

**OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME UNDER THE
'INVESTMENT FOR GROWTH AND JOBS' GOAL**

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1. STRATEGY FOR THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

1.1 Strategy for the operational programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1.1 Description of the programme's strategy for contributing to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Introduction

The Southern & Eastern (S&E) Regional Operational Programme (OP) 2014-2020 has been prepared in the context of the Union's Europe2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and is consistent with the common Strategic Framework for European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020. The specific focus of the European Regional Development Fund (under the investment in growth and jobs goal) is on research and innovation, information and communications technologies (ICT), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), promoting a low carbon economy and supporting integrated urban development. The OP sets out a development strategy, including a coherent set of investment priorities to meet the strategic objectives that have been set for the Regional OP, taking account of specific regional needs. This section sets out the Operational Programme's strategy and how it will contribute to the delivery of the Europe 2020 strategy of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Comprehensive Needs Analysis

A comprehensive territorial Needs and SWOT analysis was undertaken jointly for the ERDF and ESF co-financed Operational Programmes in 2013. The overall objective of the Needs Analysis was to ensure that the strategic choices made by the Irish programming bodies were justified, that they were consistent with the EU strategies of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, with the ERDF and ESF fund-specific missions and with the Treaty goals of economic, social and territorial cohesion (Articles 174 and 175 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). To this end, the Needs Analysis was intended to provide an evidence-base in setting out the baseline situation and underpinning policies and strategies in respect of the selected prioritised themes for the ERDF and ESF co-financed programmes.

The Needs Analysis was conducted on a joint basis which drew upon the European, National and Regional Policy analysis expertise of the Managing Authorities, the spatial analysis and mapping expertise of the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at NUI Maynooth and the territorial analysis expertise of the Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT). The Needs Analysis process followed a framework that was specifically developed for this purpose.

Bottlenecks, Potential and Priority Development Needs

A thematic SWOT analysis for each of the 11 thematic objectives for the S&E region was undertaken as part of the Needs Analysis process and this, in summary, identified the following bottlenecks, growth potentials and development needs of the S&E Region:

Bottlenecks

1. Capacity of HEIs throughout the region to access research funding up to the OECD average, generate R&D activity and commercialise R&D outputs;
2. Quality of academic-industrial linkages;
3. Limited resources available for business-based research and innovation;
4. Level of SME establishment and growth (in some sub-regions) including access to various forms of finance;
5. Broadband availability, quality and speed particularly outside urban areas;
6. Deficient transport network in certain parts of the region including roads, rail and public transport;
7. Poor energy performance of the building stock;
8. Level of provision of renewable energy relative to potential;
9. Availability of adequate water and waste-water treatment and distribution; and
10. Lack of funds to invest in major economic projects in key centres and excessive private car commuting

Potential:

1. Increased R&D activity particularly related to existing clusters and specialisations leading to enhanced innovation and commercialisation;
2. Enhanced linkages between HEIs and enterprise leading to increased R&D commercialisation and employment;
3. Enhanced skills of work-force relative to enterprise needs leading to reduced unemployment;
4. Increased provision of renewable energy from a variety of sources but particularly wind and marine;
5. Significant savings from the improved energy performance of the building stock;
6. Growth of targeted enterprise sectors in which the region already has a strong base, including agri-food, ICT/software, pharma chemical and financial services;
7. Increased economic activity and employment from enhanced high-speed broadband provision;
8. Reduction in locational imbalances with enhanced roads, public transport and broadband provision;
9. Increased investment in business and enterprise if water and waste-water bottlenecks are removed; and
10. Enhanced attractiveness of urban growth centres to support inward investment, tourism and enterprise development and sustainable commuting patterns.

Development Needs:

1. Increasing research and development activities within HEIs and specialised research institutions including the employment of high-quality researchers and

- those on research focussed programmes of study and the co-ordination and management of inter-institution projects;
2. Strengthening links between HEIs and industry to increase the level of innovation and R&D within enterprises and accelerate commercialisation of research outputs;
 3. Increase the rate of establishment of new SMEs, the growth of SMEs and the entry of SMEs into the export market, including start-ups by women and young entrepreneurs;
 4. The continued and expanded use of HEI incubation centres to facilitate the development of spin-in and spin-out enterprises;
 5. The development of an appropriately skilled workforce that is available to enterprises;
 6. The provision of high-speed and 4G broadband particularly in rural areas;
 7. The upgrading of major secondary link roads in order to remove bottlenecks within the road system The continued development of low-carbon transport infrastructure including public transport, cycling, and electrically powered vehicles;
 8. The upgrading of water and waste-water facilities particularly in major urban centres;
 9. The development of renewable energy resources including wind, marine and biomass in particular and the enhancement of distribution networks and the continued upgrading of the Region's building stock to achieve better energy efficiency; and
 10. Development of major economic projects within key regional growth centres.
 11. Development of sustainable urban mobility strategies.

The comprehensive ERDF Needs Analysis, described above, included a review of key EU and national policy drivers, Ireland's national reform programme and an assessment of sectoral trends for each of the thematic objectives, along with urban development. The ex ante evaluation of the draft Operational Programme found (section 4.2.1) that the development of a thorough, in-depth SWOT/Needs Analysis of the S&E Programme Region was an important aspect of the programme development process and that it provided a base of information for informed decision-making on the selection of investment priorities.

Needs of Urban, Rural and Marine and Coastal Areas

The Needs Analysis also analysed the specific territorial needs of urban, rural and coastal and marine areas in the S&E Region.

Urban Development Needs

Sustainable urban development requires that urban areas would be effective and attractive locations economically, socially and environmentally. This would suggest that levels of unemployment should be low, enterprise development high, educational attainment and skills levels high, social deprivation relatively low and environmental indicators such as water quality, air quality and energy use should all be good and improving.

The Gateways and Hubs Development Index (GHDI) 2012 is a useful tool for considering the issues that apply generally within the urban areas of Ireland. This index was developed in 2013 by the Regional Assemblies and is updated from the 2009 Index using data available to year-end 2012 that applies to the nine Gateways and the nine Hubs. It should be noted that for the purposes of the index the boundaries extend beyond the administrative boundaries of the cities and towns involved and, in some cases, incorporate a significant element of the rural hinterland, within the functional areas of the growth centres.

From this data it can be seen that the population of each Gateway and Hub grew without exception in the period between 2006 and 2011. The rate of population growth varied considerably between settlements from a high of 11.49% (Mallow) to a low of 4.6% (Tralee-Killarney). This suggests that, from a population point of view, the Gateways and Hubs have the potential to remain and develop as sustainable entities.

The next point of note is the increasing skill levels of the workforce in urban areas. This is reflected in the increase in third-level-qualified workers within the urban areas. It is interesting to note that the variation in this change is significantly less than that relating to population with most rates lying between 6% and 9%. This suggests the emergence of a more skilled workforce but may also reflect in part losses from the construction industry. From a sustainable development point of view this suggests that the Gateways and Hubs are well placed to engage in the knowledge economy from where much of the employment of the future is likely to emerge. It does also mean, however, that there is a danger of a social divide emerging based on educational attainment and consequent opportunities for employment.

Broadband connectivity has also increased at a very consistent rate within these urban areas – by between 42% and 49.4% for the majority of towns. This suggests a major increase in broadband activity during the period though it does not indicate the quality of the broadband, its cost or its speed. However, this increase does suggest that access to services and knowledge in an online context is now available to the majority of the urban population.

The level of unemployment in the Gateways and Hubs averaged 19.94% and 20.07% respectively in 2011. This compared with a national unemployment rate of 19.0% when calculated on the same basis with the level of unemployment in all locations having increased significantly since 2006. There was considerable variation in the unemployment rates which ranged from a high of 22.8% (Wexford) to a low of 16.6% (Cork). Within this range it is noticeable that, in general, the larger cities had the lowest rates of unemployment, though, census data also suggests that the unemployment rates in some core city areas are amongst the highest in the country.

Another factor contributing to economic sustainability relates to the rate of formation of new enterprises. This rate fell in virtually all urban areas during the 2006 to the 2011 period. The fall ranged between 1.9% (Cork) and 7.7% (Cavan). This is not surprising given the economic downturn. The decrease tended to be at the lower end of the spectrum in the larger cities and one city, Waterford, went contrary to the general trend with a small increase in business formation. This does suggest, however, that this is an area that needs particular attention across a range of initiatives if future economic vibrancy is to be maintained with its consequential impact on employment and poverty.

With regard to issues of environmental sustainability it is worth noting that the use of private transport generally in Ireland is very high. With the exception of Dublin, Cork to a lesser extent and the other cities to an even lesser extent, intra-urban public transport systems are poorly developed and there is little in the way of commuter services. This leads to congestion and/or slow journey times in many urban centres.

Air quality in Ireland is generally very good and is good in urban as well as rural areas. With regard to water and waste-water facilities, however, there are situations in which future water demand and future waste-water treatment capacity may have negative implications for future development. Some major infrastructure projects are under development such as the Dublin Region Water Supply Project. However, there is an urgent need to manage the use of water in urban areas and to provide additional waste-water treatment in certain urban centres. Finally, it is important to note that there are ambitious population growth targets for certain urban centres and that the achievement of these levels of growth is significantly dependent on the availability of water and waste-water treatment facilities.

A final issue identified was the need for significant investment in economic projects in urban areas. Where an area is in stagnation or not developing at the pace anticipated it often requires a stimulus to address the bottlenecks that are giving rise to the low levels of growth. It is important that any such investment would have a clear purpose, would address an identified need and be clearly integrated with other activities. If these conditions are met, however, individual projects in urban areas can have a significant impact.

Needs of Rural Areas

Accessibility is a key need of rural areas in Ireland. Accessibility refers both to physical and electronic forms of access. With regard to physical access, while the radial road system in Ireland and centred on Dublin has improved significantly in the past decade, the transverse routes connecting other major national and regional centres has not improved to the same extent. This still leads to transport bottlenecks in terms of congestion in some cases or slow journey times in others. In addition, rural public transport availability is inconsistent and creates access difficulties for those who do not own private transport.

An important aspect of rurality and the development needs of rural areas is the extent to which rural dwellers commute to urban areas for work. Evidence from the 2011 Census shows that commuting to urban areas is an important aspect of rural dwellers' employment. The WDC Policy Briefing *Commuting to Work: Rural Dwellers, Urban Jobs* (May 2014) shows that:

- In 2011, 35.5% of workers were rural dwellers, but just over a fifth (21.3%) of all jobs was located in rural areas.
- The most significant employment destination for rural dwellers is urban areas (43.5%), while 37% of rural dwellers work in rural areas.
- Nearly one in five (19%) of all rural dwellers commute to work in one of the nine NSS gateways and over one third of these have journey times of 45 minutes or more.

- One in four (24.4%) commute to work in towns, of which over three fifths (62%) are women.

The data show that many rural dwellers commute to work over long distances and a higher share of rural dwellers working in gateways have third level education compared to those working in towns and rural areas. This indicates that rural dwellers have the skills to avail of employment opportunities in gateways and many choose to travel long distances to access better employment opportunities located there.

With regard to electronic access, the availability of broadband in rural areas is more restricted than that in urban areas and the speed and quality of the services that are available are also poorer. This gives rise to the danger of the emergence of a digital divide on a geographic basis as well as those that may arise from social and economic factors.

Population and employment decline are some of the key challenges facing some rural areas and towns. Recent evidence from CEDRA shows that the economic downturn has had differing effects on urban and rural Ireland with rural areas particularly affected, with an increase in unemployment of 192% compared to 114% in urban areas between 2006 and 2011. Research for CEDRA also indicates that many of the key issues confronting rural communities are part of a long term economic and social transformation, as well as reflecting the more immediate impacts of the economic crisis, such as the significant decline in construction employment which in part is related to the longer term decline in agricultural employment. Many rural communities have been fundamentally changed through the decline of traditional rural industries, increased underemployment and growing connections between rural and urban areas, such as increased commuting.

The GVA in rural areas tends to be significantly less than that in urban areas. That is to be expected given the higher value-adding occupations tend to be clustered in the urban centres of the country and particularly in the Greater Dublin Area. Disposable income in the rural areas tends to be lower than that in urban areas. This situation and that in the previous paragraph are pointed to by the lower GVA and disposable income in those sub-regions that are significantly rural in nature.

The nature of water and waste-water services in rural areas is also a matter worth noting both in terms of the quality of service to the rural population and the implications for environmental quality. Nearly 80% of the dwellings in the Aggregate Rural Areas of the country were served by septic tanks in 2011 while nearly two-thirds were served by a private water supply.

The energy efficiency of dwellings in rural areas is not likely to be significantly different to that in urban areas when age of construction is used as a proxy. In 2011 43% of houses in urban areas were built prior to 1980 with 46% of the houses in rural areas built prior to the same year. The corresponding figures for houses built before 1990 were 53% and 57%.

Many rural areas had a significant exposure to the decline in employment in the construction industry. It is noticeable that in 2011 many of the highest unemployment rates in the country were experienced by the more rural counties as well as by the core areas of the country's cities.

The protection and conservation of the country's Natura 2000 sites will also fall primarily on the rural population as the vast majority of these sites lie within the rural areas of the country. This has some implications for social and economic development in these areas though proper management of development can minimise any potential negative effects of these designations.

The rural areas of the country also contain many resources and opportunities for future development including agriculture and food, eco-tourism, the development of the blue economy and wind, bio-mass and marine energy. While some of these developments may not add significant numbers of direct employment opportunities, they do offer the opportunity for the development of income for rural areas and, if managed properly, for the development of employment in the processing and distribution of the raw materials available from within rural areas. Rural areas and smaller towns also have access to a highly skilled and educated workforce, many of whom are currently commuting long distances to work. This human capital resource is an important development opportunity for rural areas and smaller centres. It is a resource for sectors such as knowledge services which can be delivered from smaller towns and rural areas to other parts of Ireland and overseas, as long as sufficient quality broadband services are available.

Needs of Coastal & Marine Areas

The Irish seafood sector is a vital indigenous industry which makes a significant contribution to the national economy in terms of output, employment and exports. Generating over 11,000 jobs in the coastal regions the industry contributes circa €700 million to the national economy annually. This is the equivalent of 0.44% of Irish GDP in 2011. Geographically the industry operates right around the coast of Ireland and is concentrated on the western seaboard from Castletownbere, Co. Cork, in the south-west, to Killybegs, Co Donegal, in the far north-west, and the harbour towns of the south-east coastline.

Ireland's natural resource based seafood industry provides an important source of economic activity in the remote coastal regions. It provides jobs on fishing vessels, on fish farms, in processing operations, in distribution and marketing seafood at home and to export markets and in a large number of smaller ancillary companies that provide services to the mainstream industry operators. In the Irish context the main industry stakeholders are the primary production sectors of fish catching (offshore and inshore) and aquaculture; the primary and secondary processing sectors; the marketing sectors; and ancillary industries such as net-making, vessel repair, transport, and a number of other services, the majority of which are based in coastal locations.

A review of socio-economic data for coastal Electoral Districts indicates challenges in terms of retaining coastal population, above average age dependency rates in areas of the South-East, North and West, poor educational attainment in the West and North-West and levels of semi or unskilled employment have declined, but remain above the national average in many coastal areas. Both male and female unemployment levels are above the national average in many coastal districts, with male unemployment rates higher in all areas.

These indicators illustrate that a fundamental issue arising from the process of restructuring of the Seafood Industry, is the impact that process is having on coastal

communities dependent on seafood production. Mechanisms must therefore be developed to support communities dependent on fisheries and aquaculture to tackle the challenges they face as a result of change in the seafood industry, and improve their quality of life, by accessing support to enhance local seafood related activity, community infrastructure and diversification into other activities. The following challenges/ goals were identified as part of the Needs Analysis for the EMFF Programme in Ireland, and these are also relevant to the ERDF Operational Programmes.

- To develop networking and exchange of knowledge , industry collaboration which will lead to results in best practice and long term gains
- To ensure that responsibly harvested inshore seafood products are rewarded in the market place
- To ensure that fishing communities develop confidence, broaden their economic base and demonstrate innovation and sustainability
- To ensure that onshore side of fishing activities are safer, more efficient, and complemented by a substantial growth in marine tourism use
- To allow for skills development, service provision and support for new and reinvigorated marine based enterprises
- To ensure piers, harbours and coastal infrastructure that services both fisheries and tourism are sufficient for these purposes.
- To enable key fishing community members to develop new skills, access employment opportunities and develop new businesses
- To develop artisan seafood businesses which will increase the value and volume of local seafood processed

Sub-territorial Analysis

An analysis of sub-regional territorial needs was also undertaken based on the following indicators:

- Levels of Unemployment 2013
- Difference in Unemployment between 2003 and 2013
- Disposable Income/Person
- Change in Disposable Income/Person 2007-2010
- Ratio of GVA contribution to percentage of those at work
- Percentage population change 2006-2011
- Youth Dependency
- Older Age Dependency
- Pobal Deprivation Index
- Changes in Deprivation Index
- Percentage of houses connected to the Internet 2012

Dublin Region

As might be expected this Sub-Region shows the lowest level of deprivation of all the sub-regions. It scores poorly on the change in the number of houses connected to the Internet though this reflects an already high level of connection, the quality of which is also likely to be better than the rest of the country. It also shows a low level of increase in unemployment with the overall level of unemployment also being relatively low. It scores best on the Pobal Deprivation Index as well as the changes in that index and has the highest disposable income of all the Sub-Regions.

Mid-East Region

This Sub-Region ranks high in terms of disposable income and the Pobal Deprivation Index. However, it displays some trends which might give cause for concern. So, for example, while it ranked second-best in terms of disposable income, it ranked worst in terms of decline in that income. In addition, while it ranked second best in terms of the Pobal Deprivation Index, it ranked worst in terms of changes in that index. In addition while it is ranked at the mid-point with regard to unemployment it ranks below that in terms of changes in unemployment. This suggests that the new populations which grew up in this sub-region in the last decade may be under particular pressure from the economic decline and the associated loss of employment.

Mid-West Region

The Mid-West Sub-Region performs somewhat less than average with regard to the Pobal Deprivation Index and performs at or near average on many measures. It ranks low on three measures – overall unemployment, changes in unemployment and percent population change. However, it performs best with regard to the number of SMEs per head of population which suggests that there is a strong entrepreneurial spirit in the Sub-Region which may help in addressing the issue of unemployment over time provided the right supports are provided.

South-East Region

Overall this Sub-Region scores poorly on a number of measures, including unemployment where it ranks lowest, change in unemployment, disposable income and change in disposable income as well as the Pobal Deprivation Index and the changes in that index where it ranks sixth out of the eight Sub-Regions. It also shows a low number of SMEs per head of population which adds to the difficulties for the Sub-Region in addressing the unemployment and disposable income issues. It performs best with regard to population change and internet connectivity.

South-West Region

This Sub-Region performs at or better than average on most measures and performs poorly on two measures only. The lower than average increase in population may not be a matter of particular concern and the percent of houses connected to the Internet may also be regarded as less critical than some other measures. The Sub-Region performs third best in terms of the Pobal Deprivation Index and performs next with regards to unemployment and changes in unemployment.

In addition an analysis of rural and urban needs was undertaken.

Regional Innovation and Competitiveness and Smart Specialisation

The Irish Government's Action Plan for Jobs (2014) focuses on regaining lost competitiveness, boosting productivity, increasing export intensity and diversity of markets, taking measures to improve Ireland's attractiveness as a location for foreign investment and achieving an increase in start-ups and entrepreneurial activity. The strategy recognises that creating a competitive business environment is essential to ensuring Ireland and its regions achieve sustainable economic growth and higher levels of employment growth. It also recognises that regions that support strong and dynamic enterprises are crucial to Ireland's return to overall economic growth.

The Action Plan highlights that Ireland has built up a strong science base in recent years but the focus of Ireland's science, technology and innovation (STI) policy must now be on accelerating the economic and societal return on STI investment, further strengthening enterprise engagement with public research and driving more commercialisation of publicly performed research. Investment in STI is acknowledged as an essential component of supporting an innovative and enterprising economy. It assists in creating and maintaining high-value jobs and attracts, develops and nurtures business, scientists and talented people.

The National Research Prioritisation Exercise, which is the core element of Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy for Research and Innovation, includes provisions to enhance the effectiveness of the national research system, the labour market for researchers and optimal circulation, access to and transfer of scientific knowledge as well as enhancing the conditions for further transnational cooperation. The European Research Area Progress Report 2013 Staff Working Document ([http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=SWD:2013:0333\(54\):FIN:EN:PDF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=SWD:2013:0333(54):FIN:EN:PDF)) notes that the science technology and innovation system in Ireland is well aligned with the ERA priority to promote effective national research systems, with peer-reviewed competitive funding continuing to prevail in Ireland.

A detailed "Framework of Metrics and Targets for Monitoring Public Investment in Science, Technology and Innovation" has been drawn up to measure the outputs and impact of funding provided. This framework was adopted to stretch the public enterprise support system in order to maximise the impact of public investment in R&D under the National Research Prioritisation Exercise and to assess the success over time of the implementation of Research Prioritisation.

In line with Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy which builds upon the Research Prioritisation Exercise, the majority of competitive public research funding is being aligned with 14 priority areas where Ireland is most likely to get economic and societal returns, particularly in the form of jobs. Relevant Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) and integrating infrastructure will also be supported. The priority areas, which cover food, health, ICT, manufacturing, energy and innovation in business services and

processes, were identified on the basis of existing strengths of the public research and enterprise base and opportunities that exist in term of the global marketplace. Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy is a dynamic policy with mechanisms already in place to assess performance, and commitment to develop a process to add priority areas or de-prioritise others.

Ireland's Research Priorities are as follows:

1. Future Networks & Communications
2. Food for Health
3. Data Analytics, Management, Security & Privacy
4. Sustainable Food Production & Processing
5. Digital Platforms, Content & Applications
6. Marine Renewable Energy
7. Connected Health & Independent Living
8. Smart Grids & Smart Cities
9. Medical Devices
10. Manufacturing Competitiveness

The Action Plan for Jobs recognises some of the barriers to enterprise driven competitiveness improvements, including access to finance, lack the innovation capacity, language and international sales skills, to take advantage of growth opportunities. It envisages increased support for indigenous firms seeking to trade internationally, ICT skills initiatives, new measures promoting access to finance and direct support to the enterprise sector to build their capacity for research and development. The Action Plan also states that successful delivery of the National Broadband Plan will ultimately underpin job creation across all sectors of the economy by providing high quality connectivity across the country.

The capability building supports offered by Enterprise Ireland provide support for scaling, management development, mentoring and cluster development within Irish-owned companies as well as strengthening the capacity of Irish-owned firms to benefit from linkages with the multinational enterprise base in Ireland. There will be a renewed focus on Industry-led clustering initiatives.

The Action Plan puts a strong focus on a number of domestic sectors where there is potential for significant job creation with the correct supporting measures, whilst also building on exporting sectors which have been growing over the last number of years, such as Agri-food, Tourism, International Financial Services, Aviation Services and the Green Economy (green jobs and eco-innovation). The targets for 2014 are 13,000 additional jobs in indigenous enterprises, including microenterprises with a net increase of 6,000 jobs in foreign-owned firms in Ireland.

The focus of the Action Plan for Jobs and of Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy is clearly reflected in Priorities 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Operational Programme:

- Investment Priority 1(a) – alignment with identified priority sectors, enhancement of scientific talent and focus on research engagement with industry
- Investment Priority 1(b) – focus on commercialisation, innovation partnerships with industry;
- Investment Priority 2(a) – provision of next generation broadband access will underpin job creation across all sectors of the economy
- Investment Priority 3(a) – emphasis on entrepreneurship will boost enterprise start-up rates and the capabilities of early-stage entrepreneurs
- Investment Priority 4(e) will boost employment in the green economy through labour-intensive retrofitting initiatives providing ambitious energy efficiency by using the latest cost-efficient state-of-the-art-retrofitting techniques.

Operational Programme Strategy

Arising from the Needs Analysis process and consistent with the strategic priorities identified in Ireland's national Partnership Agreement and the outcome of public consultation process, five thematic objectives were selected and six investment priorities were chosen for co-financing under the Operational Programme. The selected investment priorities were considered to be the most appropriate to address the identified needs and challenges, address bottlenecks and build upon the development potential, whilst contributing to Union strategies and national development objectives. This section summarises these findings of the Needs Analysis for the selected investment priorities in the 5 specific areas, with reference to relevant EU and national strategies and policies and identified regional needs.

Priority 1: Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region

The Europe 2020 strategy and the Flagship Innovation Union Initiative stipulate that Member States should continue to prioritise investment to strengthen the research, technological development and innovation (RTDI) to build capacity and contribute to the development of a high-added value and resilient European economy. This remains a key objective for Ireland, demonstrated by significant investments, co-funded by European funds over the past decade. Research and Development and Innovation (R&D&I) and the application of knowledge are critical drivers for the future success of Irish industry. It is therefore imperative that Ireland focuses on promoting the level, quality and commercial applicability of the R&D&I undertaken, ensuring that industry leads the response to rapid changes in customer needs. In addition, innovation must pervade all aspects of the R&D&I process.

Ireland's headline national target for Research and Development aims to raise combined public and private investment levels in this sector to 2.5% of GNP (approximately equivalent to 2.0% of GDP). The Report of the Research Prioritisation Group published in November 2011 identified fourteen priority areas for research and has become the focus of future State investment in RTDI and the foundation for Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy.

The S&E Region has sectoral strengths in many, if not all of the priority sectors identified due to the presence of most of the third level institutes in the region. The prioritisation report represents an explicit emphasis on prioritising research that can achieve commercial outcomes within a reasonable timescale and for that research to be valorised accordingly. In addition, the agreed framework that emerged from the National Research Prioritisation Exercise set additional targets in relation to: the share of publicly performed R&D financed by enterprise to grow to €180m by 2017, from a baseline of €31.2 m in 2010; to increase the number of spin-out companies greater than 3 years old from 44 to 69 by 2017; to increase the number of firms engaged in R&D projects of significant scale from 1070 companies in 2011 to 1185 companies in 2017; to increase the turnover due to new-to-firm or new-to-market product innovations from 9.3% to 10.3% by 2017; and, a further 1,100 researchers will be employed in the enterprise sector in addition to the circa 10,600 currently employed.

At a regional level, the analysis undertaken highlighted the low level of expenditure on BERD in the S&E region relative to the OECD average (Needs Analysis). In 2011 the S&E region ranked 90th out of all EU regions reporting data on GERD, with a per capita spend of €657 on R&D. Patents per billion of GDP in Ireland stands at 2.63 as compared to the EU average of 4.0.

While on track to meet EU 2020 targets in relation to R&D intensity targets it is acknowledged that to attain national targets Ireland will require continued public support.

The Needs Analysis identified that the R&D partnerships between HEIs and businesses in the region are reported as being low and difficult to put in place. It also noted a relatively small rate of conversion of R&D to commercial application.

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Forfás published a joint survey on Business Expenditure on R&D (BERD) activities of enterprises in Ireland. The survey asked businesses across all sectors to report on R&D expenditure for 2011 and provides the most recent comprehensive view. Irish enterprises spent almost €1.86bn on R&D activities in 2011. Small enterprises (<50 employees) accounted for 27% of R&D expenditure, while medium-large enterprises accounted for the balance. Foreign-owned enterprises accounted for the vast majority of expenditure (71% of total business R&D spend in 2011), with approximately the balance coming from Irish indigenous businesses.

Of all R&D performing firms, 35% engaged in joint research projects with other parties in 2011. Foreign companies account for the majority of total BERD with a fairly constant 70 per cent share over the period and reaching €1.32 billion in 2011. Irish BERD increased to €537 million in 2011 from €330 million in 2003, an increase of 75%. Foreign-owned firms showed higher rates of collaboration with all R&D partners in 2011. The highest rate of collaborative R&D activity for Irish firms at 19% was with HEIs in Ireland. Foreign firms were more likely to collaborate with firms outside of Ireland with 27% engaged in joint research projects.

While the region is categorised as an innovation leader the Needs Analysis exercise established that there are relatively low levels of innovation amongst Irish SMEs.

In summary, to bring the region on par with higher performing regions within the EU and OECD, this analysis supports increasing the research and development activities within

HEIs and specialised research institutions including the employment of high-quality researchers and those on research focussed programmes of study consistent with Investment Priority 1(a) under Article 5 of the ERDF Regulation. It also supports strengthening of the links between HEIs and industry to increase the level of innovation (including eco-innovation) and R&D within enterprises to accelerate the commercialisation of research outputs consistent with Investment Priority 1(b).

Priority 2: ICT Infrastructure

The overall aim of the Digital Agenda for Europe is “to deliver sustainable economic and social benefits from a digital single market based on fast and ultra fast internet and interoperable applications”. In line with this aim which is an Irish Government priority, ambitious targets are set for the provision of high-speed broadband by 2020 under the National Broadband Plan (NBP). The NBP targets are:

- 70Mbps -100Mbps available to at least 50% of the population with a majority having access to 100Mbps;
- At least 40Mbps, and in many cases much faster speeds, to at least a further 20% of the population and potentially as much as 35% around smaller towns and villages; and
- A minimum of 30Mbps available to all.

Ireland’s National Digital Strategy “Doing More with Digital” launched in July 2013 is focused on building momentum in digital adoption. As part of the digital strategy, a target has been set to get 10,000 Irish businesses online for the first time and to achieve a further 2,000 small Irish businesses trading online over a period of two years, through several complementary initiatives:

- Development of a “trade-on-line” voucher scheme.
- A “Winning With Web” Awareness scheme – highlighting the value for small business of trading online.
- Better Information on online engagement to inform future policy.
- Support digital enterprise development by providing the skills base, research capacity and key financial supports through EI and IDA, and through the Digital Hub Development Agency and the National Digital Research Centre.

Ireland lags behind the EU and OECD average with regard to total fixed broadband take-up (excluding mobile). According to OECD figures, at the end of 2013, fixed broadband penetration reached 24.4% in Ireland, with the OECD average at 27% of population. Fibre accounts for only 0.5% of connections compared with 9.6% for the OECD.

From a regional and rural perspective, there are extensive areas in both regions that will require publicly funded investment in order to ensure that they will be provided with high-speed next generation broadband infrastructure, if both the national and EU targets are to be achieved, and the existing digital divide is not to be made worse. It is evident that areas with the lowest population density have the lowest levels of household broadband connections.

Given the Regions dispersed population, there is also a high reliance nationally on mobile broadband with limited speed and capacity. 47% of broadband subscriptions are mobile subscriptions compared with the OECD average of 41.6%. There are poor connection speeds available, especially in rural areas. However, average broadband speeds continue to increase. In Q1 2014 approximately 56.7% of all broadband subscriptions were equal to or greater than 10 Mbps, up from 32.2%; and 37.7% of all broadband subscriptions were equal or greater than 30 Mbps up from 21.3% in Q1 2013.

The potential benefits accruing from NGB infrastructure investment (as provided for under Investment Priority 2(a) of Article 5 of the ERDF Regulation) will permeate all aspects of the economy and society. Investment has the potential to impact positively on the environment and to promote and support the principles of equality and accessibility. Such investment also offers important synergies with other proposed investment priorities and other CSF funds in Ireland for the 2014-2020 period.

The Needs Analysis highlighted that the prioritisation of investment in ICT infrastructure will:

- Contribute to the EU Digital Agenda objectives and meet national targets in respect of high speed broadband availability;
- Address identified gaps in high speed broadband availability in non-urban areas; and
- Provide a key enabling infrastructure for research and development, enterprise start-up and growth and e-government services To contribute to the EU Digital Agenda objectives;
- Promote regional development by enhancing the productive capacity of regional locations;
- Enhance a key driver of the competitiveness of the regional and national economy;
- Stimulate innovation and job creation in SMEs throughout the region;
- Continue to attract foreign direct investment to the S&E Region;
- Underpin investment under other ESIF Programmes e.g., e-learning, rural development, development of coastal communities;
- Provide ubiquitous next generation broadband to all citizens, regardless of location, supports equality of opportunity;
- Exploit opportunities for more effective service provision e.g., e-health technologies
- Complement investment under OP investment priorities in strengthening RTDI, enhancing SMEs and integrated urban development; and,
- Facilitate greater levels of e-working, thus reducing fuel consumption and peak time traffic flows.

Priority 3: SME Competitiveness

The Small Business Act for Europe set out a clear imperative from the EU to support entrepreneurship and innovation among SMEs and to drive new firm creation, expansion and employment in SMEs, along with the need to overcome a range of operational barriers. This is replicated by the emphasis that the Irish Government has placed upon facilitating and empowering Irish SMEs through their action plan for small business.

The private sector in Ireland consists largely of an indigenous Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) base. The Irish business environment is dominated by SMEs, with 99% (192,531) of businesses being classified as SMEs in 2010. As a consequence, the SME base acts as a major source of employment accounting for 69% of persons engaged, 51.5% of turnover and 46.8% of gross value added (GVA).

There are many recognised barriers to the establishment and expansion of SMEs, one of which is access to finance as a result of the prevailing economic and banking climate. Recent analysis of SME credit availability found that just 52.2% of SME loans are approved. The decline in the number of economically active SMEs as a result of the economic crisis is clear for the following graph. In 2006, there were almost 16,700 enterprises born and by 2010 this figure had fallen to just over 11,200. By contrast the number of enterprise deaths/closures rose steadily over the period to 2009. Enterprise closures increased from 11,900 in 2006 to 24,500 in 2009. Prior to 2009, the vast majority of enterprise deaths were in the construction sector. However, by 2010 this had been overtaken by the services sector. In terms of spatial distribution, the S&E region predominates with over 148,000 of the 194,000 active enterprises in Ireland, while the balance of 46,000 is in the BMW region.

The total early-stage entrepreneurial activity rate is 4.8% in Ireland compared with an EU rate of 7.2%. The rate is 9.5% for males and 3.9% for females (GEM; Needs Analysis). Weak domestic and consumer demand in recent years have left many firms and employees vulnerable - over 56% of private sector workers are employed by non-exporting indigenous firms.

In order to address the above clearly recognised needs, it is proposed to invest in one investment priority under Thematic Objective 3, namely to promote entrepreneurship, with a particular emphasis on high-growth and potentially high-growth sectors by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms (Investment Priority3(a). Such supports will also promote green jobs and eco-innovation. These investment priorities will also contribute to one of the recent (2014) country –specific recommendations for Ireland, namely the facilitation of access to financial support for SMEs (CSR 5, 2014) and will also contribute to reducing Ireland’s unemployment rate (CSR 3, 2014).

Priority 4: Low Carbon Economy

The resource-efficient Europe flagship initiative seeks to develop a framework for policies to support the shift towards a low-carbon economy. This will be achieved through an increased use of renewable energy, development of green technologies and a modernised transport sector, and promotion of energy efficiency.

Ireland’s second National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (“**NEEAP**”) to 2020 emphasises that improving Ireland’s energy efficiency is an essential part of Ireland’s energy policy. It sets out 97 actions to achieve Ireland’s 2020 energy efficiency target which is equivalent to a 20% reduction (31,925GWh) in energy demand across the whole economy and includes a specific 33% energy reduction target for the public sector, equivalent to 3,240GWh. These are ambitious targets and will require considerable investment in order to be achieved.

At 13.8 tonnes of carbon dioxide per capita, Ireland GHG emissions are 50% higher than the EU average. However, while Ireland's per capita aggregate GHG emissions are the second highest in the EU, its CO₂ emissions per capita are the 10th highest. This reflects the fact that non-CO₂ GHGs, mainly methane and nitrous oxide from agriculture, make up a significant proportion of total emissions in Ireland.

Data published by the CSO in October 2014 on domestic Building Energy Ratings shows that 79% of pre-1977 dwellings have a BER of D or worse in Ireland, while for houses built post-2010, the comparable figure is just 1%. This clearly demonstrates that the age of dwellings is the most important determinant of the energy performance of domestic dwellings.

Ireland has been making good progress in terms of meeting commitments on improving the energy performance and reducing CO₂ emissions from the built environment and the building regulations are an important tool in meeting these standards. However, it should be recognised that there is a considerable stock of social housing in public ownership, generally in disadvantaged areas, which do not meet the new building requirements in terms of energy efficiency and performance. Currently the national social housing stock is comprised of some 130,000 rental properties, most of which are located in the country's cities and towns. It is estimated that there are some 25,000 older properties with low levels of energy performance, due mainly through heat loss through the fabric of the building. A targeted measure to address these issues will be necessary with the objective of securing positive outcomes in terms of improved energy efficiency, carbon savings, and improved comfort levels.

In addition there are large numbers of owner occupied non-Local Authority homes, which were constructed before 2006, where the energy efficiency and performance is very poor. A further targeted measure to address energy efficiency improvements in these homes, specifically targeting the elderly and vulnerable, making the homes more comfortable, healthier and more cost effective to run will also be required.

Based on this analysis it has been decided to concentrate resources on investment priority 4(c) to support energy efficiency in the housing sector. This investment will contribute to meeting the minimum 20% of ERDF resources required to be invested nationally in the low carbon economy and will promote increased green jobs in Ireland. This activity is acknowledged to be labour-intensive and will also therefore contribute to Country Specific Recommendation 3 reducing Ireland's unemployment rate (CSR 3, 2014).

The EU 2020 target for renewable energy sources is being addressed through national funding sources and therefore it has been decided to concentrate the limited ERDF resources for low carbon retrofitting of social housing to improve their energy efficiency.

Priority 5: Sustainable Urban Development

The strategic aim of the urban dimension of cohesion policy for the 2014-2020 period is to reinforce the role of urban actions in support of territorial cohesion and Europe 2020 objectives, through an enhancement of the integrated approach and a renewed focus on sustainable urban development. One of the aims of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is to support sustainable urban development through integrated strategies that tackle the economic, environmental, climate and social challenges of urban areas,

including functional urban areas, taking account of the need to promote urban-rural linkages.

Urban areas are recognised as engines of growth and hubs for creativity and innovation, they add value and act as centres contributing to the development of their wider regions and rural hinterlands, and contribute to the polycentric and balanced territorial development of the EU.

In Ireland the principal strategic framework for urban policy is the national Spatial Strategy 2002-2020, which provides a 20 year planning framework and a hierarchy of designated growth centres. The key objectives of the NSS are set out hereunder. These align very well with the overall goals for the European Structural and Investment Funds:

- Sustain economic and employment growth;
- Improve competitiveness;
- Foster balanced regional development;
- Improve quality of life for all; and
- Maintain and enhance quality and diversity of natural environment and cultural heritage.

It is intended that the eligible urban areas will be selected in line with the principles specified in Ireland's Partnership Agreement. These urban authorities will develop integrated urban strategies and from these they will select, in accordance with Article 7.3 of the ERDF Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, the most appropriate actions for ERDF co-funding.

Under this priority, it is proposed to have two specific objectives, which will improve the urban environment, regenerate brownfield sites, reduce air pollution, promote noise reduction and promote sustainable multi-modal urban mobility. The measures foreseen for sustainable urban development take sustainable urban mobility plans, noise abatement plans (Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC)), and air quality plans (Ambient Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC), Gothenburg Protocol) into account.

Specific Objective 5.1: To revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment in the designated urban centres as part of integrated urban strategies

The Gateway Development Index which measured the performance of both Gateways and Hubs across a range of economic, social and environmental metrics demonstrated that the implementation by Government of NSS policy has facilitated significant investment in public infrastructure, such as transport, better housing, ICT, improved water services and waste infrastructure that have helped to create the conditions for long-term economic progress in the Gateways and Hubs.

However, the data also revealed that in the case of most of the Gateways and Hubs, the populations of the adjoining hinterlands grew at a far faster pace than that of the urban cores of the Gateways. There is an increased incidence of vacancy in city and town centres, population declining in several core urban areas and lack of incentives for public/private investment in revitalisation schemes. This means that the designated urban growth centres and gateways do not have the capacity to be effective drivers of regional and national economic development and Ireland's weak urban structure outside of the

major cities, presents significant challenges to the future achievement of integrated urban development and highlights the need for continued investment in all of the designated growth centres.

It has been recognised that patterns of urban sprawl and low density development in particular, have led to unsustainable settlement and travel patterns in Ireland (EPA, 2012). The provision of attractive and environmentally sustainable living environments in compact urban centres is an important part of the solution to this problem.

The area under artificial land cover in Ireland grew by 15% in Ireland in the decade 2000-2010, mostly occurring on former agricultural land and on the periphery of existing urban centres (EPA, 2011). This rapid increase in artificial surfaces impacts significantly on many aspects of the environment, including climate, biodiversity, land resources and water quality.

Degradation of air quality in urban areas is also a challenge. While air quality in Ireland is generally good, NO_x levels have been monitored to be at or above EU limits in some Irish cities, (EPA, 2011) due to excessive vehicular emissions.

It has been estimated (EPA, 2004) that there are circa. 2000 brownfield sites in Ireland, many with potential contamination problems and most of these are in urban areas.

Good urban design plays an important role in facilitating economic activity, changing commuting patterns, maintaining air and water quality, and protecting biodiversity, whilst restoring vacant and derelict sites to new uses.

Data from the Gateways and Hubs Development Index highlights that the rate of new firm formation had fallen during the 2006 to 2011 period. The level of decrease ranged from 1.90 per 1000 employees in the Cork gateway to 2.60 in the Dublin gateway. More significant levels of decrease are observed across the period in the Hubs with a decrease of 3.7 per 1,000 employees in the Wexford hub to 4.6 in the Mallow hub. This demonstrates that the economic performance of the designated growth centres has been sub-optimal.

The unemployment rate in all of the gateways had increased significantly between 2006 and 2011, with the rate in 2011 ranging from 16.6% in the Cork gateway to 22.3% in the Waterford gateway. The deprivation index which is a composite measure incorporating demographic growth, social class composition and labour market strength shows a higher concentration of deprivation in the core or zone 1 of the Waterford gateway in 2011 than that observed in 2006. The proportion of the population experiencing 2 or more deprivation indicators grew from 14% to 24.5% over the past 10 years. Many of these household are concentrated in core urban areas.

This investment priority will take action to improve the urban environment, revitalise and regenerate designated urban areas, consistent with investment priority 6(e) under Article 5 of the ERDF Regulation. It will support integrated urban regeneration initiatives to improve the urban environment and revitalise urban areas, making them more attractive places to live work and visit.

According to the Common Strategic Framework for the ESI Funds 2014-20 support for sustainable integrated urban development is a key action for the European Regional Development Fund under Thematic Objective 6, including the rehabilitation of cultural infrastructure. Part II of the Commission Staff Working Document ‘Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020’ (page 22) specifically highlights the contribution of culture as a tool for regional development and for urban regeneration.

Sustainable integrated urban development measures supported will focus on the efficient use of existing resources within the urban environment hence reduce the pressure for the centre to ‘spread’ outwards and lead to further land degradation. The actions to be supported are described in section 2.

Specific Objective 5.2: To support low carbon urban mobility in designated urban centres

Ireland continues to be over-reliant on private cars for transport. Low-density, car-dependent, green-field development has meant that development has become more dispersed and fragmented geographically, with greater distances between where people live and work. One of the implications of this is that the use of private cars to commute to work or school/college is at 67.7% in the S&E region in 2011, a disimprovement from the 2006 usage of 65.7%. While transport accounts for less than 20% of Ireland’s GHG emissions, it is the fastest growing source of emissions (>137%) over the past two decades (EPA, 2012). Delivering sustainable transport systems and thereby reducing GHG emissions are important dimensions of Ireland’s climate change agenda. Reduced transport emissions will also make a meaningful contribution to Ireland’s commitment under EU effort-sharing arrangements in relation to climate change and real reductions on current levels of emissions can be achieved.

There is a common challenge facing all of the gateways and hubs to increase non private car commuting into the urban areas. Data from the Gateway & Hubs Development Index, from 2011, shows that the extent of non private car commuting ranges from 18.23% in Waterford to 39.6% in Dublin. These are well below the national target figure of 55% by 2020 as set out in Ireland’s Smart Travel Policy. This policy highlights the need to focus future population and employment growth in sustainable urban areas and to give priority to cycling, walking and public transport facilities.

This investment priority will support sustainable, multimodal urban mobility initiatives, consistent with investment priority 4(e) of the ERDF Regulation. The multimodal actions to be supported are described in section 2.

Priority Axis 6: Technical Assistance

The extensive responsibilities of the Managing Authority with regard to the overall management of the OP and financial management and control are defined under Article 125 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 1303/2013. Some of these functions will be delegated to Intermediate Bodies via Administrative Agreements to be prepared by the Managing Authority and will encompass specific tasks such as selection of

operations, making payments to beneficiaries, uploading information on the IT system on co-funded operations, verifications of eligible expenditure and submitting declarations to the Managing Authority.

Intermediate bodies will also be primarily responsible for the collation of the progress data required for the monitoring and performance appraisal system. The Intermediate Bodies (i.e., Government Departments and Agencies) will be required to ensure effective implementation of the operations and schemes and full compliance with the applicable regulations, particularly those concerning financial management, control, publicity and public procurement.

The Managing Authority has extensive experience in the management, monitoring and evaluation and financial control of ERDF co-financed programmes. It possesses the skills and capabilities required to ensure the effective delivery of this Operational Programme, in accordance with the regulations for the 2014-2020 period. The training and information needs of Managing Authority personnel will be addressed during the lifetime of the Operational Programme and any costs arising will be met from the Technical Assistance budget.

All of the Intermediate Bodies are experienced in the administration and delivery of ERDF co-financed actions and in the fulfilment of financial management and control and compliance requirements. The Managing Authority will work closely with the Intermediate Bodies to ensure that the skills and capabilities needed to fulfil these requirements are in place and will ensure that the training and information needs of Intermediate Body personnel are met. A programme of training seminars will be hosted by the Managing Authority, the content of which is included in the descriptions of actions under the Technical Assistance priority.

Technical Assistance supports will therefore be required for the following purposes, in particular:

1. Maintain the effective implementation arrangements in place in relation to preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of programmes and operations which are the subject of co-funded assistance, meetings of the OP Monitoring Committee and any related sub-committees
2. Maintain effective financial management and control, audit and verification activities and put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud and anti-corruption measures;
3. Undertaking OP-level information actions in accordance with the Communications Strategy and the Annual Communication Plan, including costs of participation in the INFORM network and the development and operation of programme-related web-sites;
4. Development and implementation of an Evaluation Plan for the OP, including costs of participation in the EU Evaluation Network;
5. Provision of guidance and training to Intermediate Bodies and beneficiaries to reinforce the capacity of Member State authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use those Funds and participation by Managing Authority staff in appropriate training programmes; and,
6. Establishment and operation of the computerised system for data exchange and e-cohesion system.

Ex Ante Evaluation Review of Programme Strategy

The ex ante evaluation of the draft OP (section 4.2) stated that the proposed investment strategy (described above) will contribute positively to the EU2020 priorities, will have a positive influence on the external policy environment, and has drawn upon lessons from past experience. The ex ante evaluation also affirms that stakeholder input has informed programme development.

In their overview of the programme strategy (section 4.3), the evaluators state that programme “has drawn on a wide-ranging evidence base including socio-economic data, National and EU Policy context, stakeholder input and lessons learnt from the delivery of previous programmes and recommendations from previous programme evaluations. This has ensured that the programme is firmly rooted in the needs of and seeks to take advantage of opportunities in the programme region. It should also be well placed to make an impact on the programme region and has the potential to contribute to the Union Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth – particularly to the smart growth targets and to a lesser extent to the targets relating to sustainable and inclusive growth.”

In their review of the proposed programme strategy (section 5.3), the ex ante evaluation team, drew the following conclusions:

- The priorities have a firm basis in the needs of the programme area – drawing on the strengths and weaknesses and targeting key challenges facing the region;
- The priorities and specific objectives are consistent with and fit within relevant thematic objectives and investment priorities but are appropriately tailored to the specific needs of the programme region;
- The priorities and specific objectives are coherent and complementary and should work well together in supporting the proposed interventions; and
- The actions proposed in the programme are appropriate and suitably reflect the intentions under the development needs, the Investment Priority, Specific Objective.

1.1.2 A justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities having regard to the partnership agreement, based on an identification of regional and, where appropriate, national needs including the need to address the challenges identified in relevant country-specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) TFEU and the relevant Council recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 148(4) TFEU, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

Table 1: Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
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Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
01 - Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist in meeting a country-specific target in the National Reform Programme; • Priority identified in the European Commission position paper on Ireland; • To build upon the positive achievements of the 2007-13 programmes; • Potential synergies with Horizon 2020; and • Potential to contribute to the Atlantic Strategy Action Plan.
01 - Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the achievement of the objectives of Ireland's Innovation Taskforce report; • To contribute to the Innovation Union agenda; and • Opportunity to commercialise through technology transfer and applied research, the substantial outputs of Ireland's research programmes.
02 - Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies	2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the EU Digital Agenda • Meet national targets of high speed broadband • Promote development by enhancing the productive capacity of regional locations • Enhance key drivers of competitiveness of regional

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		<p>and national economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate SME innovation and job creation • Attract foreign direct investment • Underpin investment under other ESIF Programmes: e-learning, rural development, development of coastal communities • Ubiquitous high speed broadband, support equality of opportunity • Exploit opportunities for effective service provision e.g. e-health technologies • Complement OP investment by strengthening RTDI, enhancing SMEs and integrated urban development • Facilitate greater levels of e-working, reducing fuel consumption, peak time traffic flows • Address gaps in high speed broadband availability in non-urban areas • Provide key enabling infrastructure for R&D, enterprise start-up, growth and e-government services • Next Generation Broadband is prioritised in the national capital investment programme
<p>03 - Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and the fisheries and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF)</p>	<p>3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority identified in the European Commission position paper on Ireland; • To address the need to accelerate micro-enterprise start-up and expansion; • To provide financial support to enterprises in accordance

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		<p>with Country-specific recommendation 5 (2014);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create employment in the start-up and expansion of micro-enterprises in accordance with Country Specific Recommendation 3 (2014); • To continue the positive delivery of entrepreneurial supports; and • Strongly supported in the public consultation submissions received.
<p>04 - Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors</p>	<p>4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the attainment of Ireland’s target under the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan; • Priority identified in the European Commission position paper on Ireland; • Contribute to the creation of employment in labour-intensive retro-fitting activity, consistent with Country Specific Recommendation 3 (2014); and • Contributes towards the 20% National Target as set out in Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No. 1301/2013 (ERDF)
<p>04 - Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors</p>	<p>4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve reduced emissions from transport in accordance with the Commission paper • To support low carbon urban mobility in designated urban

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		<p>centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To contribute to meeting Ireland’s EU2020 targets for reduced GHG emissions from transport • To support the attainment of Ireland’s Smarter Travel Policy target of 20 percentage point increase in non private car commuting
06 - Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	6e - Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of sustainable urban development strategy, to enhance the quality of urban environments; • To continue the positive delivery of sustainable urban development actions; and • To align with the objectives of the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020.

1.2 Justification for the financial allocation

Justification for the financial allocation (Union support) to each thematic objective and, where appropriate, investment priority, in accordance with the thematic concentration requirements, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

The allocations to each selected priority as set out above are based on several factors:

1. The identified need for investment following the Needs Analysis process
2. The distance from national targets e.g., the RTDI priority, which accounts for c. 36.1% of the OP allocations
3. The need for investment to comply with EU strategies, e.g., Digital Agenda for Europe. Investment under Thematic objective 2 accounts for 12.1% of the planned investment

4. The level of investment needed as identified by the relevant policy Department and the level of national co-financing available
5. The need to ensure that at least 80% of resources are allocated to thematic objectives 1 to 4, net of Technical Assistance, as required under the Common Provision Regulation. The OP allocates 88.8% of resources to thematic objectives 1 to 4.
6. Contribute to a minimum of 20% of ERDF resources to the low carbon economy objective. The allocation under the S&E OP, above, contributes €66.5m ERDF to this objective.
7. The need to ensure that at least 5% of ERDF resources are allocated to integrated actions for sustainable urban development. This OP allocates 26.7% to this objective to provide a sufficient stimulus to designated urban centres to fulfil their growth centre functions and promote sustainable urban mobility.

Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the operational programme

Priority axis	Fund	Union support (€)	Proportion of total Union support for the operational programme	Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective	Common and programme-specific result indicators for which a target has been set
1	ERDF	90,000,000.00	36.13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 01 - Strengthening research, technological development and innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 1a - To increase the level of research taking place in the S&E region with Company engagement by supplying applied research. ▼ 1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 1b - To increase the level of commercialisation of research by the higher education institutions in the S&E Region 	[1a.1, 1b.1]
2	ERDF	30,000,000.00	12.04%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 02 - Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 2a - To increase the provision of fibre optic links to all un-served settlements in the S&E Region 	[2a.2]
3	ERDF	34,600,000.00	13.89%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 03 - Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and the fisheries and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 3a - To increase employment levels in micro-enterprises in the S&E Region by supporting business start-ups, business expansion and higher innovation levels in micro-enterprises. 	[3a.1]
4	ERDF	66,500,000.00	26.70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 04 - Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors 	[4c.1]

Priority axis	Fund	Union support (€)	Proportion of total Union support for the operational programme	Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective	Common and programme-specific result indicators for which a target has been set
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector ▼ 4c - To improve energy efficiency in the housing stock. 	
5	ERDF	26,000,000.00	10.44%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 04 - Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors ▼ 4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 4e - To support low carbon sustainable, multimodal urban mobility in designated urban centres ▼ 06 - Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency ▼ 6e - Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 6e - To revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment in the designated urban centres as part of integrated urban strategies 	[6e, 4e]
6	ERDF	2,009,350.00	0.81%	<p>TA.2 - Effective communication of funding opportunities and programme achievements</p> <p>TA.3 - Effective evaluation of the programme</p> <p>TA.4 - Effective capacity building for staff of the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies</p> <p>TA.5 - Establishment and operation of an effective computerised system for data exchange and e-cohesion system</p> <p>TA1 - Effective implementation of the Operational Programme</p>	[]

2. PRIORITY AXES

2.A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES OTHER THAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	1
Title of the priority axis	Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ERDF	More developed	Public	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	1a
Title of the investment priority	Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	1a
Title of the specific objective	To increase the level of research taking place in the S&E region with Company engagement by supplying applied research.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Number of industry partners engaged with funded strategic research centres in the S&E region.</p> <p>* An industry partner is a company making a financial contribution to the budget of the Research Centre, as well as an intellectual contribution to the research agenda of the centre. The Industry Partner is represented in the centre by its Industry Collaborator. An industry partner can be either a Multi-national or SME and all Industry partners sign a collaboration agreement with the Research Centre. Under the terms of the standard Collaboration agreements, which outline the IP rights, the Intellectual property (IP) rights generated by the research, is retained by the Research Bodies.</p>

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators, by specific objective (for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund)

Specific objective		1a - To increase the level of research taking place in the S&E region with Company engagement by supplying applied research.						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region (where relevant)	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1a.1	Number of industry partners engaged with funded strategic research centres in the S&E region.	Number of enterprises	More developed	529.00	2014	713.00	Science Foundation Ireland	Annual

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
<p>Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy is a dynamic policy process which will continue to be reviewed over the lifetime of the Operational Programme 2014-2020 to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements in terms of performance, monitoring, stakeholder involvement and prioritisation.</p> <p>SFI Research Centres Programme</p> <p>The objective of the Research Centres Programme is to develop a set of world-leading, large-scale research centres aligned with the 14 priority areas of research identified in the Research Prioritisation Exercise that will provide major economic impact for Ireland. SFI Research Centres link scientists and engineers in partnerships across academia and industry to address crucial research questions; foster the development of new and existing Irish-based technology companies; attract industry that could make an important contribution to Ireland and its economy; attract international research talent and capital; attract, anchor and spin out related companies in Ireland; and increase the numbers of SFI-trained researchers employed in industry. All of the approved research centre proposals will be aligned with the 14 priorities identified in Ireland's Research Prioritisation Exercise.</p> <p>The Research Centres are structured on a hub & spoke model consisting of a number of targeted projects undertaken in partnership with industry that connect into a central hub containing the platform research and core operations. A key feature of 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. The Research Centres provide the foundation for sustainable research activity which can take place in conjunction with Industry Partners and other funding agencies such as EU by leveraging against the core SFI funding, with the objective to meet the changing needs of industry and society. SFI Research Centres <u>envisage evolving</u> to maximise capabilities, outputs and industry offerings including the transfer of knowledge and expertise to enterprises and the spin-out of new, high-technology start-up companies that have the potential to raise external angel or venture funding.</p> <p>The SFI Research Centre programme will contribute to the specific objective of the investment priority by increasing the level of strategic research taking place in the S&E region, aligned with the Research Prioritisation Exercise, with strong industrial linkages and will also promote eco-innovation, where</p>	

Investment priority	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
<p>relevant.</p> <p>Industry partners are expected to contribute 30% of the cost of research activities in Strategic Research Centres. This relatively high industry cost-share component reflects the importance and urgency of the programme to industry and to ensure maximum impact on growth and jobs. The co-funded expenditure does not include infrastructure.</p> <p>SFI Research Centres: Spokes Programme</p> <p>The objective of the Spokes Programme is to promote the further development of existing SFI Research Centres to incorporate new areas of research, new industrial and academic collaborators. The Spokes Programme is an initiative to enable the addition of new industrial and academic partners and projects to an existing SFI Research Centre in the S&E region, so allowing the Centre to expand and develop in line with new priorities and opportunities aligned with the Research Prioritisation Exercise. This will ensure that the Research Centre retains its ability to do cutting edge research and its industrial relevance, and so enhance its sustainability. The Spokes programme also provides a vehicle to link together, in a meaningful and relevant way, different Research Centres. The Programme has been designed to deliver excellent oriented applied research results and discoveries in targeted projects associated with SFI Research Centres aligned with the 14 priorities identified in Ireland’s Research Prioritisation Exercise and hence will deliver significant economic and societal impact during the lifetime of the programme.</p> <p>SFI Spokes will help link scientists and engineers in partnerships because under this programme Industrial and academic researchers (both scientists and Engineers) are linked through funding of projects delivered via the Spokes programmes.</p> <p>The Spokes Programme will contribute to the specific objective of the investment priority by enabling new industrial and academic partners to join existing strategic research projects. This will increase the level of strategic research activity in the S&E region and enable increased engagement by industry with the supported research centres.</p> <p>Industry partners are expected to contribute 50% of the cost of research activities in Spokes Projects. This high industry cost-share component reflects the importance and urgency of the programme to industry and to ensure maximum impact on growth and jobs. The co-funded expenditure does not include infrastructure.</p>	

Investment priority	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
<p>One of the stated objectives of funding the Research Centres is to leverage complementary funding from other sources (in addition to the cost-share with industrial partners outlined above). In particular SFI encourages Research Centres to participate in the development of the European research area by leading initiatives of scale funded by the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 initiatives. SFI have agreed annual targets for each research Centre for level of funding to be secured from non-SFI sources including Horizon 2020 and other international funding instruments.</p> <p>Marine Research Programme</p> <p>The objective of the Marine Research Programme is 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 Research Programme administered by the Marine Institute aims to support a range of interventions including PhD scholarships, Post-Doctoral Fellowships, research projects and inward/outward research visits to support capacity building and technology transfer. The Marine Institute will host competitive calls for funding of marine research activities which will be open to both the public sector and to industry and will co-fund relevant research undertaken by public research bodies which aligns with Ireland’s marine research objectives, as set out in the Government policy “Harnessing our Ocean Wealth” and consistent with Priority 1 of the Atlantic Strategy Action Plan, in the S&E Region.</p> <p>The Marine Institute will also catalyse funding from other funding agencies (e.g. Environmental Protection Agency, Science Foundation Ireland, Irish Research Council, Geological Survey of Ireland, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, etc.) through co-funding initiatives aimed at achieving common research objectives.</p> <p>The Irish Government’s marine strategy “Harnessing our Ocean Wealth” (2013) has identified key sectors with the potential for further growth and expansion. These include the marine biotechnology and high tech marine products and services sectors, currently valued at €85m per annum. These sectors are aligned with Ireland’s Research Prioritisation Exercise and are underpinned by marine research.</p> <p>This initiative will increase the level of research activity taking place in the S&E region aligned with Ireland’s marine research priorities and in support of a growing marine economic sector, thus contributing to the specific objective of the investment priority.</p> <p>The Marine Institute hosts a national contact point for marine and one of the key elements of this role is to identify EU/International funding opportunities for the Irish marine sector, and assist potential applicants with networking to establish the best research consortia.</p>	

Investment priority	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
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In addition the Research Office, Marine Institute offers a number of services to researchers in Ireland:

- Provides information on national and international funding opportunities via our Funding webpage <http://www.marine.ie/home/funding/>.
- Responsible for project and financial management of research projects awarded under the Marine Research Sub-Programme.
- Encourages North/South collaborations as funding under the Marine Research Sub-Programme is open to applicants in Northern Ireland also.
- Provides assistance with proposals with respect to strategic context, financial rules and preparation of budgets to Marine Institute staff for research proposals to the EU and other national funding agencies e.g. Science Foundation Ireland, Environmental Protection Agency, etc.
- Encourages marine research collaborations e.g. our travel grants scheme provides funding for overseas pre-proposal meetings to establish consortia for Horizon 2020 proposals.

Support for enterprises under Investment Priority 1(a)

Investment Priority 1(a) will support both indigenous enterprises and foreign-owned enterprises through engagement with Companies by Strategic Research Centres and Spokes Programme implemented by Science Foundation Ireland. The Marine Institute will also engage primarily with indigenous Irish marine enterprises through the marine research programme. Under the current SFI Research Centre Programme, a majority of industry partners (58%) are indigenous Irish Companies.

An industry partner is a company making a financial contribution to the budget of the Research Centre, as well as an intellectual contribution to the research agenda of the centre. The Industry Partner is represented in the centre by its Industry Collaborator. An industry partner can be either a Multi-national or SME and all Industry partners sign a collaboration agreement with the Research Centre. Under the terms of the standard Collaboration agreements, which outline the IP rights, the Intellectual property (IP) rights generated by the research, is retained by the Research Bodies.

Companies engaged with research institutions will also benefit from the roll-out of high speed fibre broadband in currently unserved areas. This will enable them to secure the maximum commercial and socioeconomic advantages.

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
<p>The following general principles will apply to the selection of operations for the 2014-2020 programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transparency in the process – all potential beneficiaries to be aware of the process and criteria to be used; • incorporation of OP objectives and contribution to defined results; • incorporation of applicable horizontal principles (e.g., sustainability, equality) into the selection criteria; • use of competitive selection processes, where feasible; • cost effectiveness and value for money; and • consistency in the appraisal of proposals. <p>In relation to the SFI-administered there are open calls run for researchers in eligible Research Bodies, which generally have fixed deadlines. All submissions are subjected to competitive, international merit review processes carried out by a panel of leading experts who make recommendations to SFI Executive, or SFI Board as appropriate, who make the final decision on awards.</p> <p>Marine research funding will be administered via competitive calls for proposals from both the research community and industry taking account of the Atlantic Strategy where appropriate. Research proposals are evaluated by a panel of national and international experts maintained by the Marine Institute and drawn from third-level, public and industry sectors. The names of the experts assigned to individual proposals are not made public. However, the Marine Institute makes available lists of all the experts participating on its evaluation panels at regular intervals. To ensure that the best quality scientific research is undertaken, the Marine Institute carries out ongoing project monitoring from grant award to final report that focuses on the achievement of planned project outputs and deliverables.</p> <p>Strategic context is one of the evaluation criteria for all competitive research proposals (including those co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund), with 20-25% of the overall score allocated to <i>Strategic context, rationale, benefits and impacts of the project.</i></p>	

Investment priority	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
<p>Applicants for funding must clearly demonstrate how their research addresses the objectives of the relevant National/European strategies, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth – An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland (July 2012) • Food Harvest 2020 • Food Research Ireland • Report of the Research Prioritisation Steering Group • EU Strategy for the Atlantic (2011) • Atlantic Action Plan 2014-2020 • Blue Growth 	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
<p>The Irish Authorities are satisfied that there is no scope for the use of financial instruments in Priority Axis 1 of the S&E Regional OP. Actions to be co-funded under investment priority 1(a) are not revenue-generating and there is no internal rate of return. However, the potential use of financial instruments will be kept under review and the S&E ERDF OP 2014-2020 will introduce financial instruments where possible during the implementing time of the OP.</p>	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
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Investment priority	1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest
No major projects are planned under this investment priority.	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		1a - Enhancing research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and capacities to develop R&I excellence, and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
CO24	Research, innovation: Number of new researchers in supported entities	Full time equivalents	ERDF	More developed			689.00	Science Foundation Ireland	Annual
1.1	Number of Awards under the Spokes Programme in the S&E Region	Number of Awards	ERDF	More developed			25.00	Science Foundation Ireland	Annual
1.2	Number of marine research PhDs and Post-Doctoral researchers funded	Number of Researchers	ERDF	More developed			21.00	Marine Institute	Annual

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	1b
Title of the investment priority	Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	1b
Title of the specific objective	To increase the level of commercialisation of research by the higher education institutions in the S&E Region
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Annual number of Licenses as a result of research in S&E Region

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators, by specific objective (for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund)

Specific objective		1b - To increase the level of commercialisation of research by the higher education institutions in the S&E Region						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region (where relevant)	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1b.1	Annual Number of Licenses as a result of research in S&E Region	Number of Licenses	More developed	24.00	2013	25.00	Enterprise Ireland	Annual

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies
Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Fund The objective of the Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Fund is to foster and grow a dynamic and commercially aware research community and to create an environment that promotes entrepreneurship aligned with the Research Prioritisation Exercise. In so doing, an accessible route to commercialisation is established for the transfer of knowledge from the research base into industry. Third-level researchers and researchers in other research producing organisations (RPOs) can apply to carry out applied research that may lead to licensing agreements and spin-out companies. The programme will fund the development of innovations at all stages of the commercial pipeline to the point where they can be commercialised as new products, services and companies. This Fund will not support purely exploratory research, nor does it support applied research for companies. Two funding supports will be provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feasibility support to investigate the commercial case for the innovation, technology, project idea; and,• Commercialisation Fund support to develop the innovation/technology for commercialization. Researchers in third level institutions and non-profit research agencies and organisations in the Republic of Ireland are eligible to apply. The Commercialisation Fund programme leverages the research strengths and technical expertise in Irish HEIs to develop innovations that will have an economic impact in Ireland. Innovations including those aligned to the 14 areas of Research Priority that provide commercial opportunities which can be exploited by Irish companies operating in relevant markets or which create opportunities for new start-up companies are supported by the programme. The Commercialisation Fund will contribute to the specific objective of the investment priority by supporting research organisations to develop a route to	

Investment priority	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies
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commercialisation for innovative technology-based projects, leading to the creation of R&D based spin-out enterprises.

Enterprise Ireland Innovation Partnership Programme

The objective of the Innovation Partnership Programme is to propel the use of key technologies by Irish companies by encouraging them to work with Irish research institutes resulting in mutually beneficial co-operation and interaction. 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 the creation of new knowledge that it can use to generate commercial advantage. The research institute benefits in terms of developing skill sets, intellectual property and publications. The Innovation Partnership programme leverages the research strengths and technical expertise in Irish HEIs to develop innovations that will have an economic impact in Ireland. The Innovation Partnership programme is aligned to 14 areas of the Research Prioritisation Exercise.

The Innovation Partnership Programme is aimed at propelling the use of key technologies by Irish companies and is a key part of the strategy for the implementation of the Research Prioritisation Exercise. The Innovation Partnership Programme helps companies to engage in collaborative research projects with Irish universities and institutes of technology to develop new products and services. The Programme will support companies which already have a history of investing in innovation and R&D activity - mostly in-house; is deepening existing links between academia and business in many cases; is serving companies whose main motivations for participation is to help their business to grow and also to access academic knowledge.

For companies, Innovation Partnership funding reduces both the cost and the risk associated with collaborative research. The programme is focused on firms, especially SMEs, that have difficulty exploiting technological developments that are outside their established capacities. It also address the insufficient use being made by industry of the wealth of expertise and technology available from Ireland’s knowledge base.

Innovation Partnership funding may follow an Innovation Voucher as a large commitment of a company to R&D. It can also build on commercialisation funding through working with a platform technology developed through the Commercialisation Fund or through SFI funding to customise and advance the technology for a particular field of use. EI’s R&D fund could also follow an Innovation Partnership to ‘productise the technology developed in an Innovation Partnership. The Programme attracts clients through organised exhibitions, presentations and networking, articles and editorial, advertising

Investment priority	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies
<p>and brochures.</p> <p>The Innovation Partnership programme leverages the research strengths and technical expertise in Irish HEIs to develop innovations that will have an economic impact in Ireland. The Innovation Partnership programme is aligned to 14 areas of the Research Prioritisation Exercise.</p> <p>The Innovation Partnership Programme contributes to the specific objective of the investment priority by supporting Irish companies to undertake increased R&D activities with the support of public research institutions</p> <p><u>Support for enterprises under Investment Priority 1(b)</u></p> <p>Direct supports will be provided under Investment Priority 1(b) to indigenous Irish enterprises through the Enterprise Ireland Innovation Partnerships (there are no enterprise size limits and some non-indigenous client companies of EI will also be eligible) and to early-stage campus-based start-ups in Irish institutions via the Commercialisation Fund.</p> <p>Companies engaged in research activities and innovation partnerships will also benefit from the roll-out of high speed fibre broadband in currently unserved areas. This will enable them to secure the maximum commercial and socioeconomic advantages.</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies
<p>The following general principles will apply to the selection of operations for the 2014-2020 programmes:</p>	

Investment priority	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transparency in the process – all potential beneficiaries to be aware of the process and criteria to be used; • incorporation of OP objectives and contribution to defined results; • incorporation of applicable horizontal principles (e.g., sustainability, equality) into the selection criteria; • use of competitive selection processes, where feasible; • cost effectiveness and value for money; and • consistency in the appraisal of proposals. <p>Applications from researchers for Commercialisation Fund supports will be evaluated for their commercial and if appropriate to the support technical merit by internal and/or external evaluators. Funding recommendations for feasibility support will be considered by relevant senior management in Enterprise Ireland who will make the funding decision. Funding recommendations for Commercialisation Fund support are presented to the Industrial Research and Commercialisation Committee in Enterprise Ireland for approval. This committee is currently composed of senior members of Enterprise Ireland, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment, the Department of Agriculture, the IDA, senior academics and independent industrial experts and members of the business community.</p> <p>Innovation Partnership funding is paid to the research-performing organisation. The percentage of the costs paid by Enterprise Ireland is determined by company size and by the type of research (Industrial Research or Experimental Development). There are two phases associated with an Innovation Partnership application. In Phase 1, either an Outline Proposal Document or an Innovation Partnership Feasibility Study application can be submitted. Phase 2 is a Full Application. Full Proposal Applications are accepted following the approval of an outline proposal or following the submission of a report upon completion of an Innovation Partnership Feasibility Study. The company must discuss this proposal in detail with their Development Adviser / Agency Contact before the research institute partner submits it. After Technical and Commercial Assessment, the project is brought to Enterprise</p>	

Investment priority	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies
Ireland's Industrial Research & Commercialisation Committee for decision.	

2.A.6.3 *Planned use of financial instruments* (where appropriate)

Investment priority	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies
The Irish Authorities are satisfied that there is currently no scope for the use of financial instruments in Priority Axis 1 of the S&E Regional OP. Actions to be co-funded under investment priority 1(b) include bringing innovative concepts to pre-commercialisation stage and incentives for industry to partner with research/innovation centres. These supports are not repayable. However, the potential use of financial instruments will be kept under review and the S&E ERDF OP 2014-2020 will introduce financial instruments where possible during the implementing time of the OP.	

2.A.6.4 *Planned use of major projects* (where appropriate)

Investment priority	1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies
No major projects are planned under this investment priority.	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	ERDF	More developed			143.00	Enterprise Ireland	Annual
CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Enterprises	ERDF	More developed			143.00	Enterprise Ireland	Annual
CO26	Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	Enterprises	ERDF	More developed			143.00	Enterprise Ireland	Annual
1.3	Number of commercialisation fund awards	Number of Awards	ERDF	More developed			325.00	Enterprise Ireland	Annual

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region

2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis		1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region											
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
CO24	O	Research, innovation: Number of new researchers in supported entities	Full time equivalents	ERDF	More developed			276			689.00	Science Foundation Ireland	This is a key output of SFI Research Centres and IP 1(a). It represents 53.6% of the overall Priority allocation.
F1.1	F	total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority	€	ERDF	More developed			72,000,000.00			180,000,000.00	Certifying Authority	This performance indicator assumes 40% of priority allocated expenditure will be incurred and declared by end 2018 and 100% by end 2023
1.3	O	Number of commercialisation fund awards	Number of Awards	ERDF	More developed			130			325.00	Enterprise Ireland	This is a key output of EI Industry R&D Programme and IP 1(b). It represents 25% of the overall Priority allocation and 75% of IP 1b.

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	060. Research and innovation activities in public research centres and centres of competence including networking	60,000,000.00
ERDF	More developed	062. Technology transfer and university-enterprise cooperation primarily benefiting SMEs	30,000,000.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	01. Non-repayable grant	90,000,000.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	01. Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	65,000,000.00
ERDF	More developed	02. Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	25,000,000.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	07. Not applicable	90,000,000.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	2
Title of the priority axis	Information and Communication Technologies

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ERDF	More developed	Public	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	2a
Title of the investment priority	Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	2a
Title of the specific objective	To increase the provision of fibre optic links to all un-served settlements in the S&E Region
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Extension of high-speed next generation broadband to un-served settlements in the S&E Region

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators, by specific objective (for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund)

Specific objective		2a - To increase the provision of fibre optic links to all un-served settlements in the S&E Region						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region (where relevant)	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
2a.2	Settlements with high-speed next generation broadband in the S&E Region	Number of Settlements	More developed	391.00	2014	933.00	Department of Communications Energy and Natural Resources	Annual

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy
<p>High quality and reliable broadband as an enabling infrastructure for economic and social development is increasingly becoming a critical component of a 21st century society. The digital part of Ireland's economy is growing at a rate of 16% per year and the opportunities this presents must be harnessed in order to maximise the accruing economic and social benefits. International experience and research supports the view that high speed broadband in particular is a key requirement for growth and jobs. Furthermore, the exponential growth of digital technologies across the globe is driving demand for high speed broadband.</p> <p>Studies have indicated that SMEs with a strong web presence have been shown internationally to grow twice as quickly, export twice as much and create twice as many jobs as those who have a minimal web presence. Reliable connectivity to the internet is therefore critically important for business growth and development. By providing the requisite connectivity, incentivising digital for small business, and raising awareness of its benefits, it is expected that more businesses will be encouraged to do more with digital. This, in turn, should have a positive impact on efficiencies, increase sales, grow enterprise and create more jobs. From a societal perspective, broadband is an important facilitator of many activities including education, entertainment, business, eHealth, eGovernment and is increasingly used as a simple and effective way of communication through social media. It is also an essential requirement for more flexible work patterns which can potentially reduce operating costs for commercial and public sector organisations. Considerable progress has been made in recent years in both the coverage and speeds of national broadband infrastructure with a multiplicity of commercial operators providing services over a diverse range of technology platforms. A combination of private investment and State intervention over the past number of years means that Ireland has met the European Commission Digital Agenda target of having a basic broadband service available to all areas by 2013. The focus must now turn to accelerating the roll out of high speed services and the achievement of the other targets of the Digital Agenda for Europe. Notwithstanding progress made in recent years in delivering a basic broadband service, there still remains an unacceptable digital divide between rural and urban areas. While industry continues to make significant investments in high speed broadband services, it is accepted that Ireland's widely dispersed population and topography means that there are some areas where it is simply not viable for the commercial sector to provide services.</p> <p>Recognising the critical importance of high speed broadband in terms of economic stability and prosperity, the Irish Government is committed to radically changing the broadband landscape in Ireland by ensuring that guaranteed, quality broadband is available to all and that citizens and businesses have the</p>	

Investment priority	2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy
<p>requisite tools to participate fully in, and maximise the benefits of, a digitally enabled economy and society. In this regard, a National Broadband Plan and National Digital Strategy have been adopted and will be implemented over the coming years. These represent a dual strategy of facilitating the provision of high quality infrastructure while at the same time helping citizens, businesses and communities to optimise the use of technology.</p> <p>Based on the most recent statistics from the OECD from 2011, 90% of Irish enterprises had a fixed broadband connection. In absolute terms this means that approximately 14,000 enterprises within the Southern & Eastern region had yet to connect to a fixed broadband connection. This gives an indication of the number of potential enterprises within the region who could benefit from the roll-out of next generation broadband to the presently unserved areas.</p> <p>The Next Generation Broadband Plan which was published in 2012 contained a suite of measures aimed at ensuring the widespread availability of broadband across the country, irrespective of location. The main focus was to facilitate commercial investment with a commitment from the State that public money would be invested to ensure high speed broadband services would also be available in those parts of the country that were not commercially viable. In addition, the Plan also contained a number of other policy targets including looking at improving interaction with local authorities to help streamline planning and consents for proposed commercial investments (road openings, erection of masts etc.), a review of national spectrum policy as well as leveraging, where possible, the role that State-owned infrastructure might play in broadband deployment.</p> <p>The National Broadband Plan is a clear expression of the importance of broadband infrastructure to the achievement of Ireland’s economic and social objectives. It recognises that the full range of opportunities presented by a digital economy can only be further unlocked if the requisite infrastructure is in place to support the development of new applications, new connectivity, new ways of doing business and new ways of delivering public, private and community services to citizens. It commits to, among other things, a State led investment to deliver high speed broadband in those areas that will not be served by the commercial sector. A comprehensive mapping exercise will identify where the market is expected to deliver high speed broadband services over the coming years and consequently those areas that will need to be targeted by a State led intervention.</p> <p>The Plan also contained specific proposals around stimulating demand for broadband and, as a consequence, in the summer of 2013, Ireland published the National Digital Strategy (http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Communications/NDS/NDSHome.htm). The strategy recognises that any supply side measures need to have complementary demand side measures, if the benefits of a digital society are to be fully realised. To this end, the National Broadband Plan complements a range of developed and emerging Government initiatives that require high speed broadband in order to realise their full potential. The National Digital Strategy seeks to stimulate business and consumer demand for ICT and the e-Government Strategy, encompassing e-Health and eLearning.</p>	

Investment priority	2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy
<p>In tandem with Ireland’s National Digital Champion (David Puttnam) a lot of effort is being put into implementing the various recommendations of this Report. The focus is very much on getting small domestic SMEs trading on-line, increasing the use of ICT in the classroom and learning environment and enabling those traditional groups (elderly, unemployed, early school-leavers) to gain basic digital skills. Ireland’s e-Government Strategy (dealt with by another Ministry) also has clear targets for increasing the range of public services that can be accessed on-line. Ireland’s Central Bank has also developed a national electronic payments plan to try shift business and the public away from cash and cheque transactions.</p> <p>As part of DCENR’s communications strategy for the proposed State intervention, the Department of Communications is heavily engaged with numerous stakeholders who would represent rural dwellers and business. For example, links have been forged with the Irish Farmers’ Association to create a compelling picture as to why the farming community should embrace digital technology. A similar case is being developed with other groups representing tourism and small businesses.</p> <p>In parallel and in order to ensure that the opportunities afforded by the digital era are embraced, the National Digital Strategy seeks to stimulate business and consumer demand for ICT and is part of suite of measures introduced by the Irish Government to ensure that Ireland transitions to a more digitally engaged society. These strategies include the National Payments Plan and the eGovernment Strategy.</p> <p>To promote greater levels of take-up of high speed broadband, and to complement the investment under the National Broadband Plan, the National Digital Strategy sets out a wide range of measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of e-business and web-based trading opportunities for indigenous firms • Support for the start-up and expansion of digital enterprises • Awareness-raising campaigns to reduce the levels of non-internet usage, in collaboration with internet service providers • Digital skills training initiatives • Greater deployment of on-line education resources for both mainstream and e-learning uses • Enhance on-line service delivery for public service users <p>Promotion of ICT and e-business opportunities and expansion of digital enterprises will be supported under Priority Axis 3 of the OP. Other initiatives will be funded by the Irish exchequer and include, inter alia: the Broadband for Schools initiative and a Trading Online voucher Scheme to promote online trading by SMEs. The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources also liaises with community groups such as LEADER Groups and the Irish Farmers’ Association in this regard.</p>	

Investment priority	2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy
<p>The National Broadband Plan and National Digital Strategy are investing in Ireland’s future. While the improvements they seek to deliver will impact across Ireland, they will be especially pronounced in smaller urban and rural areas. Their successful implementation should ensure that the benefits of the internet economy are realised by all. The proposed State investment will be subject to a formal state aid application.</p> <p>Broadband and the need to improve both its availability and quality in rural areas emerged as a strong theme from both research and consultation carried out to support the development of the LEADER elements of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. However, it was also determined that the level of funding available and the community-led nature of the delivery methods would not lend itself to significant infrastructural investment from the LEADER elements of the RDP. It is therefore envisaged that LEADER support will be directed to projects that support and promote the uptake of broadband and capacity building efforts to ensure rural communities and business can avail of all of the benefits that broadband has to offer. In this context, the LEADER elements of the RDP aim to add value to national efforts to improve broadband infrastructure. The RDP programme document will include text to include broadband in the context of activities that complement national initiatives in order to ensure flexibility for Local Development Strategies with a view to further refining the specifics of what is and what is not eligible within the framework of the LEADER operating rules that accompany the implementation of the programme. The Managing Authorities for the ERDF and EAFRD co-financed programmes will maintain effective communications to ensure that programmes work together in a complementary manner.</p> <p>The intervention that will be supported under this Priority is a targeted State led investment providing broadband infrastructure in those areas that will not be covered by the commercial sector. This will facilitate the widespread availability of reliable and guaranteed high speed broadband which is a key component in delivering the objectives of the National Broadband Plan and the National Digital Strategy.</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy
<p>The following general principles will apply to the selection of operations for the 2014-2020 programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transparency in the process – all potential beneficiaries to be aware of the process and criteria to be used; 	

Investment priority	2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporation of OP objectives and contribution to defined results; • incorporation of applicable horizontal principles (e.g., sustainability, equality) into the selection criteria; • use of competitive selection processes, where feasible; • cost effectiveness and value for money; and • consistency in the appraisal of proposals. <p>The areas to be targeted for the provision of high speed broadband will be identified in a comprehensive mapping exercise. A broadband service provider(s) will be selected arising from a competitive tender process, compliant with public procurement requirements, for the roll out of high speed broadband in the identified target areas. The criteria for selection of the successful bidder(s) will be specified in the request for tender document.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy
<p>The Irish Authorities are satisfied that there is no scope for the use of financial instruments in Priority Axis 2 of the S&E Regional OP. The action is aimed at providing high speed fibre accessibility to areas where it is not currently commercially viable to do so. This market failure requires state intervention, subject to state aid approval and is not suitable to be delivered via a financial instrument. However, the potential use of financial instruments will be kept under review and the S&E ERDF OP 2014-2020 will introduce financial instruments where possible during the implementing time of the OP.</p>	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy
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Investment priority	2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy
<p>Ireland’s digital economy is growing at a rate of 16% per year and the opportunities this presents must be harnessed in order to maximise the accruing economic and social benefits. International experience and research finds that high speed broadband is a key requirement for growth and jobs. The exponential growth of digital technologies across the globe is driving demand for high speed broadband.</p> <p>International studies indicate that SMEs with a strong web presence grow twice as quickly, export twice as much and create twice as many jobs as those with a minimal web presence. Reliable connectivity to the internet is therefore critical for business growth and development.</p> <p>Societally broadband is an important facilitator of activities including education, entertainment, business, eHealth, eGovernment and social media. It is essential for more flexible work patterns which can potentially reduce operating costs for commercial and public sector organisations.</p> <p>Private investment and State intervention has allowed Ireland to meet the European Commission Digital Agenda target of basic broadband provision. An unacceptable digital divide exists between rural and urban areas in Ireland. Therefore, the focus now is on the roll out of high speed services and the achievement of the other Digital Agenda targets. Ireland’s dispersed rural population and topography lessens the attraction for commercial operators to provide fibre to these areas. Recognising the critical importance of high speed broadband, the Irish Government is committed to guaranteeing the provision of quality broadband for all citizens and businesses to maximise the benefits of a digitally enabled economy and society.</p> <p>A National Broadband Plan (NBP) and National Digital Strategy (NDS) have been adopted and will be implemented over the coming years. They facilitate the provision of high quality infrastructure, while helping citizens, businesses, communities and public institutions to optimise the use of technology.</p> <p>The NBP provides the mechanism to unlock the opportunities of a digital economy to support the development of new applications, new connectivity, new ways of doing business and new ways of delivering public, private and community services to citizens.</p>	

Investment priority	2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy
<p>This intervention, which will be delivered through a major project, is a targeted State led investment providing broadband infrastructure in those areas that will not be covered by the commercial sector. This will facilitate the widespread availability of reliable and guaranteed high speed broadband which is a key component in delivering the objectives of the National Broadband Plan and the National Digital Strategy and specifically addresses the specific objective to increase the provision of fibre optic links to all un-served towns and villages in the S&E Region.</p>	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
CO10	ICT Infrastructure: Additional households with broadband access of at least 30	Households	ERDF	More developed			164,344.00	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources	Annual

Investment priority		2a - Extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
	Mbps								

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	2 - Information and Communication Technologies
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2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis		2 - Information and Communication Technologies											
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
CO10	O	ICT Infrastructure: Additional households with broadband access of at least 30 Mbps	Households	ERDF	More developed			0			164,344.00	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources	This is a key Common output indicator for the Priority.
F1.1	F	total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority	€	ERDF	More developed			0.00			60,000,000.00	Certifying Authority	The roll-out of next generation broadband fibre will take place in the latter half of the programme
I1	I	Key Implementation Steps	Number of Steps Completed	ERDF	More developed			Launch of procurement process to award contract			1.00	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources	The final target represents the completion of phase 1 of the National Broadband Plan

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		2 - Information and Communication Technologies	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	046. ICT: High-speed broadband network (access/local loop; >= 30 Mbps)	30,000,000.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		2 - Information and Communication Technologies	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	01. Non-repayable grant	30,000,000.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		2 - Information and Communication Technologies	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount

Priority axis		2 - Information and Communication Technologies	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	02. Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	15,000,000.00
ERDF	More developed	03. Rural areas (thinly populated)	15,000,000.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		2 - Information and Communication Technologies	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	07. Not applicable	30,000,000.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		2 - Information and Communication Technologies	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:		2 - Information and Communication Technologies	

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	3
Title of the priority axis	SME Support, promotion and capability development

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ERDF	More developed	Public	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	3a
Title of the investment priority	Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	3a
Title of the specific objective	To increase employment levels in micro-enterprises in the S&E Region by supporting business start-ups, business expansion and higher innovation levels in micro-enterprises.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Employment in the micro-enterprise sector in the S&E Region

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators, by specific objective (for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund)

Specific objective		3a - To increase employment levels in micro-enterprises in the S&E Region by supporting business start-ups, business expansion and higher innovation levels in micro-enterprises.						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region (where relevant)	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
3a.1	Employment in the micro-enterprise sector in the S&E Region	Full Time Equivalents	More developed	169,866.00	2011	186,852.00	CSO	Annual

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
<p>This investment priority will support innovative and growth oriented micro-enterprise business start-ups and expansions, with a particular emphasis on high-growth and potentially high-growth sectors through the provision of business information, advisory services, capability building, mentoring and financial supports. The ERDF co-financed financial supports will be targeted at more value added micro-enterprises in the manufacturing and traded services activities, with a particular emphasis on high-growth and potentially high-growth sectors which do not lead to deadweight and or displacement. The non-financial supports are broader and more generally focussed but will meet the specific needs of high growth and potential high growth companies.</p> <p>In pursuing this, the LEOs will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support business start-ups and expansions with appropriate financial supports, including feasibility supports, priming supports and repayable assistance in addition to networking with appropriate private sector finance providers; • encourage and facilitate higher levels of value added businesses, including green enterprises and eco-innovation, by applying innovation, ICT strategies and export awareness; • build the capability of owner/managers of micro-businesses through training and development actions including mentoring programmes, peer learning's and access to business networks with a particular focus on high growth and potential high growth enterprises; • promote local enterprise culture and entrepreneurship throughout society through initiatives such as their Start-Your-Own-Business training courses – targeted at the unemployed, provision of business information and advisory services, schools enterprise programmes, awards schemes, networks including the Women-in-Business , Seniors and Youth enterprise networks. The LEOs run a range of Start-Your-Own-Business Programmes every year which are targeted at the unemployed to encourage them to develop their skills in addition to presenting self employment as a career development option. <p>Companies will also benefit from the roll-out of high speed fibre broadband in currently unserved areas. This will enable them to secure the maximum commercial and socio-economic advantages. In addition the LEO's are also implementing a scheme on behalf of the Department of Communications</p>	

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
<p>Energy and Natural Resources to encourage businesses to trade online via an offer of Digital Online Vouchers.</p> <p>The micro-enterprise support actions will be administered in each local authority area by the relevant Local Enterprise Office. Each Local Enterprise Office will operate in accordance with a Service Level Agreement with Enterprise Ireland setting out the protocols relating to service delivery, operational arrangements, policy and support, budgets and performance metrics. Enterprise Ireland will act as the Intermediate Body for the actions and the Local Enterprise Offices within each City and County Council will be the public beneficiary bodies.</p> <p>The financial assistance provided will be in the form of repayable and non-repayable grants, with 30% of total approvals being in the form of repayable grants. Each Local Enterprise Office will have discretion to assign a refundability element in the case of individual grants once the overall levels are achieved. Separate records are maintained for grants distributed from the repayable aid accounts.</p> <p>Repayable grants typically have to be repaid in instalments over a period of 3 – 5 years, sometimes after an initial repayment holiday. Repayable assistance is eligible for inclusion in declarations of co-financed expenditure when first declared only and repayments received from repayable / recycled grants must be used for the same purpose as the original funds.</p> <p>The LEOs will engage, individually and collectively, in the development and establishment of training programmes and initiatives designed to promote entrepreneurial capability, entrepreneurship, and adaptation of new technology including ICT applications, on-line business opportunities and innovation, as well as increased export sales by micro enterprises. The training programmes as developed by the LEOs may be delivered by public and/ or private sector training providers. The selection of training providers will have regard to the suitability of a market-driven approach and the scope for private sector participation in delivery as well as to the capacity and experience of potential providers and adherence to cross-cutting themes.</p> <p>The LEOs are the first stop shop for anybody in Ireland looking to start develop or grow a business. The LEOs will support entrepreneurs and businesses that are eligible for support under current policy. The LEOs have a series of protocols in place with other agencies in the enterprise space and where appropriate will refer on those enquirers to the relevant agency to deal with their enquiry. Those protocols include many of the key local and national agencies including Department of Social Welfare. Revenue Commissioners, Údarás Na Gaeltachta, Micro Finance Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, etc. This also involves referrals for H2020 where appropriate. The LEO Customer Service Charter states specifically: <i>Where your LEO cannot deal with your enquiry it will provide a referral service to the appropriate agency. The Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation and Enterprise Ireland have agreed</i></p>	

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
<p><i>protocols with the relevant agencies to ensure an efficient customer service in response to LEO clients' enquiries.</i></p> <p>Due to the level ERDF resources available for this priority, supports for larger SME's (i.e. those in excess of 10 employees) will not be delivered through this Priority, but through a number of Irish exchequer funded schemes primarily delivered through Enterprise Ireland. Enterprise Ireland is charged with providing a range of financial support, information services and training relevant to Irish Enterprises. In particular the supports include (inter alia):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · promoting entrepreneurship and supporting high potential start-up companies, · fostering and investing in in-company R&D & Innovation · fostering and investing in research collaborations between public and private research performers in Ireland · supporting the commercialisation of public research institutes · promoting awareness and access to EU funding research programmes including Horizon 2020 · supporting the adoption of best practice in relation productivity and environmental improvements in Irish Enterprises · supporting the development of management capabilities in Irish Enterprise · improving access to finance for Irish SMEs. <p>The average annual funding for enterprise development allocated by Enterprise Ireland is in the region of €200m and this funding is primarily targeted at supporting the development of manufacturing and internationally traded services companies. The funding and supports are to assist the companies, from entrepreneurs with business propositions for a high potential start-up through to large companies, to expand their activities, improving efficiency and growing international sales.</p> <p>In instances where Enterprise Ireland does not play a direct role in delivering supports signposting and introductions are made to other relevant government and EU supports. This information is provided through a number of channels including the Enterprise Ireland website, Ireland's Horizon 2020 website, information events for entrepreneurship, regional Enterprise Ireland Offices and through direct discussions and advice provided by</p>	

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
Enterprise Ireland representatives.	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
<p>The following general principles will apply to the selection of operations for the 2014-2020 programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transparency in the process – all potential beneficiaries to be aware of the process and criteria to be used; • incorporation of OP objectives and contribution to defined results; • incorporation of applicable horizontal principles (e.g., sustainability, gender equality) into the selection criteria; • use of competitive selection processes, where feasible; • cost effectiveness and value for money; and • consistency in the appraisal of proposals. <p>Approval of micro-enterprise support will be effected through the relevant Local Enterprise Office operating within local authorities. These will pursue a systematic appraisal of all project proposals. An overriding requirement is the avoidance of duplication, displacement or dead-weight. The key selection criteria will be based on national guidelines and include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality, commercial viability of the project proposal and its local relevance; • overall costs of the project and its cost effectiveness; • The contribution of the proposal to the development of the enterprise in terms of internal capacity and employment creation; • Potential for deadweight or displacement; 	

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to increase the competitiveness of the enterprise and added value to local enterprise development; and • Adherence to cross cutting themes. 	

2.A.6.3 *Planned use of financial instruments* (where appropriate)

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
<p>As outlined in Ireland’s Partnership Agreement, the wider EU SME Initiative proposed by the EIB was considered as a financial instrument to be co-financed. In early 2014, the Departments of Public Expenditure & Reform, Finance and Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation held exploratory discussions with the Commission, EIB and EIF concerning possible participation by Ireland. The relevant Departments undertook the necessary market testing to examine the level of interest and capacity of prospective financial intermediaries to participate in this initiative. The outcome of these investigations suggest that, at this stage, Ireland is not participating in this initiative but the use of this initiative is not ruled out a later stage in the programming period. Repayable grants are currently used in the microenterprise sector, co-financed under this priority axis.</p>	

2.A.6.4 *Planned use of major projects* (where appropriate)

Investment priority	3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators
No major projects are planned under this investment priority	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
CO01	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	ERDF	More developed			51,736.00	Enterprise Ireland administrative records	Annual
CO02	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving grants	Enterprises	ERDF	More developed			1,804.00	Enterprise Ireland administrative records	Annual
CO04	Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Enterprises	ERDF	More developed			17,770.00	Enterprise Ireland	Annual
CO05	Productive investment: Number of new enterprises supported	Enterprises	ERDF	More developed			2,398.00	Enterprise Ireland	Annual
CO06	Productive investment: Private investment	EUR	ERDF	More developed			13,649,599.00	Enterprise Ireland administrative	Annual

Investment priority		3a - Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
	matching public support to enterprises (grants)							records	
CO08	Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises	Full time equivalents	ERDF	More developed			5,760.00	Enterprise Ireland	Annual
3.1	Number of participants of enterprise training programmes	Number of participants	ERDF	More developed			105,552.00	Enterprise Ireland	Annual

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development

2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis	3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development
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ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
CO08	O	Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises	Full time equivalents	ERDF	More developed			2,304			5,760.00	Enterprise Ireland	Captures a key outcome of the supported intervention
F1.1	F	total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority	€	ERDF	More developed			27,680,000.00			69,200,000.00	Certifying Authority	The financial indicator assumes that 40% of allocated eligible expenditure will be declared by 2018 and 100% by 2023

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development		
Fund	Category of region	Code		€ amount
ERDF	More developed	001. Generic productive investment in small and medium –sized enterprises ('SMEs')		34,600,000.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis	3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development

Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	01. Non-repayable grant	24,220,000.00
ERDF	More developed	02. Repayable grant	10,380,000.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis	3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	01. Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	10,860,000.00
ERDF	More developed	02. Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	12,580,000.00
ERDF	More developed	03. Rural areas (thinly populated)	11,160,000.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis	3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	07. Not applicable	34,600,000.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis	3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development		
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	4
Title of the priority axis	Low Carbon Economy

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ERDF	More developed	Public	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	4c
Title of the investment priority	Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	4c
Title of the specific objective	To improve energy efficiency in the housing stock.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	The average thermal performance of housing units in the S&E Region.

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators, by specific objective (for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund)

Specific objective		4c - To improve energy efficiency in the housing stock.						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region (where relevant)	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
4c.1	The average thermal performance of housing units in the S&E Region.	KWh/BRm ² /year	More developed	210.00	2014	185.00	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland	Annual

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector
<u>Social Housing Retrofit</u>	
<p>The actions to be funded under this priority axis will support the creation of green jobs, for employees working in the labour-intensive retrofitting of existing dwellings.</p>	
<i>Scheme 1 - Apartments</i>	
<p>Of the 25,000 older properties a particular difficulty arises in the case of some 2,000 apartments located in large flat complexes in Dublin city especially, where more than 1,500 of these are found. These 5-storey maisonettes do not meet new building standards of energy efficiency and require a substantial energy retrofit to address this as well as renewable energy use, condensation risk etc. These 5-storey blocks are solid, well located and currently support stable communities in city centre locations and make a positive contribution to the urban form. In the case of Cork and Limerick, the flat complexes are smaller in scale but exhibit the same deficiencies in terms of thermal performance and comfort levels. They will be the subject of similar thermal improvement works.</p>	
<p>Installation and design of energy efficiency retrofit works will be performed to National Building Regulations and to the detail provided in the National Standards Authority of Ireland Code of Practice for Energy Efficiency Retrofit of Dwellings.</p>	
<p>Therefore this theme will provide funding for the energy retrofitting of up to 2,000 thermally deficient and older social housing units.</p>	
<p>The principal objective of the retrofitting proposal is to meet Ireland's commitments in relation to carbon emissions reductions and energy reduction targets for 2020. Implementation of energy efficiency measures in buildings will make a significant contribution to Ireland's carbon emissions reduction targets and energy reduction targets for 2020. The frameworks within which these measures are being implemented are provided by the recast Energy</p>	

Investment priority	4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector
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Performance of Buildings Directive and Energy Efficiency Directive.

Energy savings in buildings will contribute 45% of Ireland’s total energy savings targets for 2020. The energy retrofitting of buildings in the private and public sector hold the greatest potential for energy savings.

It is intended that this retrofitting proposal will fully meet the stringent requirements and ambitious targets of the Energy Efficiency Directive.

Secondary objectives of the retrofitting proposal include:

- Stimulating employment generation within the construction/energy retrofitting sector. This measure will support some 4167 jobs, taking account of both direct and indirect jobs, over the implementation period;
- Demonstrating the importance of public sector bodies leading by example as required by the Recast Energy Performance of Buildings Directive and the Energy Efficiency Directive.

The targeted housing units shall undergo an ambitious and all-at-the-same time comprehensive energy efficiency improvements resulting in at least an improvement in one energy efficiency grade rating to be fit for purpose.

A programme of Energy Retrofitting works will include:

- Insulation works;
- Installation of new heating systems based on 91% efficient gas boiler with zoning, temperature controls, and factory insulated hot water cylinders;
- Interventions to improve energy efficiency and seal buildings including draught proofing and ventilation systems; and
- Replacement of windows and doors with high performance double glazing and triple glazing.

Scheme 2 – Local Authority Houses

Measure 1: Insulation Retrofitting Programme.

This scheme will focus on older properties with solid masonry wall construction with a view to retrofitting attic/roof and wall insulation. Due to the

Investment priority	4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector
<p>higher cost of providing either external wall insulation and/or internal dry-lining/insulation, grants of up to €10,000 per dwelling will generally be payable. The funding will include the replacement of poorly performing doors and windows where necessary.</p> <p>It is estimated that at least 13,000 such properties across Ireland (8,750 in the S&E Region) will require to be retrofitted in the coming years at an estimated cost of €10,000 each.</p> <p>The targeted housing units shall undergo an ambitious and all-at-the-same time comprehensive energy efficiency improvements resulting in at least an improvement in one energy efficiency grade rating to be fit for purpose.</p> <p>Properties in all local authority areas are eligible for funding.</p> <p><u>Measure 2: Retrofitting of Vacant Social Housing Stock.</u></p> <p>In addition to achieving best use of existing resources, minimising voids attracts a much enhanced perception of local authorities where housing applicants can be accommodated as quickly as possible and vacant dwellings are not the source of anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Over 4,000 social housing units are vacant at present. A targeted measure is being introduced which will focus exclusively on vacant and boarded-up properties with the objective of returning at least 3,500 of these (2,355 in the S&E region) to productive use as quickly as possible. Funding of up to €30,000 per unit will be provided for a suite of retrofitting works. The programme will focus on retrofitting of the fabric of the dwelling (insulation of walls/roofs, window/door replacement, heating system improvement, etc). The measure will apply across all local authorities in the S&E region.</p> <p>Retrofitting on the selected properties under the above measures will be based on the results of a conditional and thermal efficiency survey of social housing units. Local Authorities are required to identify properties without adequate basic fabric insulation or thermal saving measures. Priority will be given to ensuring that all social housing stock will have, as a minimum, wall insulation and attic insulation (300mm). Following this, Local Authorities will identify properties which have un-insulated solid walls – pre 1978 dwellings, solid block, hollow block or mass concrete wall; u-Value.2.1. The document “Guidance note on energy retrofitting of dwellings, 2013” outlines the methodology and offers guidance to Local Authorities to assist in prioritising works for upgrading the energy efficiency of the social housing stock. Priority is given to stock with less than 100mm insulation at present.</p> <p>The targeted housing units shall undergo an ambitious and all-at-the-same time comprehensive energy efficiency improvements resulting in at least an</p>	

Investment priority	4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector
improvement in one energy efficiency grade rating to be fit for purpose.	
<u>Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme</u>	
<p>The Better Energy Warmer Homes scheme is run by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland on behalf of the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. The scheme is targeted at low-income households at risk of energy poverty. The objectives of the scheme are to improve the energy efficiency of the household at risk and in the process reduce the amount of expenditure that is required to be spent on energy. Other secondary objectives are to improve health and well-being, while reducing the amount of disposal income spent on energy. A reduction in spend on energy will also make a positive contribution to reducing poverty in at-risk households.</p> <p>The Better Energy Warmer Homes scheme delivers a range of energy efficiency measures to households that are vulnerable to energy poverty. The scheme is delivered through a combination of private contractors appointed through public procurement which is augmented by SEAI-appointed Community Based Organisations (CBOs), in order to ensure national coverage. Measures typically installed in eligible households include dry lining, draught proofing, attic insulation, lagging jackets for hot water tanks and cavity wall insulation. A technical survey is carried out by an independent company hired by the SEAI to assess the suitability of each home to receive measures. All energy efficiency works will be undertaken in accordance with SR 54 - Code of practice for the energy efficient retrofit of dwellings (Methodology for the energy efficient retrofit of existing dwellings). This code does not set a minimum standard for energy performance requirements however the targeted housing units shall undergo an ambitious and all-at-the-same time comprehensive energy efficiency improvements resulting in at least an improvement in one energy efficiency grade rating to be fit for purpose.</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector
The following general principles will apply to the selection of operations for the 2014-2020 programmes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transparency in the process – all potential beneficiaries to be aware of the process and criteria to be used; • incorporation of OP objectives and contribution to defined results; 	

Investment priority	4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporation of applicable horizontal principles (e.g., sustainability, equality) into the selection criteria; • use of competitive selection processes, where feasible; • cost effectiveness and value for money; and • consistency in the appraisal of proposals. <p>Local authorities are asked to submit details of all tenanted social housing units within their stock which are subject to low energy performance and in need of retrofitting. Authorities are requested to prioritise those properties which could be retrofitted in the shortest possible timeframe, i.e. those with cavity wall construction. Therefore, phase 1 works will prioritise these properties with cavity wall construction and energy retrofitting included roof/attic insulation and pumping of cavity walls. Phase 2 works will include attic and wall insulation of properties with solid masonry construction, requiring external cladding or internal dry-lining and insulation. Phase 2 works will also include the replacement of poorly performing windows and doors and replacement of deficient heating systems.</p> <p>Proposals will be invited by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government from Local Authorities under a targeted measure to return vacant social houses to productive use. Properties will be selected on the basis of unit cost, the extent of local housing need and the age/condition of the property.</p> <p>Under the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme there are two mechanisms by which work is allocated. In the first instance, the SEAI appoint private contractors via an open and transparent procurement process, which is fully in compliance with public procurement rules (etenders.ie reference: 83171). Contractors then sign a framework agreement to work to the terms and conditions of the scheme. Households apply either directly to the SEAI or via a network of community-based organisations. Each household is deemed eligible if it meets the minimum specification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owner occupied non-Local Authority homes • Constructed before 2006 • The owner is in receipt of one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Fuel Allowance as part of the National Fuel Scheme o Job Seekers Allowance for over six months and with children under 7 years of age 	

Investment priority	4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector
<p>o Family Income Supplement</p> <p>Households are individually (and independently) surveyed to assess what measures are appropriate. Applications are then batched, generally on a geographical basis and allocated to individual contractors. Following completion of works the SEAI undertake a Building Energy Rating of the dwelling. Contractors / CBO's are paid once SEAI receive appropriate confirmations that the works are done and pass the relevant audit and quality controls.</p> <p>Contractors to undertake all of the above retrofit works under each of the schemes will be selected following an open and transparent tendering process and will be in compliance with EU and National public procurement rules.</p>	

2.A.6.3 *Planned use of financial instruments* (where appropriate)

Investment priority	4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector
<p>An evaluation study was conducted by PwC and Arup between November 2012 - June 2013 on behalf of the European Investment Bank, European Commission and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform into the prospective demand, potential thematic focus potential financial instrument architecture and size of the fund. The study found that, based on indicative projects submitted, there would be potentially suitable projects in the categories of Resource Efficiency and Innovation, with the Resource Efficiency theme composed of three sub-themes; Greener Social Housing, Energy Efficiency and Waste-to-Energy.</p> <p>The study concluded that the implementation of a financial instrument in Ireland could provide significant advantages and a valuable source of finance to take forward projects related to strategically important themes such as Resource Efficiency and Innovation and that there was considerable appetite from</p>	

Investment priority	4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector
<p>partners to investigate the opportunity presented by a financial instrument. The invitation to submit projects identified a strong current demand for a financial instrument in Ireland particularly with respect to the Resource Efficiency thematic objective and a financial instrument could help fill an identified market gap.</p> <p>Based on the study a Resource Efficiency financial instrument in the order of €120-150m would be a sufficient size to support implementation of the initiative, while a much larger fund would be required to support the demand if a Social Housing Retrofit project is included.</p> <p>A potentially suitable vehicle to be co-funded was identified in the national energy efficiency fund. However, as the procurement process had already been completed it was not possible for it to retrospectively comply with the EU Procurement requirements specific for FI's.</p> <p>In relation to social housing initiatives the targeted housing units are individual local authority social housing units which are either vacant currently or with low rental revenues and in some cases extensive arrears. There is limited scope to use a financial instrument with repayments to be made based on the type of housing unit in question. Similarly, the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme is a means-tested scheme targeted at low income households with low repayment capacity.</p> <p>However, the potential use of financial instruments will be kept under review and the S&E ERDF OP 2014-2020 will introduce financial instruments where possible during the implementing time of the OP.</p>	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector
<p>No major projects are planned under this investment priority.</p>	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		4c - Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
CO31	Energy efficiency: Number of households with improved energy consumption classification	Households	ERDF	More developed			19,497.00	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.	Annual
CO34	GHG reduction: Estimated annual decrease of GHG	Tonnes of CO2eq	ERDF	More developed			8,945.00	Department of Environment, Community and Local Government	Annual

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	4 - Low Carbon Economy
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Priority axis	4 - Low Carbon Economy
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2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis		4 - Low Carbon Economy											
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
CO31	O	Energy efficiency: Number of households with improved energy consumption classification	Households	ERDF	More developed			7,799.00			19,497.00	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.	This is a key common output indicator for this priority.
F1.1	F	total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority	€	ERDF	More developed			26,600,000.00			66,500,000.00	Certifying Authority	This financial indicator assumes that 40% of eligible expenditure will have been declared by the end of 2018 and 100% by 2023

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		4 - Low Carbon Economy	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	014. Energy efficiency renovation of existing housing stock, demonstration projects and supporting measures	66,500,000.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		4 - Low Carbon Economy	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	01. Non-repayable grant	66,500,000.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		4 - Low Carbon Economy	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	01. Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	20,615,000.00
ERDF	More developed	02. Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	23,940,000.00
ERDF	More developed	03. Rural areas (thinly populated)	21,945,000.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		4 - Low Carbon Economy	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	07. Not applicable	66,500,000.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		4 - Low Carbon Economy	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	4 - Low Carbon Economy

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	5
Title of the priority axis	Sustainable Urban Development

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ERDF	More developed	Public	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	4e
Title of the investment priority	Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	4e
Title of the specific objective	To support low carbon sustainable, multimodal urban mobility in designated urban centres
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Non-private car commuting levels in the designated urban centres.

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators, by specific objective (for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund)

Specific objective		4e - To support low carbon sustainable, multimodal urban mobility in designated urban centres						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region (where relevant)	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
4e	Non-private car commuting levels in the designated urban centres.	%	More developed	22.26	2011	42.26	Central Statistics Office	Every 5 Years

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures
<p>The urban development needs, bottlenecks and growth potentials have been identified in section 1.1 of the programme and, in terms of sustainable, multimodal urban mobility, a common challenge facing all of the designated urban centres was highlighted - to increase non private car commuting into the urban areas. Low-density, car-dependent, suburban green-field development has meant that development has become more dispersed and fragmented geographically, with greater distances between where people live and work.</p> <p>Promotion of modal shifts play an important part in reducing transport emissions. Alternatives to private car use such as walking, cycling and improved access to public transport will therefore be supported. These actions will also contribute towards creating sustainable communities, having a focus on access to public transport, and the provision of cycleways , bus lanes and pedestrian priority areas.</p> <p>To address this common challenge, this investment priority will support sustainable urban mobility initiatives, consistent with investment priority 4(e) of the ERDF Regulation. The multimodal actions to be supported could include a number of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pedestrianisation;• installation and extension of a network of cycle lanes;• installation and extension of bus lanes.• reduction in short-distance car journeys through the introduction of good quality travel information and alternative infrastructure, and• Improved walking and cycling access to public transport <p>The actions supported will be consistent with Ireland’s Smarter Travel policy. Improved infrastructure in the main urban centres will encourage more</p>	

Investment priority	4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures
<p>people to switch to more sustainable modes of travel thus promoting multi-modal transport availability in Ireland’s urban centres. Local authorities are required to promote the delivery of public transport, cycling and more sustainable travel patterns generally in existing urban centres under Ireland’s Smarter Travel policy. Local authorities have been tasked with creating sustainable neighbourhoods so that walking and cycling can be the best options for local trips, for example to reach local facilities such as shops and schools and places of work.</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures
<p>It is intended that the eligible urban areas will be selected in line with the principles specified in Ireland’s Partnership Agreement. These urban authorities will develop integrated urban strategies and from these they will select, in accordance with Article 7.3 of the ERDF Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, the most appropriate actions for ERDF co-funding. An Assessment Panel will be established by the Managing Authority whose role will be to determine the allocation of the ERDF resources available and to assure the eligibility of the selected actions.</p> <p><u>Guiding principles for project selection</u></p> <p>The following general principles will apply to the selection of operations for the 2014-2020 programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transparency in the process – all potential beneficiaries to be aware of the process and criteria to be used; • incorporation of OP objectives and contribution to defined results; • incorporation of applicable horizontal principles (e.g., sustainability, equality) into the selection criteria; • use of competitive selection processes, where feasible; 	

Investment priority	4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost effectiveness and value for money; and • consistency in the appraisal of proposals. <p>The Urban Development Priority will be overseen by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government which has overall responsibility for spatial planning and urban development policy in Ireland. Local Authorities within the designated urban growth centres in the BMW/S&E Regions will be invited to prepare integrated development strategies, and to select specific actions for which support is being sought. Clear guidelines will be provided to the local authorities with the calls for proposals to ensure that the preparation of the integrated strategic proposals and selected actions meet the required standards and target the appropriate challenges in selected urban areas.</p> <p>An assessment panel will be established to make the awards of ERDF to the selected projects. This panel will be chaired by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and will also contain representatives from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the Regional Assemblies and other Government Departments, as appropriate. This panel will examine the selected actions before making allocations, taking account of the overall objectives of the Priority and the specified assessment criteria, eligibility of the selected actions and compliance with the approved selection criteria, in accordance with Articles 125(3)(a), 125(3)(b) and 125(3)(d) of the Common Provisions Regulation</p> <p>Actions will be selected by urban authorities on the basis of a detailed specification and criteria to be prepared for the investment programme. These criteria will take account of, inter alia, the following key criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence with the integrated strategy submitted, including the strategic fit with national, regional and local plans and individual Urban Centre Strategies. • Quality of the selected proposal(s) in terms of social inclusion and contribution to economic development of urban centre, universal design and environmental sustainability, • Social and Economic benefits that the proposal will bring to the community and to the urban centre concerned over-and-above what is there already in terms of employment and sustainable economic development. 	

Investment priority	4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value for money of the proposed actions to be supported and the expected leverage effect of additional public and private funding • Inclusiveness of the consultative process undertaken in the development of the integrated strategy and the prioritization of project actions, in terms of council and community buy-in. • Delivery arrangement including project management arrangements, milestones, targets, deadlines and outcomes. <p>There may be more than one call issued to local authorities over the lifetime of the programme.</p>	

2.A.6.3 *Planned use of financial instruments* (where appropriate)

Investment priority	4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures
<p>A JESSICA-style financial instrument was considered for the delivery of the sustainable urban development priority. The conclusion was that the majority of the actions to be co-funded with local authorities in the designated centres are either not directly revenue-generating, e.g, streetscaping, public space enhancements, heritage works, social infrastructure, installing cycle lanes and/or priority bus lanes; or are not net revenue generating, such as public arts and tourism facilities.</p> <p>However, the potential use of financial instruments will be kept under review and the S&E ERDF OP 2014-2020 will introduce financial instruments where possible during the implementing time of the OP.</p>	

2.A.6.4 *Planned use of major projects* (where appropriate)

Investment priority	4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures
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Investment priority	4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures
No major projects are planned under this investment priority.	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		4e - Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
5.2	Number of multimodal urban mobility projects	Number of Projects	ERDF	More developed			4.00	Managing Authority administrative records	Annual

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	6e
Title of the investment priority	Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	6e
Title of the specific objective	To revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment in the designated urban centres as part of integrated urban strategies
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Improvement in the social, economic and physical conditions in selected urban growth centres, based on an urban development index

Table 3: Programme-specific result indicators, by specific objective (for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund)

Specific objective		6e - To revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment in the designated urban centres as part of integrated urban strategies						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Category of region (where relevant)	Baseline value	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
6e	Improvement in the social, economic and physical conditions in selected urban centres, based on an urban development index	index Values	More developed	5.00	2012	5.10	Managing Authority - Gateway and Hubs Development Index	Every 3 years

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	6e - Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures
<p>The urban development needs, bottlenecks and growth potentials have been identified in section 1.1 of the programme and can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Region is characterised by an unbalanced urban structure with Dublin being very dominant in terms of population and economic activity.• Each of the region’s designated growth centres need a stimulus to reinforce their regional economic development role, boost their attractiveness for enterprises and tourism and un-lock public and private investment;• There are concentrations of socially deprived areas and issues of vacancy in urban centres that require multi-faceted responses, such as upgraded social infrastructure, community facilities and support for social enterprises;• Further investment is needed to promote uptake of public transport and eco-friendly modes of transport, other than private motorcars;• Physical regeneration is also needed in some public areas, including environmental enhancement;• Provision of enhanced arts, tourism and cultural facilities can be drivers of economic regeneration as part of integrated urban strategies;• Concentration of historic structures in core urban areas are an essential part of urban fabric, but they are in need of regeneration, including the regeneration of urban brownfield sites;• The priority needs of individual urban centres differ greatly, thus necessitating a wide range of potential investments that would be eligible under a sustainable urban development priority. <p>This investment priority will take action to improve the urban environment, revitalise and regenerate designated urban areas, consistent with investment priority 6(e) under Article 5 of the ERDF Regulation. It will support integrated urban regeneration initiatives to improve the urban environment and revitalise urban areas.</p> <p>Sustainable integrated urban development measures supported will focus on the efficient use of existing resources within the urban environment hence reduce the pressure for the centre to ‘spread’ outwards and lead to further land degradation.</p>	

Investment priority	6e - Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures
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The actions to be supported could include:

- Green regeneration, physical enhancements and social revitalisation including open public/community spaces;
- Rehabilitation of brownfield sites including renewal of existing and/or demolition and construction of new buildings and landscaping; and
- Rehabilitation/development of cultural infrastructure/assets.

The actions supported under this priority will bring multiple benefits to the selected urban centres. First of all, the preparation of integrated strategies by the relevant authorities will stimulate a comprehensive re-appraisal of development needs, challenges and potential opportunities within the urban areas, in co-operation with local stakeholders. The proposed actions will provide a much-needed stimulus and financial incentives to the urban authorities to invest in strategic measures which address the challenges identified and to avail of new opportunities to improve the urban environment, to enhance economic growth and for job creation. These will complement the development objectives specified in the various land-use and transportation strategies and statutory development plans, which are already in place. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the funding of the selected strategies will un-lock and leverage additional public and private investment in the urban areas, thus having a significant multiplier effect. . For example the recent ERDF co-funding of the House of Waterford Crystal and the Bolton Street Coach parking was complemented by additional public investment in the adjacent Waterford Museum of Treasures, which included works to Bishops Palace, the Viking Triangle and public realm works, making the Mall a more attractive area to visit for tourists and residents. The provision of social, arts/culture and heritage facilities in urban centres can provide new uses for previously under-utilised or vacant public buildings or the construction of efficient new buildings in areas in need of revitalisation, thus contributing to environmental improvements and integrated urban regeneration which is central to the objectives of investment priority 6(e). Rehabilitation of buildings and public spaces not only brings improvements in the built environment, but can also bring economic, social and/or cultural benefits

Improving the quality of the physical environment also has a number of positive secondary effects, including social benefits, contributing to improvements in the quality of life for all. Within the context of resource efficiency, the provision of social infrastructure, and support for community initiatives can provide new uses for existing vacant buildings and under-utilised open spaces.

Finally, consultation with communities is an important guiding principle in the elaboration of integrated urban development strategies from which urban authorities will select the most appropriate actions for co-funding under the OP.

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	6e - Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures
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It is intended that the eligible urban areas will be selected in line with the principles specified in Ireland's Partnership Agreement. These urban authorities will develop integrated urban strategies and from these they will select, in accordance with Article 7.3 of the ERDF Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, the most appropriate actions for ERDF co-funding. An Assessment Panel will be established by the Managing Authority whose role will be to determine the allocation of the ERDF resources available and to assure the eligibility of the selected actions.

Guiding principles for project selection

The following general principles will apply to the selection of operations for the 2014-2020 programmes:

- transparency in the process – all potential beneficiaries to be aware of the process and criteria to be used;
- incorporation of OP objectives and contribution to defined results;
- incorporation of applicable horizontal principles (e.g., sustainability, equality) into the selection criteria;
- use of competitive selection processes, where feasible;
- cost effectiveness and value for money; and
- consistency in the appraisal of proposals.

The Urban Development Priority will be overseen by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government which has overall responsibility for spatial planning and urban development policy in Ireland. Local Authorities within the designated urban growth centres in the BMW/S&E Regions

Investment priority	6e - Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures
<p>will be invited to prepare integrated development strategies, and to select specific actions for which support is being sought. Clear guidelines will be provided to the local authorities with the calls for proposals to ensure that the preparation of the integrated strategic proposals and selected actions meet the required standards and target the appropriate challenges in selected urban areas.</p> <p>An assessment panel will be established to make the awards of ERDF to the selected projects. This panel will be chaired by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and will also contain representatives from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the Regional Assemblies and other Government Departments, as appropriate. This panel will examine the selected actions before making allocations, taking account of the overall objectives of the Priority and the specified assessment criteria, eligibility of the selected actions and compliance with the approved selection criteria, in accordance with Articles 125(3)(a), 125(3)(b) and 125(3)(d) of the Common Provisions Regulation</p> <p>Actions will be selected by urban authorities on the basis of a detailed specification and criteria to be prepared for the investment programme. These criteria will take account of, inter alia, the following key criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence with the integrated strategy submitted, including the strategic fit with national, regional and local plans and individual Urban Centre Strategies. • Quality of the selected proposal(s) in terms of social inclusion and contribution to economic development of urban centre, universal design and environmental sustainability, • Social and Economic benefits that the proposal will bring to the community and to the urban centre concerned over-and-above what is there already in terms of employment and sustainable economic development. • Value for money of the proposed actions to be supported and the expected leverage effect of additional public and private funding • Inclusiveness of the consultative process undertaken in the development of the integrated strategy and the prioritization of project actions, in terms of council and community buy-in. • Delivery arrangement including project management arrangements, milestones, targets, deadlines and outcomes. 	

Investment priority	6e - Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures
<p>There may be more than one call issued to local authorities over the lifetime of the programme.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	6e - Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures
<p>A JESSICA-style financial instrument was considered for the delivery of the sustainable urban development priority. The conclusion was that the majority of the actions to be co-funded with local authorities in the designated centres are either not directly revenue-generating, e.g., streetscaping, public space enhancements, heritage works, social infrastructure, installing cycle lanes and/or priority bus lanes; or are not net revenue generating, such as public arts and tourism facilities.</p> <p>However, the potential use of financial instruments will be kept under review and the S&E ERDF OP 2014-2020 will introduce financial instruments where possible during the implementing time of the OP.</p>	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	6e - Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures
<p>No major projects are planned under this investment priority.</p>	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		6e - Taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
CO37	Urban Development: Population living in areas with integrated urban development strategies	Persons	ERDF	More developed			1,571,356.00	Central Statistics Office	Annual
5.1.1	Number of integrated growth centre strategies implemented	Number of Strategies	ERDF	More developed			9.00	Managaing Authority Administrative Records	Annual

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	5 - Sustainable Urban Development

2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis		5 - Sustainable Urban Development											
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
F1.1	F	total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority	€	ERDF	More developed			20,080,000.00			52,000,000.00	Certifying Authority	This financial indicator assumes that 40% of eligible expenditure will be declared by 2018 and 100% by 2023
5.1.1	O	Number of integrated growth centre strategies implemented	Number of Strategies	ERDF	More developed			4			9.00	Managaing Authority Administrative Records	This is the key output indicator for integrated urban development

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		5 - Sustainable Urban Development		
Fund	Category of region	Code		€ amount

Priority axis		5 - Sustainable Urban Development	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	036. Multimodal transport	2,000,000.00
ERDF	More developed	089. Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land	12,000,000.00
ERDF	More developed	094. Protection, development and promotion of public cultural and heritage assets	12,000,000.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		5 - Sustainable Urban Development	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	01. Non-repayable grant	26,000,000.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		5 - Sustainable Urban Development	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	01. Large Urban areas (densely populated >50 000 population)	9,000,000.00
ERDF	More developed	02. Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	17,000,000.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		5 - Sustainable Urban Development	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount

Priority axis		5 - Sustainable Urban Development	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ERDF	More developed	02. Other integrated approaches to sustainable urban development	26,000,000.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		5 - Sustainable Urban Development	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	5 - Sustainable Urban Development

2.B DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.B.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	6
Title of the priority axis	Technical Assistance

2.B.2 Justification for establishing a priority axis covering more than one category of region (where applicable)

2.B.3 Fund and category of region

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)
ERDF	More developed	Public

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
TA.2	Effective communication of funding opportunities and programme achievements	Results are not required to be specified under Article 96(2)(c)

2.B.5 Result indicators

Table 12: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective) (for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

Priority axis		TA.2 - Effective communication of funding opportunities and programme achievements									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value			Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
			M	W	T		M	W	T		

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
TA.3	Effective evaluation of the programme	Results are not required to be specified under Article 96(2)(c)

2.B.5 Result indicators

Table 12: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective) (for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

Priority axis		TA.3 - Effective evaluation of the programme									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value			Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
			M	W	T		M	W	T		

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
TA.4	Effective capacity building for staff of the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies	Results are not required to be specified under Article 96(2)(c)

2.B.5 Result indicators

Table 12: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective) (for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

Priority axis		TA.4 - Effective capacity building for staff of the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value			Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
			M	W	T		M	W	T		

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
TA.5	Establishment and operation of an effective computerised system for data exchange and e-cohesion system	Results are not required to be specified under Article 96(2)(c)

2.B.5 Result indicators

Table 12: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective) (for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

Priority axis		TA.5 - Establishment and operation of an effective computerised system for data exchange and e-cohesion system									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value			Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
			M	W	T		M	W	T		

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
TA1	Effective implementation of the Operational Programme	Results are not required to be specified under Article 96(2)(c)

2.B.5 Result indicators

Table 12: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective) (for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

Priority axis		TA1 - Effective implementation of the Operational Programme									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value			Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
			M	W	T		M	W	T		

2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives (by priority axis)

2.B.6.1 A description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

Priority axis	6 - Technical Assistance
<p>Under this Priority the ERDF may, subject to the limits set down in Article 59 (1) support areas such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation, selection, appraisal and monitoring of programmes and operations which are the subject of co-funded assistance; 2. Meetings of the OP Monitoring Committee and any related sub-committees; 3. All financial management and control, audit and verification activities on co-funded operations, including the preparation and implementation of anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategies; 4. OP-level information actions in accordance with the Communications Action Plan, including costs of participation in the INFORM network and the development and operation of programme-related web-sites; 5. Evaluations of the programme or aspects of it, including costs of participation in the Evaluation Network; 6. Actions for the reduction of the administrative burden on beneficiaries, including the establishment and operation of the computerised system for data exchange and e-cohesion system; 7. Provision of guidance and training to Intermediate Bodies and beneficiaries to reinforce the capacity of Member State authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use those Funds and participation by Managing Authority staff in appropriate training programmes; 8. Cost of establishment and administration of complaint resolution procedures; 	

Priority axis	6 - Technical Assistance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Study visits and attendance at meetings and conferences related to EU Cohesion Policy; 10. Networking, co-ordination and other activities in support of complementarities, with other EU funded programmes, including attendance at steering and monitoring committee meetings; 11. The ERDF may be used to support actions to reinforce the capacity of relevant partners in accordance with Article 5(3)(e) and to support exchanges of good practices between such partners; and 12. Any other activities deemed appropriate by the Certifying and Managing Authority 	
<p>The actions above referred to above may concern previous and subsequent programming periods.</p>	
<p>In addition, taking account of the recent reconfiguration of regional bodies in Ireland, the Technical Assistance Priority will also cover the approved costs of the Midland and Eastern Regional Assembly in relation to their participation in any of the above activities.</p>	
<p>The Technical Assistance Priority will cover the appropriate costs of the ERDF Audit Authority, as well as the costs of the management controls undertaken by the Managing Authority.</p>	
<p>Capacity Development</p>	
<p>Under this priority it is proposed to address the capacity development needs of the personnel engaged in programme management and implementation. This will take the form of the provision of guidance and training to Intermediate Bodies and beneficiaries to reinforce the capacity of these authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use those Funds and participation by Managing Authority staff in appropriate training programmes. The capacity development supports for staff of Intermediate and beneficiary bodies will include the following:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and guidance on the overall financial management and control system • National and EU eligibility rules • Public Procurement for ERDF co-financed operations • Information and Publicity • Integration of Horizontal Principles (including equality and sustainable development) • Audit Trail and document retention requirements 	

Priority axis	6 - Technical Assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU and national regulations (including Competition and State Aids and EIA and Sea Directives) • Management verifications • Preparation for systems and operations audits • Declarations of eligible expenditure on the ESIF IT System • E-cohesion 	

2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results

Table 13: Output indicators (by priority axis) (for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

Priority axis		6 - Technical Assistance				
ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) (optional)			Source of data
			M	W	T	
6.1	Number of Monitoring Committee meetings	number of meetings			10.00	Managing Authority
6.2	Number of evaluation studies conducted	Number of studies			5.00	Managing Authority
6.3	Number of annual information and publicity events	Number of events			7.00	Managing Authority
6.4	Number of Managing Authority Staff employed	Full time equivalents			4.50	Managing Authority
6.5	Number of staff participating in capacity-building measures	Number of staff			30.00	Managing Authority
6.6	Computerised system in place for data exchange and e-cohesion	System in place			1.00	Managing Authority
6.7	Number of representations on other programme committees for complementarity purposes	Number of representatives			6.00	Managing Authority

2.B.7 Categories of intervention (by priority axis)

Corresponding categories of intervention based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and an indicative breakdown of the Union support

Tables 14-16: Categories of intervention

Table 14: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		6 - Technical Assistance	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ Amount
ERDF	More developed	121. Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	1,306,078.00
ERDF	More developed	122. Evaluation and studies	351,636.00
ERDF	More developed	123. Information and communication	351,636.00

Table 15: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		6 - Technical Assistance	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ Amount
ERDF	More developed	01. Non-repayable grant	2,009,350.00

Table 16: Dimension 3 – Territory type

Priority axis		6 - Technical Assistance	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ Amount

Priority axis		6 - Technical Assistance	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ Amount
ERDF	More developed	02. Small Urban areas (intermediate density >5 000 population)	2,009,350.00

3. FINANCING PLAN

3.1 Financial appropriation from each fund and amounts for performance reserve

Table 17

Fund	Category of region	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		Total	
		Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve												
ERDF	More developed	31,496,156.00	2,010,393.00	32,126,730.00	2,050,642.00	32,769,836.00	2,091,692.00	33,425,676.00	2,133,554.00	34,094,623.00	2,176,252.00	34,776,934.00	2,219,804.00	35,472,835.00	2,264,223.00	234,162,790.00	14,946,560.00
Total		31,496,156.00	2,010,393.00	32,126,730.00	2,050,642.00	32,769,836.00	2,091,692.00	33,425,676.00	2,133,554.00	34,094,623.00	2,176,252.00	34,776,934.00	2,219,804.00	35,472,835.00	2,264,223.00	234,162,790.00	14,946,560.00

3.2 Total financial appropriation by fund and national co-financing (€)

Table 18a: Financing plan

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a) / (e) (2)	EIB contributions (g)	Main allocation		Performance reserve		Performance reserve amount as proportion of total Union support (l) = (j) / (a) * 100
						National public funding (c)	National private funding (d) (1)				Union support (h) = (a) - (j)	National Counterpart (i) = (b) - (k)	Union support (j)	National Counterpart (k) = (b) * (j) / (a)	
1	ERDF	More developed	Public	90,000,000.00	90,000,000.00	90,000,000.00	0.00	180,000,000.00	50.000000000000%	0.00	84,556,089.00	84,556,089.00	5,443,911.00	5,443,911.00	6.05%
2	ERDF	More developed	Public	30,000,000.00	30,000,000.00	30,000,000.00	0.00	60,000,000.00	50.000000000000%	0.00	28,185,363.00	28,185,363.00	1,814,637.00	1,814,637.00	6.05%
3	ERDF	More developed	Public	34,600,000.00	34,600,000.00	34,600,000.00	0.00	69,200,000.00	50.000000000000%	0.00	32,507,119.00	32,507,119.00	2,092,881.00	2,092,881.00	6.05%
4	ERDF	More developed	Public	66,500,000.00	66,500,000.00	66,500,000.00	0.00	133,000,000.00	50.000000000000%	0.00	62,477,554.00	62,477,554.00	4,022,446.00	4,022,446.00	6.05%
5	ERDF	More developed	Public	26,000,000.00	26,000,000.00	26,000,000.00	0.00	52,000,000.00	50.000000000000%	0.00	24,427,315.00	24,427,315.00	1,572,685.00	1,572,685.00	6.05%
6	ERDF	More developed	Public	2,009,350.00	2,009,350.00	2,009,350.00	0.00	4,018,700.00	50.000000000000%	0.00	2,009,350.00	2,009,350.00			
Total	ERDF	More developed		249,109,350.00	249,109,350.00	249,109,350.00	0.00	498,218,700.00	50.000000000000%		234,162,790.00	234,162,790.00	14,946,560.00	14,946,560.00	6.00%
Grand total				249,109,350.00	249,109,350.00	249,109,350.00	0.00	498,218,700.00	50.000000000000%		234,162,790.00	234,162,790.00	14,946,560.00	14,946,560.00	

(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

Table 18c: Breakdown of the financial plan by priority axis, fund, category of region and thematic objective

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
1	ERDF	More developed	Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	90,000,000.00	90,000,000.00	180,000,000.00
2	ERDF	More developed	Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies	30,000,000.00	30,000,000.00	60,000,000.00
3	ERDF	More developed	Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and the fisheries and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF)	34,600,000.00	34,600,000.00	69,200,000.00
4	ERDF	More developed	Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors	66,500,000.00	66,500,000.00	133,000,000.00
5	ERDF	More developed	Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors	2,000,000.00	2,000,000.00	4,000,000.00
5	ERDF	More developed	Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	24,000,000.00	24,000,000.00	48,000,000.00
Total				247,100,000.00	247,100,000.00	494,200,000.00

Table 19: Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (€)	Proportion of the total allocation to the operational programme (%)
4	66,500,000.00	26.70%
5	800,000.00	0.32%
Total	67,300,000.00	27.02%

4. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Description of the integrated approach to territorial development taking into account the content and objectives of the operational programme having regard to the Partnership Agreement and showing how it the operational programme contributes to the accomplishment of the objectives of the operational programme and expected results

The main territorial development needs and bottlenecks for the Southern Eastern Region are set out in section 1.1 in terms of urban and rural areas based on the detailed SWOT analysis completed. It is not intended however that the Regional Programme will target particular actions for specific geographic areas, other than under the Sustainable Urban Priority but rather focus on investing in growth and jobs for all areas.

As required under Article 96 (3) (b) of the CPR a minimum of 5% of the ERDF has to be targeted at support for integrated actions for sustainable urban development in line with Article 7(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013. A separate priority is dedicated to Sustainable Urban Development under this Operational Programme, the details of which are set out under Priority 5 above and section 4.2 below.

The Rural Development Programme is the main vehicle for addressing many of the development needs and bottlenecks of rural areas however investments under this programme will also make a considerable contribution to addressing the needs as follows:

- Priority 1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region: Whilst most of the HEI's are located in urban centres rural businesses and enterprises will be able to avail of the opportunities through this Priority.
- Priority 2 - Information and communication Technologies: Accessibility is a key need of rural areas in Ireland - accessibility refers both to physical and electronic forms of access. There are extensive areas outside of the main urban centres in the Region where access to high-speed broadband is very limited or non-existent. Therefore, investment under this Priority help address this development need and impact positively in terms of job creation potential and employment, the environment and support the principles of equality and accessibility.
- Priority 3 - SME support, promotion and capability development: This Priority is delivered via the Local Enterprise Offices located in each Local Authority area. Funding and support will be available to small businesses and entrepreneurs in rural areas.
- Priority 4 – Low Carbon Economy: The Better energy warmer homes scheme will be available to all home owners who qualify in terms of risk of fuel poverty. As retro-fitting is labour intensive it may also provide employment opportunities.

4.1 Community-led local development (where appropriate)

The approach to the use of community-led local development instruments and the principles for identifying the areas in where they will be implemented

4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development (where appropriate)

Where appropriate the indicative amount of ERDF support for integrated actions for sustainable urban development to be implemented in accordance with the provisions under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 and the indicative allocation of ESF support for integrated action.

Cohesion policy stresses the role of urban investment, in support of territorial cohesion objectives, through integrated urban actions. Urban areas are recognised as engines for economic growth and as hubs for knowledge, creativity and innovation. On the other hand, particular challenges such as congestion, degradation and concentrations of disadvantage are prevalent in urban areas. Under the Investment for Growth and Jobs goal, a minimum of 5% of ERDF resources must be allocated to integrated actions for sustainable urban development, where city authorities, sub-regional or local bodies responsible for implementing sustainable urban strategies shall be responsible for tasks relating at least to the selection of operations.

In Ireland the principal strategic framework for urban policy is the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020, which provides a 20 year planning framework and a hierarchy of designated growth centres. The key objectives of the NSS align very well with the overall goals for the European Structural and Investment Funds:

- Sustain economic and employment growth;
- Improve competitiveness;
- Foster balanced regional development;
- Improve quality of life for all; and
- Maintain and enhance quality and diversity of natural environment and cultural heritage.

Under this priority, it is proposed to have two specific objectives which will improve the urban environment, regenerate brownfield sites, reduce air pollution, promote noise reduction and reduce carbon emissions through, for example, the promotion of sustainable urban mobility measures.

Specific Objective 5.1: To revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment in the designated urban centres as part of integrated urban strategies

Sustainable integrated urban development measures supported will focus on the efficient use of existing resources within the urban environment hence reduce the pressure for the centre to ‘spread’ outwards and lead to further land degradation. The actions to be supported are described in section 2.

Specific Objective 5.2: To support low carbon urban mobility in designated urban centres

This investment priority will support sustainable, multimodal urban mobility initiatives, consistent with investment priority 4(e) of the ERDF Regulation. The multimodal actions to be supported are described in section 2.

In short, €26,000,000.00 ERDF has been allocated to the Priority where local authorities for the designated growth centres in the S&E Region will be invited to submit integrated strategies to tackle the economic, environmental, and social challenges affecting the urban centres, consistent with Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation (EU) 1301/2013, and which support the overall development strategy for the urban area concerned.

Table 20: Integrated actions for sustainable urban development – indicative amounts of ERDF and ESF support

Fund	ERDF and ESF support (indicative) (€)	Proportion of fund's total allocation to programme
Total ERDF	26,000,000.00	10.44%
TOTAL ERDF+ESF	26,000,000.00	10.44%

4.3 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (where appropriate)

The approach to the use of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs) (as defined in Article 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) other than in cases covered by 4.2, and their indicative financial allocation from each priority axis.

Table 21: Indicative financial allocation to ITI other than those mentioned under point 4.2 (aggregate amount)

Priority axis	Fund	Indicative financial allocation (Union support) (€)
Total		0.00

4.4 The arrangements for interregional and transnational actions, within the operational programme, with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State (where appropriate)

4.5 Contribution of the planned actions under the programme to macro-regional and sea basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the Member State (where appropriate)

(Where the Member State and regions participate in macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies).

The relevant Sea-basin strategy for the Irish programmes is the Atlantic Area Strategy (2011), supported by a more detailed Action Plan (2013). The Action Plan identifies four overarching priorities each of which contain a number of specific actions which Member States are invited to implement, using EU and national funds that are managed by Member States.

Priority 1: Promote Entrepreneurship and innovation – this will be complemented by the research and innovation support measures that will be supported under the Regional OPs, including support for maritime-related research activities undertaken by the higher education research centres and the Marine Institute. It will also be complemented by supports for micro-enterprise establishment and expansion by the Local Enterprise Offices of local authorities across Ireland. The availability of high speed broadband will also facilitate the establishment of knowledge economy enterprises in coastal Atlantic areas.

Priority 2: Protect, secure and develop the potential of the Atlantic marine and coastal environment – this includes actions to exploit the potential of off-shore energy, one of the potential areas that may be supported by a proposed financial instrument focussed on the renewable energy sector. It will also be supported by research investment in the marine energies and biotechnology sectors under the Regional OPs.

Priority 3: Improve Accessibility and Connectivity - ERDF co-financed investment in next generation broadband will ensure the progressive roll-out of high speed broadband services to all parts of Ireland, including peripheral coastal areas. This will make a major contribution to the connectivity of coastal communities.

Priority 4: Create a socially inclusive and sustainable model of regional development - the overall impact of the Regional Operational Programmes will be to enhance the innovation capacity, competitiveness, digital connectivity and resource efficiency of the Regions, along with sustainable development of urban centres. This will contribute to the priority of creating a socially inclusive and sustainable model of regional development along the Atlantic.

The Inter-Department Marine Co-ordination Group will be responsible for national co-ordination of the Atlantic Action Plan 2014-2020. They will (together with their line Departments) identify and prioritise funding to generate sustainable economic growth in coastal regions from sectors such as tourism, aquaculture and fisheries, renewable energy, mineral seabed exploration, marine biotechnology, etc.

The funding will be utilised to meet the priorities of the Action Plan, namely:

1. Promote entrepreneurship and innovation;
2. Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment;
3. Improve accessibility and connectivity;
4. Create a socially inclusive and sustainable model of regional development

5. SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS MOST AFFECTED BY POVERTY OR TARGET GROUPS AT HIGHEST RISK OF DISCRIMINATION OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION (WHERE APPROPRIATE)

5.1 Geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

5.2 Strategy to address the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, and where relevant, the contribution to the integrated approach set out in the Partnership Agreement

Table 22: Actions to address specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

Target group/geographical area	Main types of planned action as part of integrated approach	Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Investment priority
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6. SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS WHICH SUFFER FROM SEVERE AND PERMANENT NATURAL OR DEMOGRAPHIC HANDICAPS (WHERE APPROPRIATE)

7. AUTHORITIES AND BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT, CONTROL AND AUDIT AND THE ROLE OF RELEVANT PARTNERS

7.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 23: Relevant authorities and bodies

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Managing authority	Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly	Mr Stephen Blair
Certifying authority	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	Ms Patricia Hennessy
Audit authority	ERDF Audit Authority	Mr Dermot Byrne
Body to which Commission will make payments	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	Ms Patricia Hennessy

7.2 Involvement of relevant partners

7.2.1 Actions taken to involve the relevant partners in the preparation of the operational programme, and the role of those partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme

The Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme was prepared in co-operation with a wide range of partners and stakeholders as required under Article 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation and as detailed in the ‘Code of Conduct on Partnership’ which is intended to support and facilitate Member States and Managing Authorities in the implementation of the partnership principle.

These partners have included:

- Competent Regional and Local Authorities
- Competent Urban and other Public Authorities
- Economic and Social Partners
- Bodies representing Civil Society, Environmental Partners and Non-Governmental Organisations
- Bodies responsible for promoting Social Inclusion, Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination

The selection of partners to be involved in programme preparation was based on the identification of appropriate partners from each of the above categories and their inclusion in all requests for submissions etc. For example, 193 organisations across all 5 categories above were invited to make submissions to the first stage of programme development and were invited to review the draft OP. The ex ante evaluation of the OP states in section 3.1 that “the range of organisations included within the programme development partners, ensures not only representation from all national and regional

views but also that the programming process has been able to draw on considerable operational expertise and experience.

The partnership principle has long been one of the key guiding principles of the EU funds under shared management with Member States and Regions and it implies close co-operation and involvement of public authorities, regional and local stakeholders, private and sectoral and community representatives in all stages of programming, from planning through to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The added value of the partnership principle lies in the enhanced commitment to and ownership of Cohesion Policy and the increased expertise and valuable perspectives which each partner brings to the programming process. Partnership also helps to improve co-ordination and avoid policy fragmentation.

The Code of Conduct on Partnership requires that all partners who can significantly influence or be significantly affected by implementation of the programmes should be involved in a timely, meaningful and transparent manner; and, in particular those partners who are most relevant in view of the planned use of the European Structural and Investment Funds contributing to the programme.

Role of Partners in Programme Preparation

The preparation of this programme followed several key overlapping stages.

Phase I Initial Stakeholder Consultation

The first phase of the preparation process was the issuing of a consultation paper to more than 200 identified stakeholders in April 2013. This paper included the policy context for the 2014-2020 programmes, details on thematic objectives and investment priorities, implementation arrangements and programme requirements. Stakeholders were invited to make submissions and to respond to key questions as follows:

1. What are the problems / issues / opportunities from your perspective (or within the remit of your organisation) that are best addressed by the new round of ERDF Programmes? (Please bear in mind the eleven Structural Funds thematic objectives from the draft regulations referred to above).
2. From the list of thematic objectives, in your opinion which other objectives should be included in the Operational Programmes, not covered by the first four Thematic Objectives?
3. Bearing in mind the thematic objectives, do you have any views on whether new implementation arrangements, such as Community Led Local Development, Integrated Territorial Investments, or Financial Instruments should be deployed in the new programming period?

4. What key things need to change in the way the Funds are currently used in order to reduce the administrative burden involved, whilst conforming to EU management control requirements?
5. Are there improvements which could be made to the way the Horizontal Principles of Equality and Sustainable Development are integrated into the programme design?

This consultation paper and invitation to make submissions was issued to the following:

- Regional Authorities, Local Authorities
- Government Departments and Development Agencies
- Potential Implementing Bodies and Beneficiary Bodies
- Higher Education Institutions and their regional network organisation
- Organisations representing business and employers and trade unions
- Community and voluntary organisations
- Organisations representing the horizontal principles of environmental sustainability, equality, including gender equality and social inclusion

In addition, the Monitoring Committee for the S&E Regional OP, which includes wide representation from the above partners, was consulted at a meeting on 30th April, 2013. The Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly (NUTS II Regional Body) was consulted at its meeting on the 12th of July, 2013 and during 2 dedicated members' workshops on 25th October 2013 and 8th February 2014.

Arising from the invitation to make submissions, 24 submissions were received. These submissions were reviewed in detail in the context of the Needs Analysis and the identification of investment priorities and a summary of each was included in the draft ERDF Needs Analysis Report. They were published on the S&E Regional Assembly web-site www.seregassembly.ie along with the draft Needs Analysis Report.

Phase 2 Consultation on draft ERDF Needs Analysis and identified investment priorities

The ERDF Needs Analysis process was undertaken jointly with the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly, with the expert assistance of the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, NUI Maynooth and the Limerick Institute of Technology. The outcomes of the analysis are detailed in Chapter 2 of the Citizens Summary of the Operational Programme.

An overview of the Needs Analysis and proposed investment priorities for the ERDF co-financed Regional OPs was presented at the Partnership Agreement consultation workshop on 13th November in Dublin, which was attended by national and regional authorities and representative organisations.

Following completion of the Needs Analysis, a half-day regional consultation workshop was held on 26th November 2013 in the offices of the S&E Regional Assembly. The workshop facilitated engagement with stakeholders on the outcomes of the Needs Analysis, the proposed investment priorities and the ex ante evaluation process.

In total, 73 organisations were invited to attend, of whom 16 attended, representing local authorities, regional authorities, state development agencies, higher education institutions, Regional OP Monitoring Committee members, Government Departments and economic and social partners.

Phase 3: Meetings with Government Departments and Agencies

Over the February 2013 to March 2014 period, 58 meetings were held with relevant Government Departments and Agencies on the preparation of the Regional Operational Programmes and potential actions for inclusion in the programmes. These meetings were held jointly with the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly and with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Roundtable meetings involving the Managing Authorities for all 4 funds were held with representatives of the horizontal principles of sustainable development, equality, gender equality and social inclusion in Dublin on 23rd January 2014 to review the proposals for the integration of these principles into the European Structural and Investment fund programmes, in compliance with Articles 7 and 8 of the Common Provisions Regulation.

A roundtable meeting was hosted jointly by the Regional OP Managing Authorities with the statutory bodies with responsibility for the horizontal principles on 18th June 2014 to discuss in detail the proposed arrangements for the integration of the horizontal principles into the Regional OPs. The meeting reviewed proposed arrangements for screening each of the co-funded schemes in respect of the principles and the arrangements for reporting to the managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee.

Phase 4: Public Consultation on draft S&E Regional Operational Programme

The Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly approved the final draft for public consultation on 2nd May 2014. The Monitoring Committee for the S&E Regional OP was consulted on the final draft on 14th May 2014.

The final draft of the S&E Operational Programme along with the draft Environmental Report prepared in accordance with the SEA Directive was made available widely for public consultation between 30th May and 30th June 2014. Arising from this, 15 submissions were received and these were reviewed and summarised and informed final amendments to the Operational Programme text.

These submissions influenced the programme strategy and OP content in a number of important areas. They reinforced the need for fibre broadband infrastructure in currently un-served areas, the need for an adequately funded urban initiative available to the designated gateways (and hubs) and the need for supports for innovation and entrepreneurship. They also provided additional input into the defined needs of rural areas, the use of universal design in public infrastructure. The submissions highlighted the importance of integrating sustainability principles and compliance with EU and national environmental legislation and the importance of assessing the social impacts of public investment. The submissions also identified other investment priorities that could have been considered, e.g., major transport infrastructure, renewable energy, supports for health infrastructure.

The ex ante evaluation report (3.1) describes the process of programme development undertaken by the managing Authority as having been “well planned, focussed and structured whilst allowing time for debate and discussion around key elements of programme design.”

Role of Partners in Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Many of the competent public bodies referred to above will be actively engaged in programme implementation as Intermediate Bodies and beneficiaries of the interventions. Participation on selection committees for each interventions co-funded under this programme will be set out in detailed implementation plans to be drawn up for the approval of the Monitoring Committee.

The partnership principle is also strongly reflected in the membership of the OP Monitoring Committee, and in the conduct of evaluations. In accordance with the Partnership Principle and the European Code of Conduct on Partnership, the Monitoring Committee for the programme shall comprise relevant representation from:

- Competent Regional and Local Authorities
- Competent Urban and other Public Authorities
- Economic and Social Partners
- Bodies representing Civil Society, Environmental Partners and Non-Governmental Organisations
- Bodies responsible for promoting Social Inclusion, Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination

The monitoring committee shall examine all issues that affect the performance of the programme, including the conclusions of performance reviews. The Monitoring Committee will also be consulted on any amendments to the programme proposed by the Managing Authority.

The Monitoring Committee will also be consulted on the content of the Evaluation Plan prior to its approval by them, and will have a formal input into any evaluations undertaken over the lifetime of the programme.

7.2.2 Global grants (for the ESF, where appropriate)

7.2.3 Allocation of an amount for capacity building (for the ESF, where appropriate)

8. COORDINATION BETWEEN THE FUNDS, THE EAFRD, THE EMFF AND OTHER UNION AND NATIONAL FUNDING INSTRUMENTS, AND WITH THE EIB

The mechanisms to ensure coordination between the Funds, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and other Union and national funding instruments, and with the European Investment Bank (EIB), taking into account the relevant provisions laid down in the Common Strategic Framework.

Due to space restrictions, details of the following key elements of section 8 are set out in a separate Annex entitled 'Co-ordination Arrangements':

1. Co-ordination between the Funds and Other Union and National Instruments
2. Co-ordination at the level of Intermediate Bodies
3. Complementarities and Synergies across Priority Axes
4. Co-ordination and Complementarities with other ESI Funds
5. Complementarities and Synergies with other Union funds and Instruments
6. Co-ordination with National Instruments
7. EIB/EIF Financial Instruments (FI) and Europe 2020 Project Bond Initiative

9. EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES

9.1 Ex-ante conditionalities

Information on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities (optional).

The Managing Authority shall ensure that the criteria for fulfilment for the selected ex-ante conditionalities will be kept regularly updated in substance

Table 24: Applicable ex-ante conditionalities and assessment of their fulfilment

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (Yes/No/Partially)
T.01.1 - Research and innovation: The existence of a national or regional smart specialisation strategy in line with the National Reform Program, to leverage private research and innovation expenditure, which complies with the features of well performing national or regional R&I systems.	1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	Yes
T.02.2 - Next Generation Network (NGN) Infrastructure: The existence of national or regional NGN Plans which take account of regional actions in order to reach the Union high speed Internet access targets, focusing on areas where the market fails to provide an open infrastructure at an affordable cost and of a quality in line with the Union competition and State aid rules, and to provide accessible services to vulnerable groups.	2 - Information and Communication Technologies	Yes
T.03.1 - Specific actions have been carried out to underpin the promotion of entrepreneurship taking into account the Small Business Act (SBA).	3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development	Yes
T.04.1 - Actions have been carried out to promote cost effective improvements of energy end use efficiency and cost effective investment in energy efficiency when constructing or renovating buildings.	4 - Low Carbon Economy	Yes
G.1 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and	1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	Yes

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (Yes/No/Partially)
application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	2 - Information and Communication Technologies 3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development 4 - Low Carbon Economy 5 - Sustainable Urban Development 6 - Technical Assistance	
G.2 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region 2 - Information and Communication Technologies 3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development 4 - Low Carbon Economy 5 - Sustainable Urban Development 6 - Technical Assistance	Yes
G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.	1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region 2 - Information and Communication Technologies 3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development 4 - Low Carbon Economy 5 - Sustainable Urban Development 6 - Technical Assistance	Yes
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region 2 - Information and Communication Technologies 3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development 4 - Low Carbon Economy 5 - Sustainable Urban Development 6 - Technical Assistance	Yes
G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region 2 - Information and Communication Technologies 3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development	Yes

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (Yes/No/Partially)
	4 - Low Carbon Economy 5 - Sustainable Urban Development 6 - Technical Assistance	
G.6 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.	1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region 2 - Information and Communication Technologies 3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development 4 - Low Carbon Economy 5 - Sustainable Urban Development 6 - Technical Assistance	Yes
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region 2 - Information and Communication Technologies 3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development 4 - Low Carbon Economy 5 - Sustainable Urban Development 6 - Technical Assistance	Yes

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
<p>T.01.1 - Research and innovation: The existence of a national or regional smart specialisation strategy in line with the National Reform Program, to leverage private research and innovation expenditure, which complies with the features of well performing national or regional R&I systems.</p>	<p>1 - A national or regional smart specialisation strategy is in place that:</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Links to supporting documents for Ireland's Smart Specialisation strategy and the Report of the National Research Prioritisation Group are listed below. The full RIS3 is attached as annex 10 to the OP.</p> <p>http://www.djei.ie/science/technology/RIS3summary2014.pdf</p> <p>http://www.djei.ie/science/technology/ris3.htm</p> <p>http://www.forfas.ie/media/ffs20120301-Research_Prioritisation_Exercise_Report.pdf</p> <p>http://www.forfas.ie/publication/search.jsp?ft=/publications/2013/Title,11020,en.php</p>	<p>A document setting out how Ireland's National Research Prioritisation Exercise (NRPE) meets the relevant ex-ante conditionality criteria for a smart specialisation strategy for research and innovation, including a description of a monitoring mechanism and budgetary framework which was submitted to the European Commission for consideration in December 2013 and was subjected to a Peer Review in Dublin on 3rd July 2014</p> <p>In accordance with article 19 and annex XI of the CPR and consistent with our institutional and legal framework, we have assessed and concluded that we meet the ex-ante conditionality criteria for TO1. We have a national RIS3 in place and indicative multi-annual plans for budgeting and prioritisation of investments linked to Europe's R&D 2020 target.</p> <p>The strategy is based on analysis to concentrate resources on a limited set of R&I priorities, has measures to stimulate private RTD investment, contains a monitoring mechanism; and has identified budget resources.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.01.1 - Research and innovation: The existence of a national or regional smart specialisation strategy in line with the National Reform Program, to leverage private research and innovation expenditure, which complies with the features of well performing national or regional R&I systems.	2 - is based on a SWOT or similar analysis to concentrate resources on a limited set of research and innovation priorities;	Yes	http://www.forfas.ie/media/ffs20120301-Research_Prioritisation_Exercise_Report.pdf	The undertaking of Ireland's Research Prioritisation Exercise, which provides the foundation for Ireland's Smart Specialisation Strategy was based on a comprehensive analysis in order to identify research and innovation priorities
T.01.1 - Research and innovation: The existence of a national or regional smart specialisation strategy in line with the National Reform Program, to leverage private research and innovation expenditure, which complies with the features of well performing national or regional R&I systems.	3 - outlines measures to stimulate private RTD investment;	Yes	http://www.forfas.ie/media/ffs20120301-Research_Prioritisation_Exercise_Report.pdf	The Report of the Research Prioritisation Exercise includes measures to stimulate private RTDI investment in the prioritised sectors
T.01.1 - Research and innovation: The existence of a national or regional smart specialisation strategy in line with the National Reform Program, to leverage private research and innovation expenditure, which complies with the features of well performing national or regional R&I	4 - contains a monitoring mechanism.	Yes	http://www.forfas.ie/media/22072013-Research_Prioritisation_A_Framework_for_Monitoring_Public_Investment_in_STI-Publication.pdf	In response to a systemic recommendation in the report of the Research Prioritisation Steering Group, a Framework of Metrics and Targets for STI Investment has been developed based on work carried out by Forfás. This Framework will monitor the impact of the implementation of research prioritisation in the 14 Priority

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
systems.				Areas
T.01.1 - Research and innovation: The existence of a national or regional smart specialisation strategy in line with the National Reform Program, to leverage private research and innovation expenditure, which complies with the features of well performing national or regional R&I systems.	5 - A framework outlining available budgetary resources for research and innovation has been adopted.	Yes	http://budget.gov.ie/Budgets/2014/Documents/Part%20II%20-%20Expenditure%20Allocations%202014%20-%202016.pdf	Multiannual public expenditure allocations for the period 2014-2016, within which R&D allocations will be made by relevant Departments, have been determined.
T.02.2 - Next Generation Network (NGN) Infrastructure: The existence of national or regional NGN Plans which take account of regional actions in order to reach the Union high speed Internet access targets, focusing on areas where the market fails to provide an open infrastructure at an affordable cost and of a quality in line with the Union competition and State aid rules, and to provide accessible services to vulnerable groups.	1 - A national or regional NGN Plan is in place that contains:	Yes	http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Communications/Communications+Development/Next+Generation+Broadband/	The National Broadband Plan, published in Autumn 2012, is a clear expression of the importance of broadband infrastructure to the achievement of Ireland's economic and social objectives and outlines the Government's commitment to delivering high speed broadband availability across the country.
T.02.2 - Next Generation Network (NGN) Infrastructure: The existence of national or regional NGN Plans which take account of regional actions in order to reach the Union high speed Internet access targets, focusing on	2 - a plan of infrastructure investments based on an economic analysis taking account of existing private and public infrastructures and planned investments;	Yes	http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Communications/Communications+Development/Next+Generation+Broadband/	Delivery of this commitment is to be achieved through a combination of a State-led investment in those areas where it is evident that the market will not deliver. A comprehensive mapping exercise will identify where the market

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
areas where the market fails to provide an open infrastructure at an affordable cost and of a quality in line with the Union competition and State aid rules, and to provide accessible services to vulnerable groups.				is expected to deliver high speed broadband services over the coming years and consequently those areas that will need to be targeted by a State led intervention.
T.02.2 - Next Generation Network (NGN) Infrastructure: The existence of national or regional NGN Plans which take account of regional actions in order to reach the Union high speed Internet access targets, focusing on areas where the market fails to provide an open infrastructure at an affordable cost and of a quality in line with the Union competition and State aid rules, and to provide accessible services to vulnerable groups.	3 - sustainable investment models that enhance competition and provide access to open, affordable, quality and future-proof infrastructure and services;	Yes	http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Communications/Communications+Development/Next+Generation+Broadband/	The full range of opportunities presented by a digital economy can only be further unlocked if the requisite infrastructure is in place to support the development of new applications, new connectivity and new ways of delivering public, private and community services to citizens. The supply side measures will have complementary demand side measures.
T.02.2 - Next Generation Network (NGN) Infrastructure: The existence of national or regional NGN Plans which take account of regional actions in order to reach the Union high speed Internet access targets, focusing on areas where the market fails to provide an open infrastructure at an affordable cost and of a quality in line with the Union competition and State aid rules, and to provide accessible services to vulnerable groups.	4 - measures to stimulate private investment.	Yes	http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Communications/Communications+Development/Next+Generation+Broadband/	The National Broadband Plan complements a range of developed and emerging Government initiatives that require high speed broadband in order to realise their full potential. These include the National Digital Strategy which seeks to stimulate business and consumer demand for ICT and the e-Government Strategy, encompassing e-Health and eLearning.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.03.1 - Specific actions have been carried out to underpin the promotion of entrepreneurship taking into account the Small Business Act (SBA).	1 - The specific actions are: measures have been put in place with the objective of reducing the time and cost involved in setting-up a business taking account of the targets of the SBA;	Yes	http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=22537	The Companies Bill contains significant simplification provisions. It will be possible, using a newer and more streamlined process, to incorporate a new company in Ireland with a single document model constitution and with the option of having only one director. This process is anticipated to be faster than the current incorporation process and it is intended that the process will be capable of completion entirely online.
T.03.1 - Specific actions have been carried out to underpin the promotion of entrepreneurship taking into account the Small Business Act (SBA).	2 - The specific actions are: measures have been put in place with the objective of reducing the time needed to get licenses and permits to take up and perform the specific activity of an enterprise taking account of the targets of the SBA;	Yes	http://www.forfas.ie/media/191212-Forfas_Review_of_Licences-Publication.pdf	As part of the Action Plans for Jobs Forfás has reviewed 159 licences for key sectors of the economy. The key recommendation from the review is for the relevant licensing authorities to proceed towards the development of integrated licensing systems, to rationalise the number of licences and to streamline processes and therefore reduce the overall administrative burden on business.
T.03.1 - Specific actions have been carried out to underpin the promotion of entrepreneurship taking into account the Small Business Act (SBA).	3 - The specific actions are: mechanism is in place to monitor the implementation of the measures of the SBA which have been put in place and assess the impact on SMEs.	Yes	http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/performance-review/index_en.htm	The SME Performance Review represents one of the main tools employed by the European Commission to annually monitor and assess Member States' performance in implementing the Small Business Act. Data is based on reports prepared by consultants, including statistical

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
				information derived from Eurostat data
T.04.1 - Actions have been carried out to promote cost effective improvements of energy end use efficiency and cost effective investment in energy efficiency when constructing or renovating buildings.	1 - The actions are: measures to ensure minimum requirements are in place related to the energy performance of buildings consistent with Article 3, Article 4 and Article 5 of Directive 2010/31/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;	Yes	http://www.environ.ie/en/Legislation/DevelopmentandHousing/BuildingStandards/FileDownload,27314,en.pdf Article 3 Building Regulations (Part L Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 259 of 2011) Article 4 Building Regulations (Part L Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 259 of 2011) Article 5 Report on the development of	Ireland's building code introduced an energy performance assessment methodology for dwellings in 2005. The Building Regulations (S.I. No. 259 of 2008) introduced a new methodology (known as "NEAP") to calculate the energy demand for buildings other than dwellings. Minimum energy performance requirements for buildings are in place for both dwellings and buildings other than dwellings.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
			Cost Optimal Calculations and Gap Analysis for buildings in Ireland under Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings (recast) – Section 1 Residential Buildings	
T.04.1 - Actions have been carried out to promote cost effective improvements of energy end use efficiency and cost effective investment in energy efficiency when constructing or renovating buildings.	2 - The actions are: measures necessary to establish a system of certification of the energy performance of buildings consistent with Article 11 of Directive 2010/31/EU;	Yes	European Union (Energy Performance of Buildings) Regulations 2012 (S.I. No. 243 of 2012)	Regulations 3, 17, 20, 21 and 22 of the European Union (Energy Performance of Buildings) Regulations 2012 fulfil the requirements set out in Article 11 of Directive 2010/31/EU in relation to energy performance certificates. Ireland's Building Energy Rating (BER) certificates are based on individual assessments of the building units concerned rather than an assumed equivalence with a representative building.
T.04.1 - Actions have been carried out to promote cost effective improvements of energy end use efficiency and cost effective investment in energy efficiency when constructing or renovating buildings.	3 - The actions are: measures to ensure strategic planning on energy efficiency, consistent with Article 3 of Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;	Yes	http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Energy/Energy+Efficiency+and+Affordability+Division/National+Energy+Efficiency+Action+Plan.htm	The NEEAP sets a clear vision for each of the sectors covered by the Action Plan, around which public and private sector actors can mobilise. The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources has reviewed, updated and replaced certain actions from the first Plan as appropriate to ensure that Ireland

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
				remains on track to meet its national and EU targets.
T.04.1 - Actions have been carried out to promote cost effective improvements of energy end use efficiency and cost effective investment in energy efficiency when constructing or renovating buildings.	4 - The actions are: measures consistent with Article 13 of Directive 2006/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on energy end-use efficiency and energy services to ensure the provision to final customers of individual meters in so far as it is technically possible, financially reasonable and proportionate in relation to the potential energy savings.	Yes	http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdo_nlyres/20F27340-A720-492C-8340-6E3E4B7DE85D/0/DCENRNE_EAP2014publishedversion.pdf	The National Smart Metering Programme is a central component of the strategy to radically enhance management of energy demand, deliver smart networks and enable greater energy efficiency through the use of cutting-edge technology and consumer empowerment. A national roll-out of Smart Meters will lead to lower customer bills, greater customer information and lower CO2 emissions.
G.1 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	1 - Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on equality in ESI fund related activities.	Yes	http://www.equality.ie/en/ See Sections 7 and 11 of the Operational Programme See Sections 3.6 and 5.3 of the OP Citizens' Summary	This sets out details of the involvement of bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons throughout the preparation and implementation of the programme and their role in the provision of advice on equality in ESI related activities
G.1 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the	2 - Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union anti	Yes	http://www.equality.ie/en/E-learning-course-on-	Arrangements for the training of staff of authorities involved in the management and control of ESI funds in the field of anti discrimination law

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
field of ESI Funds.	discrimination law and policy.		<p>Equality.html</p> <p>http://www.equality.ie/en/</p> <p>See Section 2B (Technical Assistance) and Section 11 (Horizontal Principles) of the Operational Programme</p> <p>See Sections 3.6 and 5.3 of the OP Citizens' Summary</p>	<p>and policy are included in the Operational Programme</p> <p>The Equality Authority will provide support to implementing bodies to meet the horizontal equality and anti-discrimination objectives.</p>
G.2 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	1 - Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for gender equality throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on gender equality in ESI Fund-related activities.	Yes	<p>http://www.genderequality.ie/</p> <p>See sections 7 and 11 of the Operational Programme</p> <p>See section 5.2 of the Citizens' Summary of the Operational Programme</p>	This sets out details of the involvement of bodies responsible for the promotion of gender equality throughout the preparation and implementation of the programme and their role in the provision of advice on gender equality in ESI related activities

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
G.2 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	2 - Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union gender equality law and policy as well as on gender mainstreaming.	Yes	http://www.equality.ie/en/E-learning-course-on-Equality.html http://www.equality.ie/en/ See Section 2B (Technical Assistance) and Section 11 (Horizontal Principles) of the Operational Programme See section 3.6 and 5.2 of the Citizens' Summary of the Operational Programme	Arrangements for the training of staff of authorities involved in the management and control of ESI funds in the field of gender equality law and policy are included in the Operational Programme
G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.	1 - Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the consultation and involvement of bodies in charge of protection of rights of persons with disabilities or representative organisations of persons with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes.	Yes	http://universaldesign.ie/Built-Environment/Building-for-Everyone/ http://accessibility.ie http://www.hse.ie/timetomoveon/ http://deinstitutionalisationguide.	This sets out details of the involvement of bodies responsible for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders throughout the preparation and implementation of the programme and their role in the provision of advice on equality in ESI related activities

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
			<p>eu/ www.nda.ie/cntmgtnew.nsf/accessibilityhomepage?OpenPage http://www.justice.ie for NDS Implementation Plan + Guidelines for Disability IA See Section 7 Operational programme Section 5.3 of the Citizens' summary of OP</p>	
<p>G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.</p>	<p>2 - Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of applicable Union and national disability law and policy, including accessibility and the practical application of the UNCRPD as reflected in Union and national legislation, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>http://www.nda.ie/Good-practice/ http://www.ombudsman.gov.ie/en/about-us/legislation/the-disability-act/making-a-complaint-to-the-ombudsman-under-the-disability-act/ See Section 2B (Technical Assistance) and Section 11 (Horizontal Principles) of the</p>	<p>The National Disability Authority has produced two approved Codes of Practice under the Disability Act and has a statutory function to monitor the implementation of standards and Codes of Practice in programmes and services provided to persons with disabilities and to report to Minister for Justice and Equality. They also produce guidelines covering a broad range of areas including the universal design of the built environment, products, services and information and communications technology so that these can be</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
			<p>Operational Programme</p> <p>See Section 3.6 and Section 5.3 of the Citizens' Summary of the Operational Programme</p>	<p>accessed, understood and used by all persons including staff of the MAs and IBs.</p> <p>In addition, there is a complaints system in place whereby the office of the Ombudsman is empowered by law to examine complaints concerning failures by public bodies to provide accessible buildings, services and information as required under part 3 of the Disability Act 2005.</p>
<p>G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.</p>	<p>3 - Arrangements to ensure monitoring of the implementation of Article 9 of the UNCRPD in relation to the ESI Funds throughout the preparation and the implementation of the programmes.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>http://accessibility.ie/</p> <p>See Section 11 (Horizontal Principles) of the Operational Programme and Section 5.3 of the Citizens' Summary of the Operational Programme</p>	<p>Ireland has signed but not yet ratified the UNCRPD. The National Disability Authority has developed detailed guidance on accessibility for people with disabilities for use by staff preparing and implementing OPs. A National Disability Strategy is in place. Government Guidelines have been published on conducting a Disability Impact Assessment.</p>
<p>G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of</p>	<p>1 - Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>www.procurement.ie/publication</p>	<p>Guidelines for national and EU public procurement requirements are available online for all staff involved in the</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
the ESI Funds.	mechanisms.			<p>implementation of ESI Funds.</p> <p>The Office of Government Procurement has been established under the auspices of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. This Office has the capacity to give substantive practical and legal advice on applicability of public procurement and compliance with those EU rules to staff dealing with ESI funds.</p> <p>The implementation of the OP will adhere to the TFEU principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination and transparency.</p> <p>When spending ESIF funds involves public contracts or concessions, national authorities will respect EU public procurement rules and in particular (i) Directives 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC, (ii) Directives 2014/23/EU, 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU once transposed into national legislation, (iii) Directive 2007/66/EC [amending Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC], and (iv) the general EU public procurement principles.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	2 - Arrangements which ensure transparent contract award procedures.	Yes	http://www.procurement.ie/ See Section 7.6 of the Citizens' Summary of the Operational Programme	Public sector contracts are advertised centrally online. Procedures will include appropriate publication of schemes, and transparent selection and award criteria. Relevant procurement rules and Treaty principles will be communicated to all staff involved in implementation of the OP. Appropriate monitoring of compliance will be in place.
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	3 - Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	Yes	www.procurement.ie/publications See Section 2B (Technical Assistance) of the Operational Programme and Section 3.6 of the Citizens' Summary.	Training and guidance on public procurement will be provided to Implementing Bodies and Public Beneficiary Bodies. The website acts as a central resource for buyers and suppliers to assist them with public service procurement activities. Through the National Procurement Service, the Office provides professional procurement services and advice to ensure that the public service can avail of the best value goods and services, in a legally compliant manner. The Office of Government Procurement will act as a central resource to which MAs and Intermediate Bodies can refer for advice when undertaking procurement

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
				exercises.
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	4 - Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union public procurement rules.	Yes	See Section 2B (Technical Assistance) of the Operational Programme and Section 3.6 of the Citizens' Summary.	Training and guidance on public procurement will be provided to Implementing Bodies and Public Beneficiary Bodies to ensure sufficient administrative capacity is in place
G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	1 - Arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules.	Yes	http://www.djei.ie/enterprise/stataid/ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1305&from=EN See Section 2B (Technical Assistance) of the Operational Programme and Section 7.6 of the Citizens' Summary. Verification of Compliance with State Aids law will form part of the verification checks performed in accordance with	There is a dedicated national contact point for State Aid queries. State Aid Section in the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation (DJEI) ensures compliance of that Department's Industrial Development schemes with EU State Aid rules and advises and assists other Departments to achieve the same in relation to their schemes. Where necessary, the Section notifies aid schemes to be implemented by DJEI and its agencies to the EU Commission and obtains Commission decisions that the schemes are in accordance with the EU State Aid rules. It also advises other Departments on achieving similar decisions in

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
			Article 125 of the CPR	<p>relation to their schemes.</p> <p>In addition, the Section chairs an Inter-Departmental State Aid Group to monitor State Aid</p> <p>There is also a dedicated State Aid Section in the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to ensure compliance of Industrial Development schemes with EU State Aid rules and advise and assist other Departments to achieve the same in relation to their schemes.</p>
G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	2 - Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	Yes	<p>http://www.djei.ie/enterprise/stateaid/index.htm</p> <p>http://www.djei.ie/enterprise/stateaid/whatistateaid.htm</p> <p>See Section 2B (Technical Assistance) for proposed capability development actions</p>	<p>Training on State Aid has been, and will continue to be, provided by MAs to staff involved in the implementation of the ESI Funds. Technical Assistance will be used to address the capacity development needs of the personnel engaged in programme management and implementation.</p> <p>This will take the form of the provision of guidance and training on State Aid to Intermediary Bodies and beneficiaries to reinforce the capacity of these authorities and beneficiaries to administer and use those Funds and participation by Managing Authority staff in appropriate training</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
				<p>programmes on State Aid.</p> <p>State Aid Unit in DJEI also disseminates information to interested stakeholders - training, seminars, and publications from the Commission etc.</p> <p>Dedicated web pages outlining current State Aid rules are published and updated regularly by the State Aid Section in DJEI. This includes the provision of guidance and training on EU Competition and State Aids laws, which will be carried out on an ongoing basis.</p>
<p>G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.</p>	<p>3 - Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union State aid rules.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>http://www.djei.ie/enterprise/stat_eaid/</p> <p>See Section 2B (Technical Assistance)</p> <p>See Section 7.6 of the Citizens' Summary of the Operational Programme</p>	<p>Many of the State Agencies have nominated senior officials as State Aid experts - for example Enterprise Ireland has appointed a legal expert responsible for State Aid matters.</p> <p>State Aid Unit met with DG COMP in June 2014 to discuss renewed partnership between Ireland/COMP on State Aid policy and future structures for collaboration - focus on compliance, transparency & evaluation together with identification of training needs and developing a training action plan</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
				<p>Ireland's current profile (based on duration of procedures, efficiency of notification phases, infringement cases etc.) is second out of the EU 28.</p> <p>The feedback from State Aid Units in COMP indicates that there is a good and effective relationship with the Irish authorities - cooperative, transparent and efficient.</p> <p>This sets out proposed capability development actions, including the provision of guidance and training on EU Competition and State Aids laws</p>
<p>G.6 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.</p>	<p>1 - Arrangements for the effective application of Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (EIA) and of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (SEA).</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>http://www.lawreform.ie/_fileupload/RevisedActs/WithAnnotations/EN_ACT_2000_0030.PDF</p> <p>http://www.environ.ie/en/Legislation/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload,32879,en.pdf</p> <p>http://www.environ.ie/en/Legislation/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload,14420,en.pdf</p>	<p>Legislative arrangements for the effective application of the EIA and SEA Directives are set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000-2014. Further legislation is in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2013; European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. Nos. 435 and 436 of 2004); European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment)</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
			<p>pdf</p> <p>http://www.environ.ie/en/Legislation/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload,31554,en.pdf</p> <p>http://www.environ.ie/en/Legislation/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload,14421,en.pdf</p>	<p>Regulations 2011, (S.I. Nos. 200 and 201 of 2011).</p> <p>We note result of the assessment of the fulfilment of the general ex ante conditionality with regard to the EIA and SEA legislation is without prejudice to the on-going infringement procedure (Infringement Procedure 2012/4028).</p>
<p>G.6 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.</p>	<p>2 - Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the EIA and SEA Directives.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>See Section 2B (Technical Assistance) of the Operational Programme which includes training supports for staff involved in the implementation of the EIA and SEA Directives</p> <p>See Section 11 (Sustainable Development) of the Operational Programme and Section 5.4 of the Citizens' Summary of the Operational Programme</p>	<p>This includes the arrangements for the training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the EIA and SEA Directives</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
G.6 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.	3 - Arrangements to ensure sufficient administrative capacity.	Yes	See Section 2B (Technical Assistance) of the Operational Programme which includes training and capability development supports for staff involved in the implementation of the EIA and SEA Directives	This includes arrangements to ensure sufficient administrative capacity in relation to the effective application of environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	1 - Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: the identification of sources and mechanisms to ensure statistical validation.	Yes	See Section 7.2 of the Citizens' Summary of the Operational Programme on the Monitoring System and Data Collection Arrangements	This section of the programme sets out the arrangements for the timely collection and aggregation of statistical data. The sources of all indicators are included in Section 2 of the Operational Programme
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	2 - Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: arrangements for publication and public availability of aggregated data.	Yes	See Section 7.3 on Annual Implementation reports in the Citizens' Summary of the Operational Programme	Approved Annual Implementation Reports including aggregated data will be made available publicly on the Managing Authority website

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	3 - An effective system of result indicators including: the selection of result indicators for each programme providing information on what motivates the selection of policy actions financed by the programme.	Yes	See Intervention Logic document uploaded with the Operational Programme	The Intervention Logic for the Operational Programme is included as an additional document with the Operational Programme. This includes the selected results indicators and demonstrates a coherent rationale for the selection of policy actions to be financed by the programme
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	4 - An effective system of result indicators including: the establishment of targets for these indicators.	Yes	See Table 8.2 of the Ex Ante Evaluation Report.	A summary table setting out the justification for selection, relevance, verifiable source, collection/reporting and calculation methods and realism of all targets set is included as an additional document appended to the Operational Programme. This demonstrates that an effective system is in place to establish targets for the results indicators.
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	5 - An effective system of result indicators including: the consistency of each indicator with the following requisites: robustness and statistical validation, clarity of normative interpretation, responsiveness to policy, timely collection of data.	Yes	See Summary of Indicators for the Programme, uploaded separately See Table 8.2 of the Ex Ante Evaluation Report.	A summary table setting out the relevance, collection/reporting and calculation methods and realism of all targets set is included as an additional document appended to the Operational Programme. This demonstrates that the selected indicators are robust, statistically validated, clear in terms of their normative interpretation, responsive to policy and collectible in

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
				a timely manner.
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	6 - Procedures in place to ensure that all operations financed by the programme adopt an effective system of indicators.	Yes	See Section 7.2 'Monitoring System and Data Collection' of the Citizens' Summary of the Operational Programme. See also Table 8.4 of the Ex Ante Evaluation Report	Arrangements for data collection on operations is included in Section 7.2 'Monitoring System and Data Collection' of the Citizens' Summary of the Operational Programme. Table 8.4 of the Ex Ante Evaluation report on the Assessment of the Monitoring and Data Collection System, states that the independent Evaluators are satisfied with the monitoring/data collection arrangements in place and the procedures to ensure the quality of the data collected.

9.2 Description of actions to fulfil ex-ante conditionalities, responsible bodies and timetable

Table 25: Actions to fulfil applicable general ex-ante conditionalities

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible

Table 26: Actions to fulfil applicable thematic ex-ante conditionalities

Thematic ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
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10. REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES

Summary of the assessment of the administrative burden for beneficiaries and, where necessary, the actions planned accompanied by an indicative timeframe to reduce administrative burden.

The responses to the consultation questionnaire issued prior to drafting the Operational Programme included some commentary on the administrative burden. There were several submissions which called for a lessening of the financial control burden and audit scrutiny on beneficiaries, particularly relating to the recouping of expenditure. There were also calls for better co-ordination of audits and financial control visits by the designated authorities and for proportionate and reasonable financial controls. These responses echo those received by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in the course of the consultation on the Partnership Agreement (see section 2.7 of the Partnership Agreement)

In addition, the issue of the administrative burden on Intermediate bodies and Beneficiaries was raised in several bilateral meetings with Government Departments and Agencies that took place during the course of preparing the Operational Programme. The administrative burden associated with the management, monitoring and financial control of EU co-financed programmes was identified as a potential deterrent for Government bodies in identifying suitable initiatives for co-financing.

The Managing Authority has also drawn on its own experience in managing two Regional Operational Programmes (2000-06 and 2007-13) and of the lessons learned arising from this. Many of the administrative changes made over the 2007-13 period have assisted in clarifying and streamlining the administration of EU structural funds, primarily for Intermediate bodies. These changes include the introduction of administrative agreements, the provision of standard management verification checklists, the introduction of the EU Structural Funds IT System, the provision of training and advisory services to Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries.

Arising from this, the following actions are planned to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries for the 2014-2020 period:

Admin Area: Use of Flat Rate financing for indirect costs

Action Planned: Apply flat rates for indirect costs under investment priority 1(a) in accordance with Article 68 of the Common Provisions Regulation

Timeframe*: June 2015

Admin Area: Use of standard costs for certain measures

Action Planned: Apply standard costs for certain SME support measures e.g. overseas travel allowances for marketing purposes

Timeframe*: June 2015

Admin Area: **Reduce the number of Audits**

Action Planned: Adjusting the sampling population to include both regional OPs as a single population thereby reducing minimum number of audits.

Timeframe*: June 2015

Admin Area: **Reduce the scope of Audits**

Action Planned: In cases where common procedures are in place and have been shown to function satisfactorily, reducing the scope of subsequent operational audits.

Timeframe*: June 2015

Admin Area: **Reducing the number of verification checks carried out by IBs in ERDF OPs**

Action Planned: Sharing responsibility for some verification checks between IBs and ERDF MAs.

Timeframe*: June 2015

Admin Area: **Single submission principle**

Action Planned: Requirement that document should be submitted only once

Timeframe*: June 2015

Admin Area: **Publicly available document**

Action Planned: No requirement for documents which are publicly available to be submitted

Timeframe*: June 2015

Admin Area: **Reporting templates**

Action Planned: Standard reporting templates will be put in place for all progress reports to the OP Monitoring Committee

Timeframe*: March 2015 (first meeting of the OP Monitoring Committee)

Admin Area: **Verification Checklists**

Action Planned: A single comprehensive verification checklist will be provided to all Intermediate Bodies

Timeframe*: June 2015

*It is anticipated that such administrative simplifications will form part of the system description which will be subjected to the designation procedure sometime around June 2015

Admin Area: **eCohesion**

Action Planned: As stated in section 4 of the Partnership Agreement, the electronic data exchange systems being developed in Ireland will allow beneficiaries to submit applications for payment and supporting documentation and conduct business with the MAs and to view records on-line. The Managing Authority will co-operate with the national authorities in the assessment of the existing systems for electronic data exchange

Due to space restrictions, further details of the system for electronic data exchange and eCohesion are set out in a separate annex entitled 'System for Electronic Data Exchange and eCohesion'

11. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

11.1 Sustainable development

Description of specific actions to take into account environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management, in the selection of operations.

The principle of sustainable development requires that the needs of the present be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This implies ensuring that environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, sustainable management of natural resources, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management are addressed through both dedicated funding streams and their horizontal integration across the relevant Operational Programmes.

The objectives of the European Structural and Investment funds are to be pursued in the framework of sustainable development and the Union's promotion of the aim of protecting and improving the environment as set out in Articles 11 and 19 of the Treaty taking into account the polluter pays principle. This implies that those who cause environmental damage should bear the costs of avoiding it or compensating for it and that funding should not be used to meet the costs of complying with existing legislation and the principle should be applied across the programme.

The Irish Government launched a renewed sustainable development framework in June 2012. The objectives of the Our Sustainable Future – A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland are to identify and prioritise policy areas and mechanisms where a sustainable development approach will add value and enable continuous improvement of quality of life for current and future generations and set out clear measures, responsibilities and timelines in an implementation plan.

The framework sets out a wide range of measures that seek to ensure an improvement in Ireland's quality of life into the future in areas such as:

- Sustainable consumption and production;
- Conservation and management of natural resources;
- Climate change and clean energy;
- Sustainable transport;
- Social inclusion, sustainable communities and spatial planning;
- Education, communication and behaviour change;
- Innovation, research and development;
- Skills and training; and
- Global poverty and sustainable development.

The framework identifies the green economy as a central plank to Ireland's economic recovery, consistent with the Action Plan for Jobs 2012. It sets out a medium to long-term plan to guide the essential work needed to progress the sustainable development agenda and more fully exploit opportunities in the green economy in Ireland. It sets a vision on how to transition Ireland to a resource efficient, low-carbon and climate resilient future. It also recognises the contribution that Natura 2000 sites can make to sustainable development.

Ireland's Sustainable Development Framework (2012) includes the commitment to enhance the framework for the use of market-based instruments and encourages wider use of green public procurement (GPP). An Action Plan: Green Tenders, on Green Procurement was also published in 2012. This is aimed at boosting the uptake of GPP which is an important tool in advancing the green economy agenda. The Action Plan also includes measures whereby the public service will be encouraged and facilitated to deliver new key skill sets in areas such as green procurement. The support measures included in Priority Axis 3 include the potential to support green jobs and eco-innovation. In addition Green Infrastructure will be eligible under the sustainable urban development priority axis.

The framework signals a major reorientation of public and private investment, particularly in terms of innovation, research and development in those areas where radically new approaches are considered necessary.

The priorities for action cut across many key challenges and include:

- An effective framework for transition to an innovative, low carbon and resource efficient society;
- Identifying and adopting policies that can help achieve a shift towards a green economy, while maintaining fiscal stability and ensuring sustainable public finances into the future;
- Protecting and restoring Ireland's biodiversity and ecosystems so that benefits essential for all sectors of society will be delivered;
- Effective governance arrangements to ensure delivery of sustainable development; and
- Developing a set of indicators to measure progress.

The Managing Authority invited submissions on the preparation of the OP and included a question seeking suggested improvements in the way the Horizontal principles are integrated into programme design. A general response was that there should be greater emphasis placed on the principles.

The following arrangements will be made to ensure the integration of the sustainable development principle in the S&E Regional OP 2014-2020:

- Involve bodies working in the fields of sustainable development at all stages (preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation), including the provision of advice on sustainable development
- Comply with the EIA and SEA Directives, where appropriate - this forms part of the verifications carried out under Article 125(5) of the Common Provisions Regulation
- Incorporate the principle of sustainable development in the design of measures and operations;
- Ensure that project selection criteria will assess projects on the basis of environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention;
- Monitor and evaluate the application of the principle and have regard to the results of such monitoring and evaluation actions; and
- Comply with the polluter pays principle.

11.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Description of specific actions to promote equal opportunities and prevent discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the operational programme and in particular in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination and in particular the requirements for ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Description of specific actions to promote equal opportunities and prevent discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the operational programme and in particular in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination and in particular the requirements for ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities.

In Ireland the Disability Act 2005 places obligations on public bodies with regard to accessibility which will be taken on board where relevant by Intermediate Bodies in the implementation of the programme.

Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities requires that States make their physical environment transport and ICT systems accessible for all at the urban and rural level. Ireland has a National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2015 which was agreed by members of a National Disability Strategy Implementation Group.

Implementing Bodies will, assess the impacts of the intervention for people with disabilities, including accessibility issues. Guidelines for Government Departments on conducting a Disability Impact Assessment will inform staff on designing these assessments. In addition, the National Disability Authority has developed detailed guidance on accessibility.

The Employment Equality Act, 2004 and the Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004 outlaw discrimination in employment, vocational training, education, advertising, collective agreements, accommodation, the provision of goods and services and other opportunities to which the public generally have access on nine distinct grounds: Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Age, Disability, Race, Sexual Orientation, Religious Belief and Membership of the Traveller Community. Inequality is also strongly linked to exclusion, as groups that tend to be subject to inequality also tend to be socially excluded, and have higher levels of deprivation.

The Managing Authority conducted a public consultation on the draft OP. There was a call for a robust proofing model for the integration of the HPs into the programme design.

The following arrangements will be made to ensure the integration of the non-discrimination principle in the S&E ROP 2014-2020:

- Ensure the proposed intervention complies with EU and national legislation and public policy in relation to the equal opportunities and non-discrimination principle
- Involve bodies in charge of equality and organisations representing people with disabilities at all stages (preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation), including the provision of advice on equality accessibility and universal design in fund-related activities and specific actions to promote equal opportunities and non-discrimination
- Ring-fence specific budgets to support pro-active measures or specific actions
- Identify particular target groups which may have a reduced access to support or are at risk of discrimination, and identify measures to mitigate this risk
- Take appropriate steps in the implementation of the programme to prevent discrimination in relation to the following categories which are protected by Irish equality legislation: Gender, Civil Status, Family Status, Age, Disability, Race, Sexual Orientation, Religious Belief and Membership of the Traveller Community. Where appropriate consultation with the client groups will be undertaken
- Ensure that the project selection criteria assesses projects on the basis of their compliance with equal opportunity requirements and statutory obligations on accessibility and non-discrimination and that the requisite mechanisms are in place to capture relevant data which will be reported to the monitoring committee
- Incorporate accessibility for disabled persons and universal design for all as a criterion to be observed in all co-funded public services and facilities including in project specifications, as appropriate
- Programme Implementation Plans will outline how the intervention will be planned and implemented in order to have a positive impact and to mitigate any negative impacts
- Capture horizontal impacts via performance indicators and monitor and evaluate the application of the principle having regard to the results of such monitoring and evaluation actions; and
- Make arrangements, where deemed necessary, for the provision of training and guidance to relevant staff in the fields of anti-discrimination disability, and universal design, including the law and policy, disability law and policy, including accessibility and the practical application of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, in accordance with the general ex ante conditionality.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission, which has a statutory responsibility to promote equality, will be engaged to offer support to intermediate bodies in assessing the

impact of their measures on the nine equality grounds and incorporating an equality dimension, as appropriate, in project design and delivery.

11.3 Equality between men and women

Description of contribution of the operational programme to the promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at operational programme and operation level.

Description of contribution of the operational programme to the promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at operational programme and operation level.

Monitoring systems and data collection will be established to provide a clear picture of how the programme is meeting gender equality objectives. The Managing Authority will seek to achieve a gender balance in the composition of the Monitoring Committee which will include a gender expertise/responsibility function.

Irish Government policy in this area includes a legal framework which provides for equal treatment for women and men with legislative backing for positive action initiatives for women and men including positive action in particular circumstances and commitments to apply a gender equality perspective in all areas.

The National Women's Strategy 2007 - 2016 includes commitments to increase the availability of childcare services and other initiatives to assist the return to employment of women who have interrupted their careers for family purposes. It envisages building further upon gender mainstreaming, a methodology that has been used effectively in many European countries to ensure that a gender perspective is systematically included in all public policy making.

The Managing Authority conducted a public consultation on the draft OP. Under-representation of female owners/managers was raised, as was the need to support female entrepreneurship programmes. There was a call for tailored suites of actions to promote gender balance across the business sphere and for a robust proofing model for the application of the HPs.

The following arrangements will be made to ensure the integration of the gender equality principle in the S&E ROP 2014-2020:

- Ensure the proposed intervention complies with EU and national legislation and public policy in relation to the gender principle
 - Involve bodies in charge of gender equality at all stages (preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation), including the provision of advice on gender equality in fund-related activities and specific actions to promote gender equality
 - Ring-fence specific budgets to support pro-active measures or specific actions
-
- Pursue the objective of gender equality, ensuring its mainstreaming through the integration of a gender perspective at all stages of the implementation of the funds, including preparation, project selection criteria, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
 - Undertake impact assessments to ensure that the needs of both genders will be met in the implementation of projects, to include consultation with client groups (gender mainstreaming)
 - Take account of the potential contribution of the ROP to gender equality with reference to the specific challenges in the prioritised priority investment areas
 - Capture horizontal impacts via performance indicators
 - Make arrangements for training of relevant staff in the fields of gender equality law and policy as well as on gender mainstreaming related to the implementation of the funds, in accordance with the general ex ante conditionality
 - Promote gender balance on the monitoring committees
 - Ensure data disaggregated by gender is captured and reported where relevant
 - Develop meaningful indicators to track gender equality outcomes, results and impacts
 - Set gender equality targets where appropriate. These need to be related to the baseline position (not necessarily 50:50)
 - Programme Implementation Plans will outline how the intervention will be planned and implemented in order to have a positive impact and to mitigate any negative impacts
 - Build on and improve on actions taken under previous OPs
 - Monitor and evaluate the application of the principle and have regard to the results of such monitoring and evaluation actions
 - Promote equality of access for women and men in practical ways by identifying and removing barriers to their participation through:
 - o information, publicity and communication
 - o flexible provision and delivery
 - o childcare supports
 - o transport and facilities

These commitments will be additional to legal obligations which apply in relation to gender equality. This is consistent with the mechanisms in the National Women's Strategy to foster gender mainstreaming at all policy formation and implementation levels, including EU co-financed programmes. The mainstream approach, assigns the responsibility to address gender equality, to the Intermediate Body responsible for implementing the thematic objective.

12. SEPARATE ELEMENTS

12.1 Major projects to be implemented during programming period

Table 27: List of major projects

Project	Planned notification/submission date (year, quarter)	Planned start of implementation (year, quarter)	Planned completion date (year, quarter)	Priority Axes / Investment Priorities
National Broadband Plan	2017, Q1	2017, Q1	2018, Q4	

12.2 Performance framework of operational programme

Table 28: Performance framework by fund and category of region (summary table)

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)		
					M	W	T	M	W	T
1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	ERDF	More developed	Research, innovation: Number of new researchers in supported entities	Full time equivalents			276			689.00
1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	ERDF	More developed	total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority	€			72,000,000.00			180,000,000.00
1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	ERDF	More developed	Number of commercialisation fund	Number of Awards			130			325.00

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)		
					M	W	T	M	W	T
			awards							
2 - Information and Communication Technologies	ERDF	More developed	ICT Infrastructure: Additional households with broadband access of at least 30 Mbps	Households			0			164,344.00
2 - Information and Communication Technologies	ERDF	More developed	total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority	€			0.00			60,000,000.00
2 - Information and Communication Technologies	ERDF	More developed	Key Implementation Steps	Number of Steps Completed			Launch of procurement process to award contract			1.00
3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development	ERDF	More developed	Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises	Full time equivalents			2,304			5,760.00
3 - SME Support, promotion and capability development	ERDF	More developed	total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority	€			27,680,000.00			69,200,000.00
4 - Low Carbon Economy	ERDF	More developed	Energy efficiency: Number of households with improved energy consumption classification	Households			7,799.00			19,497.00
4 - Low Carbon Economy	ERDF	More developed	total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority	€			26,600,000.00			66,500,000.00
5 - Sustainable Urban Development	ERDF	More developed	total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the	€			20,080,000.00			52,000,000.00

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)		
					M	W	T	M	W	T
			authority							
5 - Sustainable Urban Development	ERDF	More developed	Number of integrated growth centre strategies implemented	Number of Strategies			4			9.00

12.3 Relevant partners involved in preparation of programme

Submissions received arising from initial public consultation

CEB Network

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI)

Irish Local Development Network

Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

EirGrid

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Marine Institute

European Commissioner for Taxation and Customs Union, Audit and Anti-Fraud

The Revenue Commissioners

Tipperary Energy Agency (TEA)

Mid-East Regional Authority

Mallow Development Partnership

Kerry County Development Board

North Tipperary County Council

Ballyhoura Development Ltd

Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)

South-East Regional Authority

South-West Regional Authority

Mid-West Regional Authority

Dublin Regional Authority

Dublin Cycling Campaign/Cyclist.ie

Midland Regional Authority

Technology Centre for Biorefining and Bioenergy

The Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency

Organisations attending Stakeholder Workshop (November 2013)

Mallow Development Partnership

Waterford City Council

South Dublin County Council

Dublin Cycling Campaign / Cyclist.ie

Local Government Management Agency

Mid-West Regional Authority

Ballyhoura Development Ltd.

Tipperary Energy Agency (TEA)

Carlow County Council

Technology Centre for Bio-refining and Bio-energy

South-East Regional Authority

Cork City Council

Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency

Inland Fisheries Ireland

Bilateral Consultation Meetings with Departments and Agencies

Department of Public Expenditure & Reform, Structural Funds Policy

Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (R&D Policy)

Science Foundation Ireland

Enterprise Ireland (Enterprise & Innovation Policy)

Higher Education Authority

Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (ICT)

Department of Transport (Public Transport Infrastructure)

Irish Rail

National Transport Authority

Department of the Environment (Urban Planning)

Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources (Energy Policy)

Enterprise Ireland (Micro-enterprise)

Marine Institute

Irish Local Development Network

Department of the Environment (Housing retrofit)

Department of Transport (Sustainable Transport)

Forfás

Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Office of Public Works

List of Submissions received arising from public consultation 30th May – 30th June 2014

Office for Local Authority Management, Local Government Management Agency

Bord Gáis Networks

Waterford Institute of Technology

Limerick Chamber of Commerce

Environmental Protection Agency

National Disability Authority

Climate Change Section, Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine

Port of Cork

Limerick City and County Council

Irish Council for Social Housing

Cork City Council

Social Inclusion Division, Department of Social Protection

Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Tipperary County Council

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

Attendees at Meeting with statutory bodies responsible for horizontal principles (June 2014)

Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government

National Disability Authority

Department of Social Protection

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

Department of Justice & Equality (Gender Equality Division)

Documents

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
System for Data exchange and ecohesion	Programme annexes	17-Nov-2014	Annex 9	Ares(2014)4094849	System for Data exchange and ecohesion	05-Dec-2014	nbrederv
Co-ordination arrangements	Programme annexes	17-Nov-2014	Annex 8	Ares(2014)4094849	Co-ordination arrangements	05-Dec-2014	nbrederv
Intervention Logic for S&E OP 2014-2020	Programme annexes	17-Nov-2014	annex 3	Ares(2014)4094849	Intervention Logic for S&E OP 2014-2020	05-Dec-2014	nbrederv
Performance Indicators for the S&E OP 2014-2020	Programme annexes	17-Nov-2014	Annex 4	Ares(2014)4094849	Performance Indicators for the S&E OP 2014-2020	05-Dec-2014	nbrederv
Ex Ante Evaluation Report on the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020	Report of the ex-ante evaluation	18-Jul-2014	Annex 5	Ares(2014)4094849	Ex Ante Evaluation Report on the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020	05-Dec-2014	nbrederv
Irelands RIS3	Programme annexes	31-Dec-2013	Annex 10	Ares(2014)4094849	Irelands RIS3	05-Dec-2014	nbrederv