



MID TERM EVALUATION OF THE SOUTHERN & EASTERN REGIONAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME 2014-20

Appendices 5 – 8 FINAL

May 2019

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1. APPENDIX 5: STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

Table 1: Stakeholders Consulted – S&E

Name	Organisation	Scheme / Role
Derville Brennan	Southern Regional Assembly	Managing Authority
Enda Hogan	Southern Regional Assembly	Managing Authority
Vincent Dunphy	Southern Regional Assembly	Managing Authority
Donal Keane	Science Foundation Ireland	P1: SFI Research Centres
Joan Hynes		P1: SFI Spokes Scheme
Declan McGrath		P1: SFI Principal Investigators
Veronica Cunningham	Marine Institute	P1: Marine Research Scheme
Hugh O'Rourke	Enterprise Ireland Research and Development	P1: Commercialisation Fund
Una Morgan		
Hugh O'Rourke	Enterprise Ireland Research and Development	P1: Innovation Partnerships
Lawrence Lee		
Declan McGee		
Louise McCarthy	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment	P2: National Broadband Plan
Siobhan Murphy		
Martin Corry	Enterprise Ireland	P3: Entrepreneurship in Micro-Enterprise
Eilis Duffy		
Patricia Byrne	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment	P4: Better Energy Warmer Homes
Rebecca Minch		
Kate Carmody	Department of Housing Planning and Local Government	P4: Social Housing Retrofit
Sinead Kehoe		
Breda O'Connor	Department of Housing Planning and Local Government	P4: Social Housing Retrofit
Joe Durkan	Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI)	P4: BEWH & SHR schemes.
Derville Brennan	Southern Regional Assembly	P5: Designated Urban Centre Grants Scheme
Mary Hayes	Cork County Council	P5: Designated Urban Centre Grants Scheme

Name	Organisation	Scheme / Role
Michael McAdam	South Dublin County Council	P5: Designated Urban Centre Grants Scheme
Deirdre Toomey	Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission	PMC member - horizontal principles
Abed Aldekar		
AnnMarie Quarry	Department of Justice and Equality, Gender Equality Unit	PMC member – horizontal principles
Charles Stanley Smith	Environmental Pillar	
Ruth McGrath	DPER	Member State
Ann Marie Caulfield		
Ross Weir		
Patricia Hennessy.		
Michael McGrath		
Paul Herron	DPER	Audit Authority
Dermot Byrne		
Seamus Fitzgerald	Councillor	Elected Member of Southern Regional Assembly
Oliver Walsh	Councillor	
Irene Sheridan	Cork Institute of Technology	Social partner - represents interests of Institutes of Technology in S&E

2. APPENDIX 6: DEADWEIGHT ANALYSIS

Deadweight occurs when public expenditure is used to secure benefits which would have been achieved in the absence of the intervention. The Public Spending Code (PSC) states that “deadweight occurs when public expenditure is incurred to achieve benefits which would have been achieved in the absence of the project scheme being funded.”¹

Previous Irish and international research including research on (R&D) grants and Enterprise Ireland (EI) projects suggest a wide range of estimates for deadweight which are broadly aligned with the parameters used in the existing Economic Appraisal Model (EAM). The PSC have noted that estimating the measures of deadweight can be difficult and its application within the EAM presents methodological challenges. However, the existing model assumptions on deadweight are aligned with upper estimates of the main existing empirical research studies in Ireland and are somewhat higher than estimate internationally.²

The Review of the Enterprise Agencies Economic Appraisal Model (EAM) in Ireland (2018) includes a range of estimates for deadweight between 65%-80% for Start-ups depending on the region. The main findings from this review of grant deadweight for Start-ups are detailed below:

Table 2: Deadweight estimates for Start-ups

Element	Description	Parameter Values
Grant deadweight	Reflects regional variation and difference between project types	Start-ups Greater Dublin 80% Rest of State 70% BMW 65%

Source: *Indecon Review of the Enterprise Agencies Economic Appraisal Model in Ireland*, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) 2018

The purpose of accounting for deadweight in the context of the ROP is to provide an understanding of how the common output indicator would have performed in the absence of the intervention.

¹ Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2012. The Public Spending Code – Guide to economic appraisal: Carrying out a cost benefit analysis (D.03). Available at: <http://publicspendingcode.per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/D03-Guide-to-economic-appraisal-CBA-16-July.pdf>

² *Indecon Review of the Enterprise Agencies Economic Appraisal Model in Ireland*, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) 2018

3. APPENDIX 7: THEMATIC OBJECTIVES

3.1 Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 - Article 5

Investment priorities

The ERDF shall support the following investment priorities within the thematic objectives set out in the first paragraph of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, in accordance with the development needs and growth potential referred to in point (a)(i) of Article 15(1) of that Regulation and set out in the Partnership Agreement:

(1) strengthening research, technological development and innovation by:

(a) 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;

(b) 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) enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT by:

(a) extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy;

(b) developing ICT products and services, e-commerce, and enhancing demand for ICT;

(c) strengthening ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, e-culture and e-health;

(3) enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs by:

(a) promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators;

(b) developing and implementing new business models for SMEs, in particular with regard to internationalisation;

(c) supporting the creation and the extension of advanced capacities for product and service development;

(d) supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes;


(4) supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors by:

(a) promoting the production and distribution of energy derived from renewable sources;

(b) promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy use in enterprises;

(c) supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructure, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector;

- (d) developing and implementing smart distribution systems that operate at low and medium voltage levels;
 - (e) 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;
 - (f) promoting research and innovation in, and adoption of, low-carbon technologies;
 - (g) promoting the use of high-efficiency co-generation of heat and power based on useful heat demand;
- (5) promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management by:
- (a) supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches;
 - (b) promoting investment to address specific risks, ensuring disaster resilience and developing disaster management systems;
- (6) preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency by:
- (a) investing in the waste sector to meet the requirements of the Union's environmental acquis and to address needs, identified by the Member States, for investment that goes beyond those requirements;
 - (b) investing in the water sector to meet the requirements of the Union's environmental acquis and to address needs, identified by the Member States, for investment that goes beyond those requirements;
 - (c) conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage;
 - (d) protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure;
 - (e) 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;
 - (f) promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution;
 - (g) supporting industrial transition towards a resource-efficient economy, promoting green growth, eco-innovation and environmental performance management in the public and private sectors;
- (7) promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures by:
- (a) supporting a multimodal Single European Transport Area by investing in the TEN-T;
 - (b) enhancing regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes;
 - (c) developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility;
 - (d) developing and rehabilitating comprehensive, high quality and interoperable railway systems, and promoting noise-reduction measures;



(e) improving energy efficiency and security of supply through the development of smart energy distribution, storage and transmission systems and through the integration of distributed generation from renewable sources;

(8) promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility by:

(a) supporting the development of business incubators and investment support for self-employment, micro-enterprises and business creation;

(b) supporting employment-friendly growth through the development of endogenous potential as part of a territorial strategy for specific areas, including the conversion of declining industrial regions and enhancement of accessibility to, and development of, specific natural and cultural resources;

(c) supporting local development initiatives and aid for structures providing neighbourhood services to create jobs, where such actions are outside the scope of Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (10);

(d) investing in infrastructure for employment services;

(9) promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination, by:

(a) investing in health and social infrastructure which contributes to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services;

(b) providing support for physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived communities in urban and rural areas;

(c) providing support for social enterprises;

(d) undertaking investment in the context of community-led local development strategies;

(10) investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure;

(11) enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration through actions to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to the implementation of the ERDF, and in support of actions under the ESF to strengthen the institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration.

3.2 Justification for Selection of Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities for the ERDF/ESF OPs 2014-20³

3.2.1 Priority 1

Table 3: Priority 1: Justification for Selection

Selected Thematic Objective	Selected Investment Priority	Justification for Selection
1. Strengthening Research, Technological Development and Innovation	<p>(a) 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> <p>(b) 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>	<p>Europe 2020 – R&D – Innovation Target</p> <p>AGS – promoting growth and competitiveness, tackling unemployment</p> <p>NRP – Target 2 - R&D</p> <p>National Policies - Research prioritisation and Commercialisation, Action Plan for Jobs</p> <p>European Commission position paper on Ireland – promotion of R&D Investment and the competitiveness of the business sector</p> <p>To build upon the positive achievements of the 2007-13 programmes;</p> <p>Potential synergies with Horizon 2020;</p> <p>Potential to contribute to the Atlantic Strategy Action Plan.</p> <p>To support the achievement of the objectives of Ireland’s Innovation Taskforce report;</p> <p>To contribute to the Innovation Union agenda; and</p> <p>Opportunity to commercialise through technology transfer and applied research, the substantial outputs of Ireland’s research programmes.</p>

³ Partnership Agreement Ireland 1 January 2014 – 31 December 2020 in accordance with Articles 14 and 15 of Regulation (EU) N0 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17th December 2013 November 2014

3.2.2 Priority 2

Table 4: Priority 2: Justification for Selection

Selected Thematic Objective	Selected Investment Priority	Justification for Selection
<p>2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT</p>	<p>(a) 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>	<p>Europe 2020 – Employment, R&D/Innovation</p> <p>AGS – promoting growth and competitiveness, tackling unemployment</p> <p>To contribute to the EU Digital Agenda objectives</p> <p>European Commission position paper on Ireland – promotion of the competitiveness of the business sector</p> <p>NRP – Target 1 Employment</p> <p>National Policies – Action Plan for Jobs</p> <p>To meet national targets in respect of high speed broadband availability;</p> <p>Next Generation Broadband is identified as a key infrastructure priority in the national capital investment programme</p> <p>To promote regional development by enhancing the productive capacity of regional locations</p> <p>To enhance a key driver of the competitiveness of the regional and national economy</p> <p>To stimulate innovation and job creation in SMEs in the regions</p> <p>To continue to attract foreign direct investment to the Regions</p> <p>To underpin investment under other ESIF Programmes e.g., e-learning, rural development, development of coastal communities;</p> <p>To provide ubiquitous next generation broadband to all citizens, regardless of location, supports equality of opportunity</p>

3.2.3 Priority 3

Table 5: Priority 3: Justification for Selection

Selected Thematic Objective	Selected Investment Priority	Justification for Selection
<p>3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and of the fishery and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF)</p>	<p>(a) Promoting entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators.</p> <p>(d) Supporting the capacity of SMEs to grow in regional, national and international markets, and to engage in innovation processes.</p>	<p>Europe 2020 – Employment, R&D/Innovation</p> <p>AGS – promoting growth and competitiveness, tackling unemployment</p> <p>Country Specific Recommendation 48 No 5 – Develop policy initiatives for the SME Sector</p> <p>NRP – Target 1</p> <p>European Commission position paper on Ireland – promotion of the competitiveness of the business sector</p> <p>To address the need to accelerate micro-enterprise start-up and expansion;</p> <p>To create employment in the start-up and expansion of micro-enterprises;</p> <p>To continue the positive delivery of entrepreneurial supports; and</p> <p>Strongly supported in the public consultation submissions received.</p>

3.2.4 Priority 4

Table 6: Priority 4: Justification for Selection

Selected Thematic Objective	Selected Investment Priority	Justification for Selection
4. Supporting the Shift Towards a Low Carbon Economy in all sectors	(c) Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructures, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector.	<p>Europe 2020 – Climate Change / Energy</p> <p>NRP – Target 3 – Climate Change and Energy</p> <p>Support the attainment of Ireland’s target for renewable sourced energy and the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan;</p> <p>European Commission position paper on Ireland – promotion of an environmentally-friendly and resource efficient economy</p>
	(e) Promoting low carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multi-modal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures	<p>To achieve reduced emissions from transport in accordance with the Commission paper</p> <p>To support low carbon urban mobility in designated urban centres</p> <p>To contribute to meeting Ireland’s EU2020 targets for reduced GHG emissions from transport</p> <p>To support the attainment of Ireland’s Smarter Travel Policy target of 20 percentage point increase in non-private car commuting</p>

3.2.5 Priority 5

Table 7: Priority 5: Justification for Selection

Selected Thematic Objective	Selected Investment Priority	Justification for Selection
<p>Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency</p>	<p>(e) 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> <p>(f) Promoting innovative technologies to improve environmental protection and resource efficiency in the waste sector, water sector and with regard to soil, or to reduce air pollution.</p>	<p>Europe 2020 – Climate Change / Energy</p> <p>NRP – Target 3 – Climate Change and Energy - Support the attainment of Ireland’s target for renewable sourced energy and the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan;</p> <p>European Commission position paper on Ireland – promotion of an environmentally-friendly and resource efficient economy</p> <p>As part of Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) strategy, to enhance the quality of urban environments;</p> <p>To continue the positive delivery of SUD actions; and</p> <p>To align with the objectives of the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020.</p>

4. APPENDIX 8: PRIORITY 5 – ALTERNATIVE INDICATORS

4.1 Introduction - Priority 5 – Programme Specific Result Indicator

During the course of the mid-term evaluation, the Southern Regional Assembly and Northern and Western Regional Assembly have highlighted that the Programme Specific Result Indicator for Priority 5 i.e. Indicator 6(e), in both Regional Operating Programmes is no longer fit for purpose.

4.1.1 Programme Specific Result Indicator

The Programme Specific Result Indicator 6 (e) selected for Priority 5 in both ROPs is:

- Indicator: ***Improvement in the social, economic and physical conditions in selected urban centres, based on an urban development index.***
- Measurement unit: ***Index Values***
- Baseline value: ***GHI Average Score 5.0 (S&E), 4.9 (BMW)***; Baseline year ***2012*** (sourced from Gateways and Hubs Development Index 2012 (specifically commissioned to inform the baseline⁴))
- Target value: ***All > 5.1 (S&E and BMW)***.

The indicator was proposed as an innovative measure of the aggregate economic, social and environmental progress of selected urban centres. The GHI 2012 was intended to measure the effectiveness of Gateways (cities & towns) and Hubs (towns) in delivering sustained economic development and improved quality of life. It is based around eight individual domains or thematic areas, each of which consist of a number of indicators or data variables, which contribute to building up an evidence-base into the socio-economic performance of the Gateways and Hubs.

The index is based on 5.0 as a median score, with urban centres aiming for an aggregate index score of 5.1. Given the integrated nature of eligible investments under Priority 5, and the specific objective defined for priority 5

4.1.2 Data Sources / Constraints

Baseline Value: The GHI from which the baseline indicator was derived, collected data from areas designated as Gateways and Hubs as per the National Spatial Strategy (2002-2020).

Target Value: Data to update the result indicator was to draw on official statistics across a large number of domains. It was planned that this be collected twice over the programme period. However, given external policy changes (the NSS has now been superseded by the draft National Planning Framework: Ireland 2040 Our Plan (NPF)), the Gateway and Hub designation has been discontinued.

⁴ The cost for the update of the GHI 2012 was €80,749.50, shared equally between the former Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly and the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly.

Therefore, for national and regional policy coherence, it would not be relevant or consistent to measure progress in settlements that are no longer designated under Government policy.

4.2 Options for Indicator 6(e)

Potential options for replacing the indicator (within both ROPs) are proposed:

- Option 1: Defer amending the indicator / measurement until the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy is adopted and the governance and monitoring structures for the Metropolitan Areas Strategic Plans (former gateways) and Key Towns (former hubs with additional urban centres included) are determined. Subsequently the MAs would revisit the indicator in around 12 months and propose a measurement that is useful to the RSES urban centres, that correspond to the former Gateways and Hubs, as they will be configured;
- Option 2: Commission a Local Authority-focused qualitative study, using the Integrated Urban Development plans that the LAs used to support their initial bid for funding as the baseline and from these, evaluate the progress achieved; and
- Option 3: Commission qualitative studies building on the perception study that was included within the GHDI 2012. The studies would include some questions confined to those cities and towns included in the GDHI 2012, other questions would be open to all of these cities and towns; and
- Option 4: Commission a benchmarking study to explore good practice in measurement of similar schemes in other ERDF programmes. The benchmarking study should also explore how learning from these could be applied to the ROP context in order to develop a new indicator.

The benefits and drawbacks of these four options are explored below.

4.3 Option 1: Defer 12 Months

4.3.1 Description

This would involve commissioning a study to update and replace the existing GHDI (2012) to reflect changing boundaries. Technical modifications would be required to capture and adjust for the geographic boundaries upon which the indicators were formulated as these will have changed.

This option is mindful of and reflects the fluid external policy environment:

- The **draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)** for each region is yet to be adopted. Each Regional Assembly is responsible for preparation for the RSES; these have been published for public consultation and will be adopted by the relevant Assembly following consideration of responses. The RSES is subordinate to the National Planning Framework (NPF) and sets the regional context for City & County Development Plans and the Local Economic & Community Plans.
- Development of **Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs)**: A key pillar of the NPF Strategy is to target significant future growth and development in all five of Ireland's cities. The **MASP**⁵ is a

⁵ National Planning Framework. National Planning Objective No.67 requires for the first time Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs): "Provision will be made for Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans to be prepared for the **Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford Metropolitan areas** and in the case of Dublin and Cork, to also

high level and long term strategic vision, to identify critical priorities for the sequencing and delivery of growth that supports the core city area. The Regional Assemblies are responsible for preparing the MASPs and conducting consultation on these. This work is ongoing for 5 MASPs.

- Identification of **Key Towns**. The settlement typology in the draft RSES for the Southern Region⁶ describes the role of **Key Towns** within the broader RSES context; this is based on:
 - the pillars of three **cities** (Metropolitan Areas – accessible with national and international connectivity, strong business core, innovation, education, retail, health and cultural role)
 - supported by a network of strategically located **key towns** (large or strategically located towns which have an accessibility and influence in a regional or sub regional context),
 - strengthening our **towns and villages** (towns and villages of above 1,500 which provide a housing, employment or service function. The category is broad and ranges from large commuter towns to more remote towns and villages) and supporting **rural areas** (rural villages less than 1,500 and the wider rural region).

The draft RSES for the Southern Region identifies 3 MASPs and 14 Key Towns;

- Whilst Metropolitan Areas (former gateways) and Key Towns (former hubs with additional urban centres included) have been identified in each region, the development of plans for each of these is still underway. In addition, governance and monitoring structures for the **Metropolitan Areas Strategic Plans** and **Key Towns** are currently being determined.
- Whilst each MA is an active participant, contributing to the development and implementation of the sub-regional plans and associated structures, it is one of many parties involved and respectful of the wider process and role of others in the designation, governance structures, etc.

Once these plans and structures are approved and agreed, the MAs would revisit the indicator in around 12 months, commissioning a study to propose a measurement that is useful to the RSES urban centres as they will be configured- drawing on the GHDI and applying technical modifications, as required.

4.3.2 Benefits

- Of the four options proposed, this one provides the most comprehensive solution for addressing the issue of the GHDI becoming infeasible as it would provide an updated measure **without the need to create a new indicator and new target value**.
- The value of commissioning this study has **resonances beyond the immediate need** to find a solution to update the index for the programme specific result indicator. It can be used to augment the baseline studies for the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.
- **For Gateways, it may be possible to adopt the baseline from 2012 and thus compare progress against these values**. The exercise would be confined to those RSES settlements corresponding to those included in the GDHI 2012. As the DUCGS funding is only awarded to the former Gateways and Hubs, the RSES settlements that were not formerly designated do not require measurement as they did not receive funding under the OP The previous study (published 2012) included 9 designated Gateways and the draft RSES propose development of Metropolitan Areas Strategic Plans for 5 areas.

address the wider city region, by the appropriate authorities in tandem with and as part of the relevant Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies”

⁶ https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/Draft_RSES_2018_-_WEB.pdf

- **For some Hubs, it may be possible to adopt the baseline from 2012 and thus compare progress against these values.** The studies would be confined to those RSES settlements corresponding to those included in the GDHI 2012. As the DUCGS funding is only awarded to the former Gateways and Hubs, the RSES settlements that were not formerly designated do not require measurement as they did not receive funding under the OP. The previous designation included 9 of Hubs ; the draft RSES (2018) propose 14 Key Towns in the Southern Region and 8 in the Northern and Western region).

4.3.3 Drawbacks

- The **timeline for implementing this option is not as favourable** as Options 2, 3 and 4.
- This approach may not be accepted by the governing structures for the MASPs, resulting in the need to identify a new indicator and establish a baseline with a significant time loss.
- This option is **dependent upon the approval of the Draft Regional and Economic Spatial Strategy** for each region.
- To accommodate the current designation of NUTS II regions in Ireland, the S&E and BWW Managing Authorities would need to **invite the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly to collaborate** with them in commissioning and managing this modified study.
- The **designation of Metropolitan Areas, Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns in the draft RSES is unlikely to correspond exactly to the designation of Gateways and Hubs:**
 - For some of these, technical modifications may be required to derive an index;
 - For some of these, there may not be any baseline data against which current values may be compared to demonstrate progress.

4.4 Option 2: LA focused qualitative study – progress against IUDs

4.4.1 Description

This would involve a Local Authority-focused qualitative study, evaluating progress against the baseline deemed to be Integrated Urban Development plans that LAs used to support their initial bid for funding.

4.4.2 Benefits

- This would allow for a **place-based assessment** in which the MAs could determine the direct impact of the interventions and as such, **a more focussed measurement of ROP impact**
- This **would not be impacted by the time delays** that Option 1 would be subject to.

4.4.3 Drawbacks

There are a number of issues with this approach that need to be explored, specifically:

- This would require the **development and subsequent approval of a new indicator, target value and method of measurement** for the ROP, that complies with relevant EC regulations and guidance;

- This option could give rise to **potential conflicts of interest** (in essence, it could be seeking to ask Local Authorities to evaluate their own progress);
- The **variability of the IUD plans (i.e. content, structure, format, etc. do not conform to a standard template/approach) could pose a challenge** in devising a study which captures and reflects progress in a consistent, objective and reliable manner; and
- Given the qualitative nature of the proposed study, **establishing a baseline value retrospectively, current position and target value will be difficult**, allowing that subjectivity may influence measurement and as such, reduce reliability.

4.5 Option 3: Perception Study based on GHDI 2012

4.5.1 Description

This would involve qualitative studies building on the perception study which was used within the GHDI 2012. The studies would be confined to those RSES settlements corresponding to those included in the GHDI 2012. As the DUCGS funding is only awarded to the former Gateways and Hubs, the RSES settlements that were not formerly designated do not require measurement as they did not receive funding under the OP.

4.5.2 Benefits

- As per Option 2, this would allow for a **place-based assessment** in which the MAs could determine the direct impact of the interventions and as such, **a more focussed measurement of ROP impact**.
- This **would not be impacted by the time delays** that Option 1 would be subject to
- This **would not be exposed to risks** identified for Option 2 **in relation to conflicts of interest**.
- **For Gateways, it may be possible to adopt the baseline from the perception study 2012 and thus compare progress in new perception studies against baseline values** for specific questions/measures from the 2012 perception study.
- **For Hubs, there is a wealth of information about these as a group (2012). It may be possible to estimate a collated baseline from the perception study 2012 and thus compare progress against this value.** for specific questions/measures from the 2012 perception study.
- **Former Gateways and former Hubs correspond with the RSES settlements (MASPs and Key Towns):** It is proposed to limit the urban centres included in the study to those that correspond with the NSS designation i.e. Gateways now MASPs. and Hubs now Key Towns, (confining to those that were previously designated as Hubs).
- To establish current progress, in terms of **consistency and repeatability**, there is a bank of questions that were used in the perception study in the GHDI 2012 which could be used again for the purposes of comparison
- This option provides an opportunity for **direct engagement with citizens / constituents** of the ROP area, which is in keeping with the broad principles of ERDF funding.

- The perception study **provides a vehicle to increase the visibility of the ROP** and its potential benefits for the region;
- The perception study **provides a vehicle to which tailored questions could be added** to gather evidence to test awareness of the ROP and its impact as well as on regional economic development issues relevant to the respective roles of MAs and LAs.

4.5.3 Drawbacks

There are some issues that would require further consideration:

- This would require the **development and subsequent approval of a new indicator, target value and method of measurement** for the ROP, that complies with relevant EC regulations and guidance;
- **For Hubs, there are no values which can be used as a baseline for individual hubs** - due to their scale, the perception study was reported as a shared Hubs perception survey result;
- Given the nature of the proposed perception study, **estimating the progress made poses some challenges**; whilst similar questions may be posed to a similar representative sample of the population, there will be external factors beyond the control of the study that may limit comparability with results from the previous study and as such, reduce reliability. Any relevant issues would be highlighted in reporting.
- **Values for the new indicator will be reported for some cities and towns but not for all**: it would be reported for those cities and towns designated in both the GDHI and the draft RSES; it would not be reported for those which are designated in the draft RSES only. The primary reason for confining the study to the corresponding settlements/urban centres is due to the fact that only the Gateways and Hubs (S&E OP) and the Gateways (BMW OP) were awarded funding under the current programme period. Other centres are outside the area of interest for this study
- For those cities and towns which are designated in both the draft RSES and in the GDHI, **the non-core boundary of the settlements will be different**: the area that constituted zone 2 of the Gateways will not correspond with the MASPs and the area that constituted zone 2 of the Hubs will not correspond with the Key Towns. Therefore an exercise⁷ will be required to allow for changes over time as was provided for when the Index was updated from the 2009 to the 2012 iteration (to note Hubs were not measured in 2009 study). **Technical modifications may be required to establish zone 2 or outer zone areas as they were established using CSO POWSCAR data and are based on travel to work patterns.**

4.6 Option 4: Benchmarking

4.6.1 Description

This would involve commissioning a benchmarking study to explore good practice in measurement of similar schemes in other ERDF programmes. The benchmarking study should also explore how learning from these could be applied to the ROP context in order to develop a new indicator.

⁷ statistical smoothing will be necessary by the research company conducting the survey to allow for the changes in geography i.e. the EDs included in the RSES MASP and the Key Towns (technical modifications such as these also had to be carried out in 2012)

4.6.2 Benefits

- This **would not be impacted by the time delays** that Option 1 would be subject to.
- This **would not be exposed to risks** identified for Option 2 **in relation to conflicts of interest**.

4.6.3 Drawbacks

There are a number of issues with this approach that need to be explored, specifically:

- This would require the **development and subsequent approval of a new indicator, target value and method of measurement** for the ROP, that complies with relevant EC regulations and guidance;
- The ROPs operate within a wider policy context; this is likely to differ across different jurisdictions. Therefore, there may be challenges in the **transferability of approaches from other jurisdictions/schemes**.
- There may be challenges in **establishing a baseline value retrospectively**.

4.7 Conclusions

Option 1 provides the most comprehensive solution of the four options; however, it involves a considerable time delay; there are also some other significant drawbacks associated with this option. The lack of coherence with Government policy that the option presents, being the most significant basis for discarding this approach, given the changed operating environment and the challenge that this presents for establishing a baseline. This option may not be the favoured choice of the emerging governance structures of the RSES MASPs. There is risk involved in this choice that is beyond the control of the Managing Authorities. If this time-delay and the inherent risk is acceptable (to the Commission as well as MAs), the MAs should proceed with this.

However, if the time delay and inherent risk of rejection of the proposal is not acceptable, Option 3 provides a more balanced approach to evaluating progress under this Priority: it does not have the potential independence / conflict of interest issues likely to be experienced under Option 2. It should be noted that Option 3 would require a new indicator and target value to be developed and there would be additional work required to seek to prepare a baseline value for hubs. The table overleaf presents a summary of the options.

Table 8: Summary of Options

	Option 1 Defer 12 months	Option 2 Qualitative Study: IUD	Option 3 Perception Survey	Option 4 Benchmarking
Existing indicator	+ Similar indicator though technical amendments	- Develop /seek approval: new indicator, target value, method of measurement, etc	- Develop /seek approval: new indicator, target value, method of measurement, etc	- Develop /seek approval: new indicator, target value, method of measurement, etc
Challenges with approach and underlying data	+ Apply tried & tested approach: similar to previous GDHI	- Variability of IUD plans Potential conflict of interest/LA self-assessment	+ Apply tried & tested approach: similar to previous perception study	+/- Apply tried & tested approach from other jurisdiction/scheme; may be transferability issues
Baseline and Current Value	+ Adopt baseline for Gateways/Hubs from GDHI	- Challenge to determine reliable baseline & current value (qualitative study)	+/- Baseline for Gateways No baseline values for individual Hubs though estimates may be derived from collated value for Hubs	+/- It may be challenging to determine baseline; also transferability of method from other jurisdiction /scheme
Place-based assessment	+ Gateway/ Hub and successor (draft RSES) designation model	+ LA based model: more focussed measure of ROP impact	+ Gateway/ Hub and successor (draft RSES) designation model	+/- Build in to scope of study; dependent on findings of study
Timescales	- ~12 months	+ No delay	+ No delay	+ No delay
Subject to approval of RSES	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
Depend on EMRA support to commission study	-	n/a	n/a	n/a
Coherence of regional policy. Resonance beyond ROP (augment baseline studies for RSES)	+	n/a	n/a	n/a

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