interregional Study Visit Timisoara, Romania – May

Our second Interregional visit took us to Timisoara with our stakeholders - Cork City Council in May 2019 to examine in more detail their good practices including Public Naval Transport Vaporetto – “Water Taxis” and Modernisation of their Public Transport Stations.



## Interregional Study Visit Northeim, Germany – June

We undertook our final Interregional visit to Northeim with our stakeholders - Waterford Local Link in June 2019 to view their good practices. We had the opportunity to see the Revitalization “Ilmebahn” which is seeking to put old rail lines back in use for passenger transportation and the Citizens Bus Bodenfelde which is a rural bus network connecting passengers with mobility difficulties to essential services.



*In addition, we have also been active in Ireland raising awareness of the MATCH-UP project and low carbon urban mobility with the Irish public.*

### **In March 2019,**

The Southern Regional Assembly were invited to present the MATCH-UP project to a wider audience at part of the Cork Transport Mobility Forum – Mix Your Mode Seminar 2019.



## Race Against Rob Cork - September

The Southern Regional Assembly along with our Stakeholders Cork Transport Mobility Forum and Cork City Council hosted "The Race Against Rob" during European Mobility Week in September 2019 in Cork City, Ireland.

World Champion, Olympic Medallist and National Record Holder for the 50km walking race – Rob Heffernan a native of the real capital of Cork lead the race. Rob is a community and youth ambassador and was joined by over 70 members of the public to highlight the 2019 European Mobility Week theme "Walk with Us!" - focusing on safe walking and cycling and the ways active mobility can benefit our health and environment. The public "Raced against Rob" using other low carbon means of transport including cycling, bike hire and public transport.

The race commenced at the newly refurbished transport hub at Kent Train Station and crossed the new Mary Elmes pedestrian and cycle-bridge and highlighted the pedestrian and cycle infrastructure upgraded in recent years.

The event was a huge success and provided the opportunity to raise awareness of the modal interchange improvements that have taken place in Cork City over the past couple of years and encouraged more people to use low carbon transport in the city.



*Race Against Rob participants trying to beat Rob Heffernan using low carbon transport in Cork.*



*Cathaoirleach Cllr. Joe Carroll at the Mary Elmes Bridge, Cork to launch the Race Against Rob event in September.*

## MATCH-UP MOBILITY CAFÉ

The Southern Regional Assembly also hosted the MATCH-UP MOBILITY CAFÉ in September 2019 to discuss low carbon modal interchange and the proposed Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040.

Guest speakers included:



- **Sebastiaan Van Der Hijden**, Strategic Mobility Advisor, Municipality of Utrecht, The Netherlands: "Planning for People (& Bikes), Not for Cars".



- **Rodolfo Benevenuto**, Dept. of Civil, Structural & Environmental Engineering, Trinity College Dublin: "Bike Sharing – Connecting Mobility and Activity Hubs in Cork".



- **Owen Shinkwin**, Senior Planner, National Transport Authority & Kevin Burke, Principal Transport Planner, Jacobs: "Proposed Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040"



- **Bernie Connolly**, Coordinator Cork Environmental Forum: "Low Carbon Multi Modal Travel in Cork City".



The mobility café was attended by over 60 members of the public who were interested to learn more about the good practices in The Netherlands and the proposed changes to the Cork City Transport Strategy to 2040. The café was very interactive which significant input from members of the public and suggestions for further improvements to modal interchange in Cork City.

All of these activities, good practices, Interregional study visits will assist the Southern Regional Assembly in undertaking a Regional Action Plan for the MATCH-UP project. We expect the Regional Action Plan to be published in late 2020 that will improve our policy instruments by enhancing our strategy for low carbon urban mobility and improved modal interchange.

**For further information about MATCH-UP:**

**Rose Power is the Project Officer:** [rpower@southernassembly.ie](mailto:rpower@southernassembly.ie)  
**Website:** [www.interreg-europe.eu/match-up](http://www.interreg-europe.eu/match-up)  
**Twitter:** @MATCHUP\_Project  
**Facebook:** @MatchUpProject



**MATCH-UP is part-funded by Interreg Europe, through the European Regional Development Fund.**

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## **FIRESPOL**

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The Interreg Europe FIRESPOL project seeks to boost Renewable Energy investment by supporting the introduction of innovative Financial Instruments in the partner regions. This will be achieved through improvements in regional policy instruments, including new schemes and operations under Operational Programmes.

The partnership consists of Managing Authorities and Energy Agencies from six regions across six Member States – Spain, Germany, Croatia, Latvia, Poland and Ireland. Partners are sharing knowledge, experience, good practices, ideas and solutions.

The publication in 2019 of the Government's Climate Action Plan made clear the importance of increased investment in renewable energy, predicting that Ireland will miss the target set for the period 2013 to 2020 for renewables by about one eighth. The Climate Action Plan sets ambitious new targets for renewables for 2030 and this ambition was reflected in the drafting of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region.

Through its involvement in the FIRESPOL project, the Southern Regional Assembly aims to identify relevant good practices that can inform regional policy, facilitate the introduction of innovative grants or financial instruments, and support greater investment in renewable energy in the region.



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### **Interregional Study Visit Lublin, Poland - January**

The main focus of the second meeting of the FIRESPOL project was to begin sharing good practices from our regions.

Following the good practice workshops, we visited the energy cluster Zielawa Valley – a partnership of five local municipalities co-investing in renewable energy. The partnership has successfully developed a solar photovoltaic farm with a 1.4MW, currently the biggest solar farm in the Lubelskie Region.



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### **Interregional Study Visit Split, Croatia - May**

The third meeting again focused on sharing good practices and we began selecting those of most interest through peer review.

We visited the Jelinak Wind Farm, developed by Spanish wind power developer ACCIONA. It consists of twenty AW1500 wind turbines representing a total capacity of 30MW, able to generate electricity equivalent to the consumption of around 30,000 Croatian homes per year. We also visited Hydroelectric Power Plant Orlovac, a high-head diversion plant with 249MW total installed capacity.





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## Interregional Study Visit Waterford, Ireland - July

The Regional Assembly welcomed partners and stakeholders to Waterford for the fourth meeting of the FIRESPOL project. Partners presented the conclusions of their regional self-assessments. This led into a discussion on the Regional Action Plans to be developed by each of the project partners.

We visited Ormonde Organics, a local company that takes organic waste from agriculture, industry and municipal authorities and uses it to generate green energy (biogas, electricity, heat) and nutrient-rich soil amendment products.

We also visited Flahavans, a food manufacturing plant in Kilmacthomas, that produces between 60% and 70% of its energy needs from its own renewable sources, including on-site hydro, biomass, wind and solar PV installations.



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## Interregional Study Visit Hesse, Germany - October

The fifth meeting took place in Wiesbaden and in Frankfurt, in the state of Hesse. We had further workshops on good practices, with particular emphasis on financial instruments that can support greater acceptance of renewable energy.

Travelling on a hydrogen fuel cell powered bus, we visited the Weilrod Wind Farm, a 5km “energy trail” developed by ABO Wind with information boards, gaming and quiz stations on a scenic walking trail. This was followed by presentations on renewable energy investment, in particular through community co-operatives, at the Social Impact Lab in Frankfurt.



All of these activities, good practices, Interregional study visits and stakeholder engagements will assist the Southern Regional Assembly in undertaking a Regional Action Plan for the FIRESPOL project. We expect the Regional Action Plan to be published in late 2020.

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For further information about the FIRESPOL project:

**Enda Hogan:** ehogan@southernassembly.ie  
**Vincent Dunphy:** vdunphy@southernassembly.ie  
**Website:** www.interregeurope.eu/firespol  
**Twitter:** @firespolproject  
**Facebook:** @firespolproject



FIRESPOL is part-funded by Interreg Europe, through the European Regional Development Fund.



# EU PROGRAMMES

## Updates

*European Territorial Cooperation (including Interreg) is one of the goals of EU Cohesion Policy and provides a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member States.*

Cooperation actions are supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through three key components:

- Cross-border cooperation – Interreg A;
- Transnational cooperation – Interreg B;
- Interregional cooperation – Interreg C - Interreg Europe.

### Interreg VA: Cross-border Cooperation

#### Ireland-Wales Programme 2014-2020

The Ireland-Wales Programme supports activities that facilitate cross-border co-operation between organisations in Ireland and Wales. It is a maritime programme connecting organisations, businesses and communities on the west coast of Wales with the eastern and southern coasts of Ireland. The first Programme started in 1994 and subsequent programmes have built on it. The current programme began in 2014 with an overall grant budget of €100m from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The current Ireland-Wales Programme was approved by the European Commission in March 2015 with a total budget of approx. €100m available and a co-financing rate of 80%.



#### Funding is available under three Priorities:

##### PRIORITY 1

Cross-border Innovation

##### Specific Objective

To increase the intensity of knowledge transfer collaborations involving research organisations and SME's in line with the shared priorities of the smart specialisation strategies

##### PRIORITY 2

Adaptation of the Irish Sea & Coastal Communities to Climate Change

##### Specific Objective

To increase capacity & knowledge of Climate Change Adaptation for the Irish Sea & coastal communities

##### PRIORITY 3

Cultural & Natural Resources & Heritage

##### Specific Objective

To sustainably realise the potential of natural and cultural assets in increasing visitor numbers to coastal communities in the Programme area

The Welsh Government manages the programme with partners, the Southern Regional Assembly and the Department for Public Expenditure and Reform. The Irish Development Officers are based at the Regional Assembly in Waterford. For information about the programme, contact Samantha Richardson at [srichardson@southernassembly.ie](mailto:srichardson@southernassembly.ie) or Breda Curran at [bcurran@southernassembly.ie](mailto:bcurran@southernassembly.ie)

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## Programme Update 2019

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### Priority 1 - Cross-border Innovation

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#### Dŵr Uisce

is a collaboration between Trinity College Dublin (Lead) and Bangor University with funding of €2.67m ERDF. Dŵr Uisce aims to improve the long-term sustainability of the supply of water, treatment and end-use.



*Dŵr Uisce team at the Blackstairs Turbine, Ireland during construction, April.*



#### CALIN

is a collaboration between Swansea University (Lead), Bangor University, Cardiff University, University College Dublin, Tyndall National Institute Cork, and NUI Galway, with funding of €9.34m ERDF. CALIN is supporting research and development programmes for SMEs in the life sciences sector.



#### The Irish Sea Portal (Pilot)

is a collaboration between Bangor University (Lead) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara, with funding of €1.1m ERDF. The pilot project has formed a cluster focusing on a study of juvenile shellfish larvae and seabed settlement. It aims to deepen the understanding of shellfish larvae movement within the Irish Sea and its surrounds followed by larval settlement patterns where they are termed 'seed'.



#### piSCES

is a collaboration between Waterford Institute of Technology (Lead), Cardiff University, Milford Haven Port Authority & Bord Iascaigh Mhara, with funding of €1.8m ERDF. The Smart Cluster Energy System project is working with the fish processing industry to reduce operational costs and its carbon footprint by developing and testing a new 'smart grid' electricity network.



*piSCES team at a partner meeting in Waterford, October*



## CATALYST

is a collaboration between the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (Lead), WRAP Cymru, Carlow Institute of Technology, Tipperary County Council and Carlow County Council, with funding of €1.35m ERDF. The project aims to drive innovation within Welsh and Irish businesses in the life science and food and drink sectors by supporting them to develop new specialist products, research access new markets and ensure that the packaging of products is sustainably sourced and minimised.



## More than a Club

is a collaboration between the Football Association of Ireland (Lead) and Vi-Ability (a Welsh Social Enterprise), with funding of €1.03m ERDF. The project is working with local professional football clubs in Ireland and Wales to help them set up stand-alone social enterprises, delivering innovative programmes that are addressing social needs within disadvantaged communities.



*Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr. Niall Ring presenting pupils from St Laurence O'Toole's BNS, St Gabriel's NS, St Finbarr's BNS, and St. Catherine's GNS with certificates of achievement for completing the Bohemian FC Double Club Programme at the Mansion House, Dublin.*



## Bucanier

is a collaboration between Pembrokeshire County Council (Lead), Carmarthenshire County Council, Wexford County Council, Swansea University Institute of Life Sciences, Carlow Institute of Technology and Bord Iascaigh Mhara with funding of €2.35m ERDF. The project aims to increase the innovation capacity within SMEs and social enterprises.



## SELKIE

is a collaboration between University College Cork (Lead), DP Energy Ireland Ltd., Gavin and Doherty Geosolutions, Swansea University, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum and Menter Môn, with funding of €4.2m ERDF. Selkie is establishing a cross-border network of ocean energy SMEs and supply chain companies, conducting industry-academic collaborative R&D projects, R&D knowledge transfer to wave and tidal industry/SME stakeholders, and advancing the technology sector as whole and assist SMEs to progress to commercialisation.



*SELKIE project launch at the Ocean Energy Europe event in Dublin, September with Welsh Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural*



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## Priority 2 - Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change

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### CHERISH

is a collaboration between the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (Lead), Aberystwyth University, Geological Survey of Ireland, and The Discovery Programme Ireland, with funding of €4.1m ERDF. CHERISH aims to increase cross-border knowledge and understanding of the impacts (past, present, and near-future) of climate change, storminess, and extreme weather events on the cultural heritage of reefs, islands, and headlands of the Irish Sea.

*Drones are an integral part of the CHERISH approach for recording coastal heritage sites. The cross-border team deploys several qualified drone pilots, such as this one carrying out photogrammetric 3D recording of Caerfai coastal promontory fort in St David's, Wales.*



### Bluefish

is a collaboration between Bangor University (Lead), Swansea University, Aberystwyth University, University College Cork, the Marine Institute and Bord Iascaigh Mhara, with funding of €5.3m ERDF. Bluefish aims to develop understanding of the connectivity (demographic, genetic, life history, commercial) between shellfish / finfish and parasite / pathogen populations around the Irish Sea, and how this connectivity might be altered by predicted climate change effects on the physical, chemical, and biotic environment.

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## STREAM(Sensor Technologies for Remote Environmental Aquatic Monitoring)

is a collaboration between Waterford Institute of Technology (Lead), Swansea University and Cork Institute of Technology with funding of €4.3m ERDF. The project has partners on both sides of the Irish Sea to develop new processes to lower the cost of marine observation and accelerate the process of providing data to key organisations.

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### Acclimatize

is a collaboration between University College Dublin (Lead) and Aberystwyth University, with funding of €5.4m ERDF. ACCLIMATIZE will investigate the impact of climate change on bathing waters and develop a range of technologies, including smart real-time predictive tools, to monitor water quality to protect human health and the marine environment.



*Samples taken at bathing waters in Ireland & Wales, including Dublin Bay, to quantify pollution streams and develop models to forecast the impact of climate change on water quality.*

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## ECHOES

is a collaboration between Aberystwyth University (Lead), University College Cork, Compass Informatics, British Trust for Ornithology and Geo Smart Decisions, with funding of €2.6m ERDF. ECHOES (Effect of Climate Change on Bird Habitats around the Irish Sea) is addressing the challenges of climate change on the coastal bird habitats of the Irish Sea by promoting climate change understanding, and providing tools to monitor, manage and adapt to its potential impacts. The project is working with stakeholders in both Ireland and Wales including those tasked with managing coastal habitats and bird populations, as well as people who live within or enjoy the coastal environment.

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## CCAT

is a collaboration between University College Dublin (Lead), University College Cork, Fingal County Council, Cardiff University, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum and Port of Milford Haven, with funding of €1.2m ERDF. The project aims to build resilience (adaptive capacity to change) in coastal communities directly impacted by climate change, to facilitate marine and climate citizenship, and realise the potential of the Irish Sea region by (re)connecting coastal communities with their place, their dynamic coastal systems and our changing climate.

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## Ecostructure

is a collaboration between Aberystwyth University (Lead), Swansea University, Bangor University, University College Cork, and University College Dublin, with funding of €3.3m ERDF. Ecostructure aims to raise awareness of eco-engineering solutions to the challenge of coastal adaptation to climate change. It will provide developers and regulators with accessible tools and resources, based on interdisciplinary research in the fields of ecology, engineering and socioeconomics.





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## Priority 3 - Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage

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### Celtic Routes

is a collaboration between Carmarthenshire County Council (Lead), Waterford County Council, Wexford County Council, Wicklow County Council, Ceredigion County Council and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, with funding of €1.59m ERDF. Celtic Routes will encourage visitors to explore new areas of Wales and Ireland en route to their final tourist destination by enhancing visitor appeal through the development of new trails linking local culture, heritage and the natural environment. Transforming less well-known areas from transit zones to new touring sites will increase the time visitors spend in these regions and boost local economies.



*The enchanting glacial lake of Llyn y Fan Fach in the Brecon Beacons National Park, Wales is associated with the 14th century legend of the 'Lady of the Lake'. Over the hills lies the picturesque market town of Llandovery which is home to a 5-metre high stainless-steel statue of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd Fychan. Known as the 'Welsh Braveheart', he was executed there by Henry IV as punishment for his support of Owain Glyndŵr.*

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### Ports, Past and Present

is a collaboration between University College Cork (Lead), Wexford County Council, Aberystwyth University and the University of Wales Trinity St David, Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, with funding of €2.6m ERDF. Ireland and Wales have experienced shared histories and profound differences. Ports on both sides also share a history of absorbing migrant labour from other cultures and languages. The project explores the cultures of the port areas of Dublin, Rosslare, Holyhead, Fishguard and Pembroke Dock and will bring this heritage to public awareness, both within coastal communities and to increase visitor numbers and enhance visitor experiences. In doing so it will increase the capacity of coastal communities to utilise their natural and cultural heritage as a driver to economic growth. The project aims to bring life and colour to the ports, enhancing the experience of modern travellers of all ages and interests, and encouraging people to spend more time and money in these towns.

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*Inception meeting of the partners at University College Cork, Ireland June.  
Photo credit Tomás Tyner.*



## Interreg VB: Transnational Cooperation

### Interreg NWE

Interreg North-West Europe (Interreg NWE) is a transnational European Territorial Co-operation programme with the aim to make the North-West part of Europe a key economic player and create an attractive place to work and live, with high levels of innovation, sustainability, and cohesion.

Starting in 2014, Interreg NWE invests €370 million at a 60% grant rate in activities based on the cooperation between organisations from eight countries: Ireland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, part of France, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Created to foster cooperation in North-West Europe, the programme has been approving projects to deliver concrete results to improve the quality of life of citizen and reduce disparities between regions. All funded projects aim to contribute to the Europe 2020 goals of delivering smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. Interreg NWE encourages public, private, scientific, and civil society organisations to cooperate to improve the economic, environmental, social and territorial development of Europe's regions.



### Programme Priorities

Interreg NWE funds projects under three priorities, each has one or more specific objectives.

PRIORITY 1	PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY 3
Innovation	Low Carbon	Resource & Materials Efficiency
Specific Objective	Specific Objective	Specific Objective
1. Enhance innovation performance of enterprises	1. Facilitate the implementation of low-carbon, energy & climate protection strategies to reduce GHG emissions 2. Facilitate the uptake of low carbon technologies, products, processes & services in sectors with high energy saving potential, to reduce GHG emissions 3. Facilitate the implementation of transnational low-carbon solutions in transport systems to reduce GHG emissions	1. Optimise (re)use of material & natural resources

## Programme Update 2019

### Project Idea Lab Brussels - April

The final project development event took place in Brussels on 2 April 2019. The event promoted the 9th call for proposals and brought together over 300 participants from across the programme area.

### Capitalisation Call & NWE Making an Impact event Lille - December

The Programme launched a capitalisation call during 2019. To promote the call, the Programme held its first capitalisation event on 4-5 December in Tourcoing, France. The event served to facilitate networking opportunities and building synergies between project results, was the first opportunity to highlight project achievements in a tangible way. The event attracted 370 participants which gave unique insights on the results achieved by the 83 NWE projects funded so far as well as detailed guidance on the Programme first call for capitalisation, which resulted in 15 received applications.



### Projects approved with Irish partners in 2019

In 2019, the Monitoring Committee approved an additional 25 projects were approved, ten of which have Irish involvement. These approvals saw approximately €7,172,456.321 million ERDF approved to Irish partners.

Project	Irish Partner	Grant Awarded € ERDF
<b>BioWILL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>University of Limerick</li><li>Institute of Technology Tralee</li><li>Gas Networks Ireland</li><li>University College Cork</li><li>Teagasc</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€1,098,428.00</li><li>€427,943.47</li><li>€100,625.50</li><li>€171,622.36</li><li>€0.00</li></ul>
<b>Care-Peat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>National University of Ireland Galway</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€978,285.63</li></ul>
<b>ENERGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>National University of Ireland Galway</li><li>CASTeL Dublin City University</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€1,176,835.15</li><li>€170,402.73</li></ul>
<b>ICaRE4Farms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Northern &amp; Western Regional Assembly</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€342,300.00</li></ul>
<b>OceanDEMO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SmartBay Ireland</li><li>Vilicom Engineering Limited</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€48,450.00</li><li>€48,450.00</li></ul>
<b>00.REAMIT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>University College Dublin</li><li>Institute of Technology in Tralee</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€426,788.05</li><li>€191,430.00</li></ul>
<b>RED WoLF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Institute of Technology, Sligo</li><li>Cork City Council</li><li>Carbery Housing Association</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€314,523.30</li><li>€253,370.00</li><li>€521,770.00</li></ul>
<b>SHAREPAIR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>National University of Ireland Galway</li><li>University of Limerick</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€326,069.76</li><li>€133,027.51</li></ul>
<b>THREE C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Irish Bioenergy Association</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€361,600.00</li></ul>
<b>ValuSect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Teagasc the Agriculture and Food Development Authority in Ireland</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>€395,058.08</li></ul>

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## Monitoring Committee Meetings

In 2019, the Monitoring Committee met four times - January, February, June, and September - to agree the project selection for both step 1 and step 2 submissions of the application process, and the first capitalization call. The Southern Regional Assembly represented the Member State at these meetings.

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## First Level Control

The Assembly's audit team process the Interreg NWE claims from Irish partners, including auditing project expenditure before submitting the claims for payment.

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### Further Information:

**National Contact Point:** [info@southernassembly.ie](mailto:info@southernassembly.ie)

**Michael Buckley is responsible for the First Level Control team:** [flc@southernassembly.ie](mailto:flc@southernassembly.ie)

**Website:** [www.nweurope.eu](http://www.nweurope.eu)



## Interreg Atlantic Area

*INTERREG Atlantic Area promotes transnational cooperation among 36 Atlantic regions of five European countries in Ireland, western UK, Portugal and designated coastal regions of Spain and France.*

With a total budget of €185 million, Atlantic Area assists transnational co-operation projects in the fields of Innovation & Competitiveness, Resource Efficiency, Territorial Risks Management, Biodiversity and Natural & Cultural Assets.

The overall objective of the programme is to implement solutions to answer regional challenges in the fields of innovation, resource efficiency, environment, and protection of cultural assets, to generate a better quality of life in the Atlantic Area territory.



## Programme Priorities

**The Programme has four Priorities and seven Specific Objectives:**

PRIORITY 1	PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY 3	PRIORITY 4
Stimulating Innovation & Competitiveness	Fostering resource efficiency	Strengthening the territory's resilience to risks of natural, climate and human origin	Enhancing biodiversity and the natural and cultural assets
Specific Objective	Specific Objective	Specific Objective	Specific Objective
<b>1.1</b> Enhancing innovation capacity through co-operation to foster competitiveness	<b>2.1</b> Foster renewable energies & energy efficiency	<b>3.1</b> Strengthening risk management systems	<b>4.1</b> Improving the protection of biodiversity & enhancing ecosystems services
<b>1.2</b> Strengthening the transfer of innovation results to facilitate the emergence of new products, services & processes	<b>2.2</b> Fostering green growth, eco-innovation & environmental efficiency		<b>4.2</b> Enhancing natural and cultural assets to stimulate economic development

The Northern & Western Regional Assembly is the National Contact Point for Atlantic Area.

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## Programme Update 2019

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There were no calls for proposals under Atlantic Area during 2019. Over the two calls launched in 2017 and 2018, the programme's monitoring committee approved 72 transnational projects with a financial investment of €179.4m (€150m ERDF co-financing) to the Atlantic Area region.

Public bodies in Spain, France, Ireland, Portugal and the United Kingdom lead these projects, with partners in 36 Atlantic Area regions. There is strong Irish participation in Atlantic Area projects, with €25.5m allocated to Irish public bodies involved in projects.

- 27 projects investing €63m to stimulate the innovation and competitiveness in Atlantic regions;
- 15 projects investing €42.2m to support the development of renewable sources of energy;
- 15 projects investing €20.3m in risk management systems;
- 21 projects investing €53.7m to enhance biodiversity and the Atlantic natural and cultural assets.

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## The Role of the Southern Regional Assembly

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The Regional Assembly sits on the programme's Regional Advisory Group, which is responsible for assessing project applications following each call for proposals and makes funding recommendations to the Programme Monitoring Committee.

The Assembly is the designated First Level Controllers for all payment claims from partners located in the S&E Region for INTERREG Atlantic Area.

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### Further Information:

**Brendan Mooney is the National Contact Point:** [bmooney@nwra.ie](mailto:bmooney@nwra.ie)

**The NWRA is responsible for the First Level Control:** [sconway@nwra.ie](mailto:sconway@nwra.ie)

**Website:** [www.atlanticarea.eu](http://www.atlanticarea.eu)

# Northern Periphery & Arctic Programme



**Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme**  
2014–2020



**EUROPEAN UNION**

Investing in your future  
European Regional Development Fund

*The Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme forms a cooperation between nine countries. Despite the geographical spread, the large programme area shares several joint challenges and opportunities that can best be overcome and realised by transnational cooperation.*

It is the Programme's vision to help generate vibrant, competitive, and sustainable communities, by harnessing innovation, expanding the capacity for entrepreneurship and seizing the unique growth initiatives and opportunities of the Northern and Arctic regions in a resource efficient way.



## Programme Priorities

The Programme has four Priorities and eight specific objectives:

PRIORITY 1	PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY 3	PRIORITY 4
Innovation	Entrepreneurship	Renewables & Energy Efficiency	Protecting, developing & promoting natural & cultural heritage
Specific Objective	Specific Objective	Specific Objective	Specific Objective
<b>1.1</b> Degree of collaborations between SMAs & R&D	<b>2.1</b> Conditions for start-ups in remote, sparsely populated areas	<b>3.1</b> Awareness of energy efficiency opportunities and renewable solutions in housing sector and public infrastructures in remote and sparsely populated areas	<b>4.1</b> Preparedness of responsible authorities in remote and sparsely populated areas for environmental management in relation to climate change & impacts of new investments in exploitation of natural resources
<b>1.2</b> Awareness & attitudes among health professionals towards the use of health technologies	<b>2.2</b> Awareness of business opportunities beyond local markets among SMEs		

The Northern & Western Regional Assembly is the National Contact Point for Atlantic Area.



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## Programme Update 2019

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The programme's monitoring committee approved 14 projects during 2019 resulting from the sixth and seventh calls for proposals, with an investment of €8m (€6.97m ERDF). A total of 58 main projects and 60 preparatory projects have been co-funded so far.

The Irish contact point hosted a national event in Cavan during 2019 to publicise the seventh call and offer support to applicant organisations.

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## The Role of the Southern Regional Assembly

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*The Regional Assembly sits on the programme's Regional Advisory Group, which is responsible for assessing project applications following each call for proposals and makes funding recommendations to the Programmes' Monitoring Committee. The Assembly is the designated First Level Controllers for all payment claims from partners located in the S&E Region for the Northern Periphery & Arctic Programme.*

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### Further Information:

**Brendan Mooney is the National Contact Point:** [bmooney@nwra.ie](mailto:bmooney@nwra.ie)

**Michael Buckley (SRA) and Sharon Conway (NWRA) are responsible for First Level Control:**  
[flc@southernassembly.ie](mailto:flc@southernassembly.ie) / [sconway@nwra.ie](mailto:sconway@nwra.ie)

**Website:** [www.interreg-npa.eu](http://www.interreg-npa.eu)

## Interreg VC: Interregional Cooperation

### Interreg Europe

*Interreg Europe helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy. By creating an environment and opportunities for sharing solutions, the Programme aims to ensure that government investment, innovation and implementation efforts all lead to integrated and sustainable impact for people and place.*

By co-financing projects under four thematic platforms, the programme allows regional and local public authorities and other players of regional relevance across Europe, to exchange practices and ideas on the way public policies work and thereby find solutions to improve their strategies for their own citizens. In addition to regular projects, policy-learning platforms are co-funded through the programme.

### Programme Priorities

**The Programme has four Priorities under which projects operate:**

1. Research & Innovation
2. SME Competitiveness
3. Low Carbon Economy
4. Environment & Resource Efficiency

### Programme Update

The results of the final call for proposals were announced in 2019 with 74 projects approved.

Included in these are 17 Irish organisations from across the country who are participating in 14 projects to benefit Irish regions.

This brings the total number of projects approved to 258, generally split evenly across the four priorities and full commitment of its €359 million funding allocation.

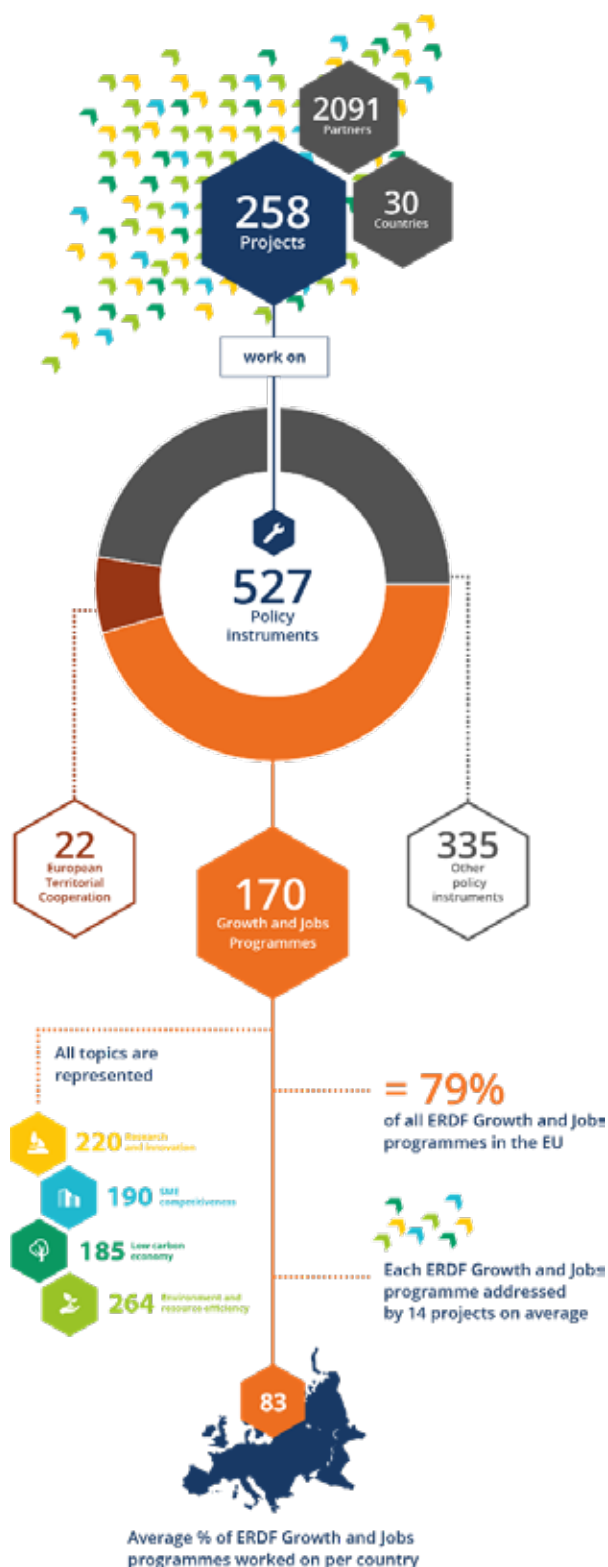
By the end of 2019, a total of 527 policy instruments operating in EU regions were improved or enhanced by the output of the projects and their regional action plans.

The Programme Secretariat was very active with supports for approved projects throughout 2019, with webinars on the claims process, communications and designing regional action plans.



**Interreg  
Europe**

European Union | European Regional Development Fund



## Projects approved with Irish partners under the fourth call for proposals

Project	Irish Partner	Total Irish Partner Budget €
Local Flavours - Authentic tourism based on local cultural flavours	• Waterford City & County Council	180,647.95
COHES3ION - Integrating the territorial dimension for cohesive S3	• Southern Regional Assembly	154,487.50
Blue Green City - Blue & Green Infrastructure for Sustainable Cities	• Southern Regional Assembly	110,590.10
CARPE DIGEM - Catalysing Regions in Peripheral & Emerging Europe towards Digital Innovation Ecosystems	• European Regions Network for Application of Communications Technology	187,341.70
PROGRESS - Promoting the Governance of Regional Ecosystem Services	• Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly	193,375.00
CRAFTS CODE - CReative Actions For Tailoring Smes' COmpetitive DEvelopment	• Design & Crafts Council of Ireland	175,441.50
SinCE-AFC - Enhancing the Entrepreneurship of SMEs in Circular Economy of the Agri-Food Chain	• Donegal County Council	145,418.00
Next2Met - Increasing attractiveness of Next2Met regions with soft digitalisation measures	• Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly	145,100.95
FOUNDATION - Building Regional Resilience to Industrial Structural Change	• Cork Institute of Technology	420,125.25
DIGITAL REGIONS - Regional policies adopting Industry 4.0 for their Digital Transformation	• European Regions Network for the Application of Communications Technology	330,792.80
AgroRES - Investing in Renewable Energies for Agriculture	• Institute of Technology, Sligo • Northern & Western Regional Assembly	209,659.30
SME POWER - SMEs powering a low carbon future	• SEAI • WESTBIC	212,848.50
PASSPARTOOL - Key tools to assess and improve soft innovation policies	• Donegal Local Enterprise Office	173,002.20
EU_SHAFE - Europe enabling Smart Healthy Age-Friendly Environments	• Technological University Dublin • ECHalliance • Louth County Council	312,233.75

## The Role of the Southern Regional Assembly

The Southern Regional Assembly is a Contact Point for the Southern & Eastern region of Ireland and represents the Irish Member State on the Programme's Monitoring Committee. The Assembly is the designated First Level Controllers for all payment claims from partners located in the S&E Region for INTERREG Europe.

### Further Information:

**David Kelly is the National Contact Point:** [dkelly@southernassembly.ie](mailto:dkelly@southernassembly.ie)

**Michael Buckley (SRA) and Sharon Conway (NWRA) are responsible for First Level Control:**  
[flc@southernassembly.ie](mailto:flc@southernassembly.ie) / [sconway@nwra.ie](mailto:sconway@nwra.ie)

**Website:** [www.interregeurope.eu](http://www.interregeurope.eu)



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# Other European Territorial Cooperation Programmes

## URBACT III

*The URBACT III European Territorial Co-operation programme aims to enable cities to work together and develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges, by networking, learning from one another's experiences, drawing lessons and identifying good practices to improve urban policies across the 27 Member States, Norway and Switzerland.*



The programme has a total eligible budget of €96.3 million and is jointly financed by the EU through the European Regional Development Fund.

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### URBACT III has four main objectives:

1. **Capacity for Policy Delivery:** to improve the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies and practices in an integrated and participative way;
2. **Policy Design:** to improve the design of sustainable strategies and action plans in cities;
3. **Policy Implementation:** to improve the implementation of integrated and sustainable urban strategies and action plans in cities;
4. **Building and Sharing Knowledge:** to ensure that practitioners and decision makers at all levels have increased access to knowledge and share know-how on all aspects of sustainable urban development in order to improve urban development policies.

URBACT III uses three types of interventions to achieve these objectives, - Transnational exchange, Capacity-building, and Capitalisation & dissemination.

The Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly is the National Contact Point for URBACT III.

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## Programme Update

The URBACT Call for Action Planning Networks opened from January to April 2019 and an URBACT Information Day was organised in Dublin in January. In June, the programme monitoring committee approved projects under the call - 23 networks, comprising 26 countries and 203 partners, six of which are Irish organisations. By the end of 2019, the URBACT programme had approved 48 networks across its four priorities and it has committed over 79% its total budget allocation, with the remaining to be allocated to networks starting in 2020.

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**Below is a list of the 14 Irish towns and cities that have been participating in URBACT III networks:**

<b>Action Planning Call 1</b>	Change! Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Smartimpact: Dublin City CityCentreDoctor: Naas MAPS: Longford TechTown: Limerick
Implementation Networks	Creative Spirits: Waterford
Transfer Networks	Volunteering Cities: Kildare The Playful Paradigm: Cork
<b>Action Planning Call 2</b>	Access: Dublin City UrbSecurity: Longford Find your Greatness: Limerick iPlace: Balbriggan Tourism Friendly cities: Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Health & Greenspace: Limerick

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## ***The Role of the Southern Regional Assembly***

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*The Southern Regional Assembly is the designated First Level Control function for all payment claims from partners located in the S&E Region for URBACT III.*

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### **Further Information:**

**Travis Doherty at the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly is the National Contact Point:** [urbactireland@emra.ie](mailto:urbactireland@emra.ie)

**Michael Buckley is responsible for First Level Control:** [flc@southernassembly.ie](mailto:flc@southernassembly.ie)

**Website:** [www.urbact.eu](http://www.urbact.eu)

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## ESPON 2020

*The ESPON 2020 Programme aims to promote and foster a European territorial dimension in development and co-operation by providing evidence, knowledge transfer and policy learning to public authorities and other policy actors at all levels.*



The objective of ESPON 2020 is to support the reinforcement of the effectiveness of EU Cohesion Policy and other sectoral policies and programmes under European Structural Investment Funds, as well as national and regional territorial development policies, through the production, dissemination and promotion of territorial evidence covering the entire territory of the 28 EU Members States, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

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### Programme Priorities

**The ESPON 2020 Programme has two Priority Axes:**

1. Territorial Evidence, Transfer, Observation, Tools and Outreach
2. Technical Assistance

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**The five specific objectives that guide the implementation of the ESPON 2020 Programme are:**

1. Enhanced production of territorial evidence through applied research and analyses;
2. Upgraded knowledge transfer and use of analytical user support;
3. Improved territorial observation and tools for territorial analyses;
4. Wider outreach and uptake of territorial evidence;
5. Leaner & more effective & efficient implementation provisions & more proficient programme assistance.

The National Institute for Regional & Spatial Analysis at Maynooth University is the Contact Point for the ESPON 2020.

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### The Role of the Southern Regional Assembly

*The Southern Regional Assembly is one of the Irish members of the Programme Monitoring Committee.*

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#### Further Information:

**Caroline Creamer is the Contact Point: Email:** [Caroline.creamer@nuim.ie](mailto:Caroline.creamer@nuim.ie)

**Website:** [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)

# Irish Regions European Office & Committee of the Regions

## Irish Regions European Office

*The Irish Regions European Office (IREO) is a specialised support service that acts as a bridge between Irish local and regional government and the European Union, explaining and guiding its stakeholders through the Brussels scene and promoting Irish interests and best practices at the European level. At the end of 2019, the new Head of Office at IREO took up post.*

IREO has four main functions by which it seeks to provide timely and relevant guidance and advisory services to stakeholders in order to inform and facilitate their individual and collective understanding of and engagement in European activities.



## European Policy

The IREO monitored and reported important EU policy development in 2019, particularly related to Brexit and the implications for Ireland, EU budget, future Cohesion Policy (incl. ETC (INTERREG) programmes) and funding for Ireland. The IREO also monitored policy developments in relation to agriculture, trade and environment, including the new EU Green Deal. Developments on the establishment of the Just Transition Mechanism were also closely monitored and input provided to ensure Irish participation in the programme. During 2019, IREO worked closely with key EU stakeholders and policy makers, including Irish local and regional representation on Brussels-based specialised networks in relation to Cohesion Policy negotiations and Brexit. IREO regularly communicate Irish interests, including the Irish MEPs, European Commission officials and Irish Government officials in the Irish Permanent Representation to the EU.

The IREO organised a visit for Cork County Council to Brussels in November on the subject of EU agricultural policy, including meetings with a wide range of EU policy makers - the Irish Representation to the EU, European Commission officials and Irish MEPs.



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## Funding and Financing

During 2019, the IREO used its new website and social media to share relevant EU affairs information and funding opportunities with Irish local and regional audiences. Funding calls, particularly in WiFi 4 EU, Urban Innovative Actions, as well as a number of preparatory funding events, held both in Brussels and Ireland. A Euro Focus section in the Council Review publication is now regular feature. In addition, support was provided to Offaly County Council on Technical Assistance tools for the Coal Regions in Transition initiative in form of research and engagement with the initiative's secretariat.

The IREO held briefing sessions with a number of Irish organisations in 2019, including presentations to University College Cork, Cork Smart Gateway, Trinity College Dublin focusing on collaboration of universities and local authorities on EU funding opportunities. Presentations to Chambers Ireland and meetings with Enterprise Ireland were also held throughout the year.

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## Networking

A highlight of 2019 was the organisation of activities for EMRA, NWRA and SRA during the European Week of Regions and Cities in October, including a meeting with Trade Commissioner, Phil Hogan, who outlined the current state of play in negotiations on the EU / UK trade arrangements post Brexit. The delegation also had an official Brexit briefing from Department of Foreign Affairs as well as a meeting with Irish MEPs in the European Parliament. IREO also assisted with the formal launch of Galway 2020 in Brussels in October.

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## Committee of the Regions

IREO is the secretariat to the Irish delegation to the Committee of the Regions and co-ordinates the work of the members of the national delegation to the Committee of the Regions (CoR). During 2019, it continued to enhance the strategic linkages between their activities and the priorities of Irish local and regional government. Communication was received from Government and from the Council of the EU confirming the Members of the CoR for the new mandate, commencing in Feb 2020.

The European Union's assembly of local and regional representatives, the CoR has 350 members from across the 28 EU Member States, all of whom are democratically elected and/or hold a political mandate in their home country. The CoR's role is to inform the development of EU legislation and future European policies through the input of those most closely representing communities, with a focus on those EU policy areas and proposals that most greatly affect regions and cities.



The CoR mainly presents its views through written opinions or resolutions, which are developed in one of six thematic commissions covering the following policy areas:

- Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX);
- Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER);
- Economic Policy (ECON);
- Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE);
- Natural Resources (NAT);
- Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC).

Each Commission generally meets on five occasions during the year to prepare the opinions for adoption at the 5-6 plenary annual sessions. Commissioners, Presidency Ministers and MEPs regularly attend CoR meetings, and there is an ongoing exchange between the institutions on policy issues.

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## The Irish Delegation 2019 – Southern Region Representatives

The Irish Government nominated CoR representatives in October following the local elections in May. The newly nominated representatives will be formally appointed in early 2020.

**Below is a list of CoR representatives for the Southern Region for 2019.**

Cllr. Michael Murphy	Tipperary County Council ( <i>CoR Member</i> )
Cllr. Deirdre Forde	Cork City Council ( <i>CoR Member</i> )
Cllr. Kieran McCarthy	Cork City Council ( <i>CoR Member</i> )
Cllr. Hughie McGrath	Tipperary County Council ( <i>CoR Alt Member</i> )
Cllr William Patton	Carlow County Council ( <i>CoR Alt Member</i> )

Further information on the Irish Delegation can be found at [www.emra.ie/committee-of-the-regions](http://www.emra.ie/committee-of-the-regions)

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## Legislative Works

### June

- The Irish Delegation tabled delegation-wide amendments to the opinion on Towards a more efficient and democratic decision making in EU tax policy, defending the Irish government position on taxation issues.

### October

- Cllr Michael Murphy was appointed a rapporteur for opinion on the Implementation of Free Trade Agreements – the local and regional perspective.
  - Cllr Deirdre Forde held a follow-up consultation for her opinion on the Single Market Programme with the European Parliament and met with the EP rapporteur on the topic to exchange views and voice local concerns on the matter (MEP Nicola Danti, Italy).
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## Contributions of Note

As Rapporteur on the opinion on implementation of Free Trade Agreements, Cllr Michael Murphy officially endorsed a resolution tabled by the Spanish Delegation to the CoR on the impact of the ongoing US-EU trade dispute on the agrifood sector. This exchange was publicised in papers, in Ireland as well as a number of other Member States including Spain and France.

The Irish delegation provided input to the National Reform Programme 2019 to link EU policy to the work of Irish LRAs on ground, highlighting particularly the role of RSEs in EU policy implementation.

The Delegation continued to act as the key link between the Committee and the Irish Representation. The Delegation also held meetings with Irish MEPs as well as with the Irish Commissioner Phil Hogan (then Commissioner for Agriculture) to voice the needs of the Irish local government on the EU stage.



*Cllr. Michael Murphy, Head of Delegation, addresses the Committee of the Regions plenary session*

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## Priorities of the 2019 Work Programme

The CoR contributed to a broader debate lead by the European Commission on shape the **future priorities of the EU**, with a view to the post-Brexit period and the mandate of the newly elected European Parliament in May 2019. To respond to ongoing discussions at the highest levels of the EU, the CoR held a Summit in Romania to present its declaration by local and regional leaders on the future of Europe, which voiced the local and regional concerns on the functioning of the EU, particularly in light of new term of office of the EU institutions.

In 2019, the CoR continued to promote its position on the key **Multiannual Financial Framework** and in seeking to influence the ongoing negotiations around funding, including Cohesion Policy and CAP. Irish Delegation took part in both

debates as well as external events to voice the concerns of Irish local and regional authorities regarding future EU funding. The Delegation also held a number of meetings with Irish officials from EU institutions and the Irish Permanent Representation on the matter. Irish Delegation are members of the #CohesionAlliance, a group set up in 2018 to defend a strong budget for a cohesive Europe.

The **future relationship between the EU and the UK** was a priority for the Irish Delegation, taking the position that the CoR should maintain as close a relationship as possible with the UK following Brexit. All full and alternate Irish members continue to be members of the interregional group on Brexit. The group continues to be the CoR's main platform for knowledge and information exchange in relation to Brexit. Last year also saw the beginning of discussions in relation to a CoR EU-UK Consultative Group to allow the UK to participate in the work of the CoR post-Brexit, particularly in areas of interest such as agriculture or ETC.



Cllr. Deirdre Forde, CoR Representative



Cllr. Kieran McCarthy, CoR Representative

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## Main Opinions Adopted in 2019

### Resolutions 2019

#### June

- Proposals of the European Committee of the Regions for the new European Union legislative mandate

#### October

- Resolution on the 2019 European Semester and in view of the 2020 Annual Growth Survey
- Resolution on Developments in the Interinstitutional Negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-27

#### December

- Resolution on the Green Deal in partnership with local and regional authorities

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### Opinions 2019

#### April

- The European Semester and Cohesion Policy: aligning structural reforms with long-term investments

#### June

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a basis for a long-term EU strategy for a sustainable Europe by 2030

#### October

- Recommendations for the successful design of regional development strategies beyond 2020
  - Better Communication for Cohesion Policy
  - Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment
  - Contribution to the renewed Territorial Agenda with special emphasis on October 2019 Community-Led Local Development
-

# Regional Assembly

## Energy Usage 2019

### Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland Annual Energy Monitoring & Reporting

The need for energy efficiency is of great national importance given the challenges we face in relation to the need for security of energy supply, fluctuating energy costs, and addressing global climate change.

The key drivers for energy efficiency at European level are included in the Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) (2012/27/EU), which sets out the policy roadmap for the period to 2020 and places legally binding measures on Member States to advance more efficient use of energy at all stages of the energy chain. Public bodies must achieve a target of 33% energy efficiency improvement by 2020.

Public bodies have two key obligations with regard to reporting energy performance on an organisational basis:

- To report the organisation's energy performance directly to SEAI each year to track progress towards the 2020 target;
- To include a statement on the organisation's energy performance in our annual report.

### Overview of Energy Usage in 2019

The Assembly employs 25 staff and most are located at Assembly House.

*Electricity is the sole energy source and energy consumption can be broken into four categories:*

- Office heating;
- Providing light;
- Powering of personal computers, laptops, printers and other office equipment;
- Heating water.

In 2019, 32,114 Kwh of energy was consumed at Assembly House, all generated by electricity.

### Actions Undertaken in 2019

In 2019, the Regional Assembly undertook the following actions to review our energy performance:

- The building is a protected structure so there were limitations on the level of retrofitting permissible however the external insulation on the roof was undertaken as an energy efficiency measure;
- The Assembly is exempt from Directive (EPBD) 2002/91/EC as listed buildings of outstanding architectural or historical importance (protected structures) are exempt. BER certificates are only applicable to public buildings greater than 1000m<sup>2</sup> and the Assembly building falls under these criteria;
- Energy costs and supply are reviewed on a quarterly basis, in accordance with the National Procurement Service contractual arrangements;
- The Assembly made an annual energy return to SEAI during 2019.

### Actions Planned for 2020

*In 2020, the Southern Regional Assembly will work with our SEAI appointed relationship manager towards reaching our energy saving target, including:*

- Ongoing review of energy consumption, bills and performance;
- Return annual energy performance reports to SEAI;
- Energy awareness training for all employees;
- Developing an energy management programme or system and an annual plan;
- Identify potential energy improvement areas and take appropriate action where necessary.



# Annual Financial Statement 2019 }

## Consolidated Balance Sheet for the Financial Year ending 31st December 2019

Income	2019 €	2018 €
Local Authority Contributions	1,603,781	1,668,016
Built Heritage Investment Scheme Grant	8,000	0
Travel Recoupment EU Programmes	167,011	15,602
Salary Recoupment EU Programmes	305,349	196,160
General Recoupment EU Programmes	76,208	44,503
Dept of Public Expenditure & Reform	3,037	0
Technical Assistance Recoupment	344,470	280,694
Designated Urban Centre Grants Scheme	1,932,530	981,526
First Level Control (FLC) Fees	86,015	64,866
Miscellaneous	1,106	21,192
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,527,510</b>	<b>3,272,558</b>

Expenditure	2019 €	2018 €
Payroll Costs	1,375,893	1,387,792
Pension Related Deduction	52,188	54,247
Superannuation	9,250	4,581
Travel & Subsistence – Staff	162,577	145,639
Members Annual Allowance	63,807	93,088
Members SPA / Other Travel	4,373	14,554
Members Training / Conference Allowance	32,269	4,579
Conference Fees	1,932	1,150
Office Equipment & Supplies	24,946	27,598
Repairs, Maintenance & Office Costs	84,551	39,921
Refurbishment Costs	31,148	19,652
Annual Contracts	58,501	28,172
Energy Costs	12,690	10,223

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>2019 €</b>	<b>2018 €</b>
Post & Phone	14,741	15,340
Rates & Water Charges	666	7,448
Insurance	10,883	13,430
Annual Report	4,855	3,125
Consultancy/Professional Fees	55,026	19,170
Public Relations/Information & Publicity	82,550	132,355
Contributions/Fees/Levies (LGMA & Audit)	8,471	9,717
Health and Safety	1,780	82
Regional Planning RSES	55,206	34,948
Gateway Grant Scheme – Project Payments	1,932,530	981,526
Depreciation Charge	1,503	1,730
Bank Charges	868	1,217
Bad debts written off (FLC)	3,133	0
Miscellaneous	4,986	13,345
Inter-Account Transfer	28,163	0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>4,119,486</b>	<b>3,064,629</b>
<b>Excess of Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>408,024</b>	<b>207,929</b>



