



Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020

Annual Implementation Report 2018 Citizens Summary



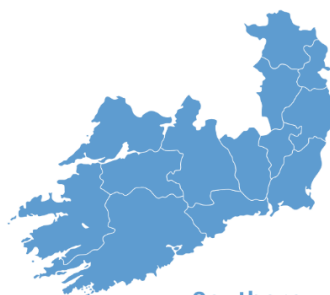
What is the Southern & Eastern Regional Programme 2014-20?

The Southern & Eastern Regional Programme (S&E ROP) 2014-20 was approved by the European Commission on 15 December 2014 and launched in Wexford on 3 July 2015 by Brendan Howlin TD, Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform.

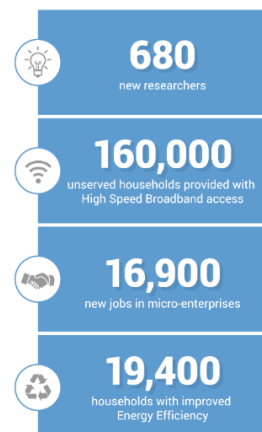
The overall objective of the S&E ROP is to support job creation, competitiveness, economic growth, improved quality of life and sustainable development. Operations supported under the Programme will contribute to Ireland's Europe 2020 targets for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The S&E ROP has five priority areas for funding:

- research and innovation
- information & communications technologies (ICT)
- small & medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- low carbon economy
- sustainable urban development



Southern
& Eastern



How much is the S&E Programme worth and who benefits?

While the S&E ROP has a 7-year timeline, implementation runs from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2023.

The Programme is worth a total of €500 million to the Southern & Eastern region of Ireland - €250 million from the European Regional Development Fund¹ (ERDF) and another €250 million in national funding.

Beneficiaries receiving grant funding under the S&E ROP 14-20 include public sector, academic and private sector organisations in the S&E region such as:

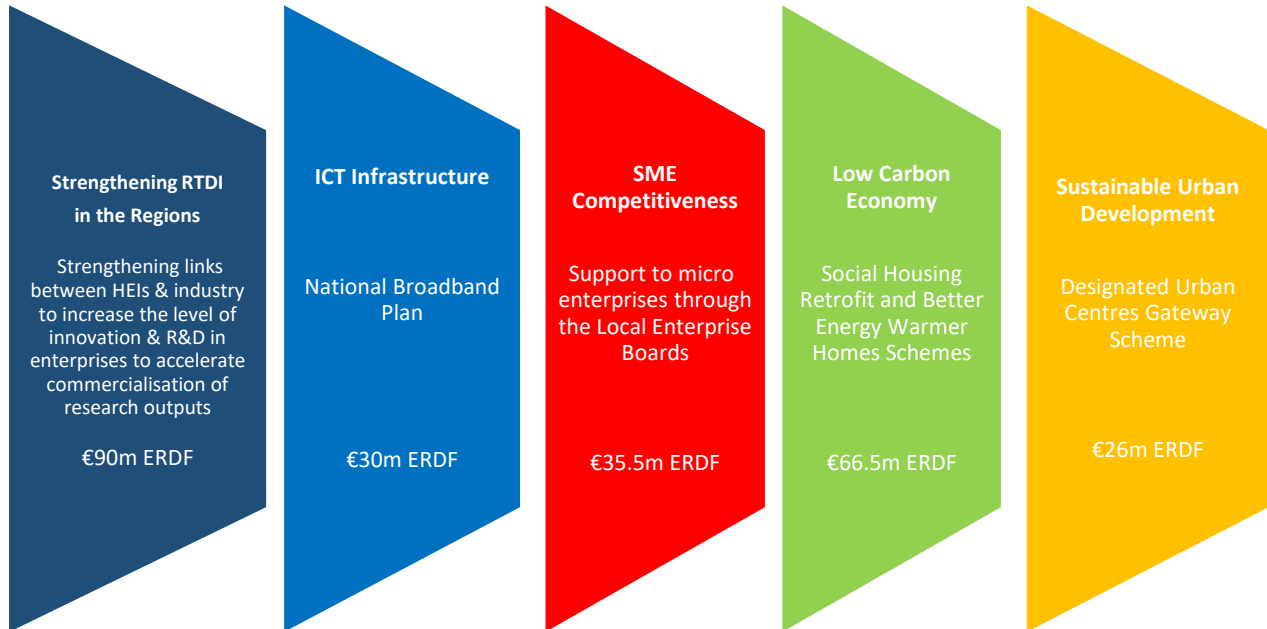
Local Authorities, State Agencies, Universities, Institutes of Technology, Local Enterprise Offices, micro-, medium- and large- sized enterprises. Lists of operations and beneficiaries are updated bi-annually at a minimum on the Southern Regional Assembly website.



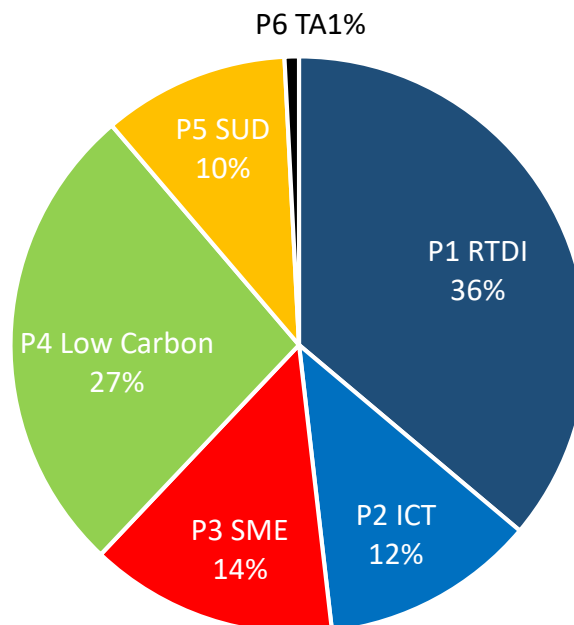
¹ Part of the EU's Cohesion Policy, the European Regional Development Fund aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the Union by correcting imbalances between its regions.

What are the five Programme Priorities?

The S&E ROP 2014-20 is focused on the following funding priorities during the programming period:



€250 million ERDF Allocation by Priority (%)



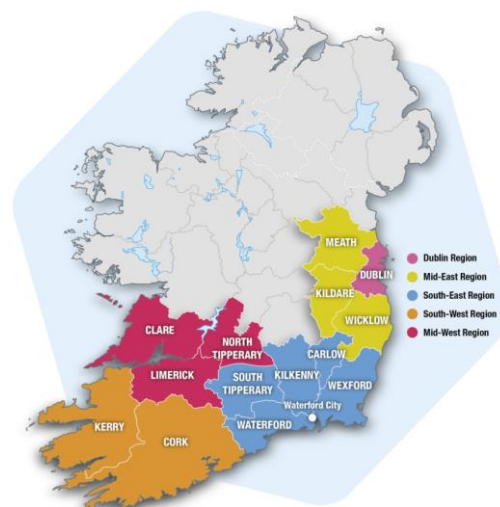
Southern & Eastern Region

The Southern & Eastern region is the eligible area covered by the Programme which is a NUTS II region². The region accounts for 53% of the land area of Ireland, 73% of the population and 81% of GVA.

Local Authority areas in the S&E Region:

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

The S&E region is classified as a 'more developed region' for the 14-20 period, having a GDP per capita above 90% the average GDP of the EU27 over the 2007-09 reference period.



Who is involved in delivering the Programme?

The Irish Government, as set out in the Partnership Agreement for the European Structural & Investment Funds has decided that ERDF funds made available to Ireland under the EU's Multi-Annual Financial Framework 14-20 will be delivered through separate ROPs for the BMW and the S&E Regions.

The Southern Regional Assembly is the designated Managing Authority for the S&E ROP 14-20 and is responsible for its preparation and delivery, in accordance with the Common Provisions Regulation. Ten schemes under the 5 priorities are included in the S&E ROP. They are administered by a variety of departments and state agencies, referred to as Intermediate Bodies:

Priority	Scheme	Intermediate Body
1. RTDI	SFI Research Centres	Science Foundation Ireland
	SFI Spokes Programme	
	Commercialisation Fund	Enterprise Ireland
	Innovation Partnerships	
	Marine Research Programme	Marine Institute
2. ICT Infrastructure	National Broadband Plan	Dept. of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
3. SME Support	Entrepreneurship in Micro-Enterprise	Enterprise Ireland/ Local Enterprise Offices
4. Low Carbon Economy	Better Energy Warmer Homes	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
	Social Housing Retrofit	Dept. of Housing, Planning & Local Government
5. Sustainable Urban Development	Designated Urban Centres	Southern Regional Assembly

² Ireland applied to Eurostat to re-define the NUTS classifications based on revised regional structures arising from reforms of local and regional administration since 2014. The EUROSTAT designation came into being on the 1st January 2018. In compliance with Arts 90 & 99 of the Common Provisions Regulation, the pre-2018 NUTS II classifications were used for programming purposes for the 2014-20 programme period.

Implementation Overview 2018

Declared Eligible Expenditure	€116,007,677
Public Eligible Cost Paid to Beneficiaries	€264,331,058
Total Public Eligible Costs of Operations Selected	€493,650,075
Total Allocation	€500,132,354

World-leading research centres supported	9
New researchers employed in supported entities	758
Industry partners engaging with supported research centres	807
Commercialisation funds awarded	165
Micro-enterprises receiving supports	35,843
Micro-enterprises participating in training programmes	65,893
Employment increase in supported micro-enterprises	3,948
Households with improved energy consumption classification	8,573
Estimated decrease in GHG reduction (tCO ² eq)	42,080
Sustainable urban infrastructure projects approved	9

Priority 1: Strengthening RTDI in the Regions

World-leading research centres supported	9
New researchers employed in supported entities	758
Industry partners engaging with supported research centres	807
Commercialisation funds awarded	165

Priority 1 aims to increase the level of research with company engagement in the S&E region by fostering applied research and increase its commercialisation by the higher education institutions in the S&E region. It does not directly co-fund infrastructure, but seeks to enhance R&I infrastructure and build the capacities to develop R&I excellence while promoting centres of competence. It also has a focus on promoting business investment in R&I through developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector. Priority 1 is aligned with Ireland's priority research areas as set out in the Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3) and is delivered through 5 individual schemes:

Marine Researchers Programme

In 2018, the S&E ROP Monitoring Committee approved a revised implementation plan for the Marine Research Programme which resulted in two ERDF co-funded calls during 2018 and an ERDF co-funding investment of €4.4m.

Managed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine as well as the Marine Institute, the programme funds the marine sector to build new research capability and capacity, enable knowledge and technology transfer, increase competitiveness for sustainable economic growth, protect/ conserve marine resources and awareness of maritime heritage. It also supports activity aimed to enhance visibility and contribution of Irish research to international research efforts and programmes.



Thirteen awards were made under two calls during 2018, €2.4m awarded to 12 projects through the Industry-led Award and 1.6m to one project through the Oceans in a Changing Climate call.

SFI Research Centres Scheme

Managed by Science Foundation Ireland, the scheme develops world-leading, large-scale research centres aligned to the 14 areas of research of the Research Prioritise Exercise for Ireland. The centres partner scientists & engineers with industry to address key research, develop new technology and attract international research talent and capital, support commercialisation and increase the number of researchers employed in industry.

During 2018, Vistamilk became the ninth research centre to be supported by the S&E ROP, along with iForm, Beacon, FutureNeuro, Confirm, CONNECT, ADAPT, LERO and iCRAG.

VistaMilk represents a unique collaboration between Agri-Food and information communications technology, research institutes and leading Irish/multinational food and ICT companies. It aims to become a world leading SFI Research Centre for innovative precision pasture-based dairying.

Leading the Agri-Food technology sector through innovation & enhanced sustainability across the dairy supply chain. Led by Teagasc Moorepark in Cork, the SFI Research Centre includes research partners from DCU, NUI Galway, Waterford Institute of Technology/TSSG, the Tyndall National Institute, and UCD.



Drs Sinead McParland, Emer Kennedy and Deirdre Hennessy - Funded Investigators and Targeted Project leads

Spokes Programme

Also managed by Science Foundation Ireland, the scheme promotes further development of existing SFI Research Centres to incorporate new areas of research, new industry and academic collaborators aligned to the 14 areas of research identified in the Research Prioritise Exercise for Ireland. There were 16 awards in the S&E region up to 2018 making it on track to achieve the final target of 25 under the S&E ROP. This highlights the research centres performance and the willingness of new industry partners to engage with the research centres.

Commercialisation Fund

Managed by Enterprise Ireland, the scheme supports researchers in the fields of science and engineering in third level institutions and research-performing organisations in applied research projects that generate outputs to benefit the Irish economy. The programme has two levels of funding - Commercial Case Feasibility to support scoping the commercial case for the innovation/project idea, and Commercialisation Fund support - to develop the innovation for commercialisation. Up to the end of 2018, 165 Commercialisation Fund awards were granted to S&E institutions worth €31 million. Twenty project approvals under the Bi-annual Published Calls process (14 under the invited rolling application process). There have also been 41 Commercial Case Feasibility approvals – total funding awarded to S&E institutions in 2018 was €592,351 plus overheads.

Innovation Partnership Programme

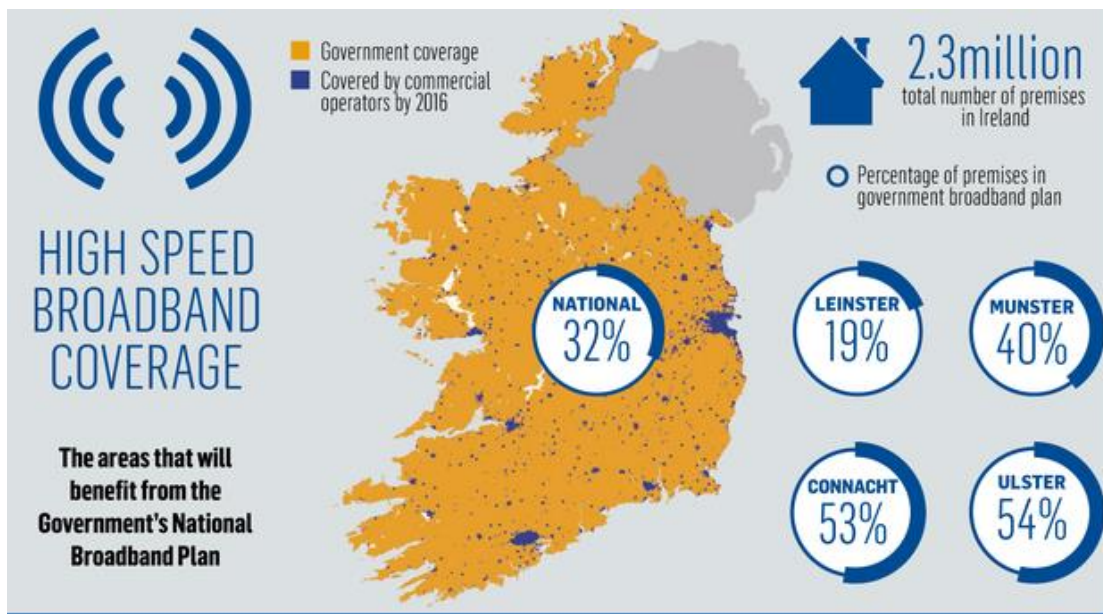
Managed by Enterprise Ireland, the scheme encourages Irish-based companies to work with Irish research institutes resulting in mutually beneficial cooperation. Companies access expertise and resources to develop new and improved products, processes, services, and generate new knowledge/ expertise. Up to the end of 2018, a total of 265 companies in the S&E region had received approval for funding and 105 had completed their projects. The scheme is well on track to meet its final target of 143 companies receiving support.

Priority 2: ICT Infrastructure

Priority 2 aims to increase the provision of high-speed broadband to all unserved settlements in the S&E region 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 (NBP). It is foreseen that a min. of 30 mbps of broadband at current market rates will be delivered by the scheme.

The NBP reflects Government objectives to deliver new opportunities for jobs, growth and social inclusion and aims to underpin and support wider public policy objectives and initiatives both nationally and within the European context. The ROP scheme contributes to the NBP which is managed by the Department of Communications, Climate Action & the Environment.

While there has been no expenditure under Priority 2 to date, it has met its implementation milestone with the launch of procurement process to award contract. Subject to the successful completion of the final contractual stage, the Department has confirmed that all target output indicators will be met.



Source: www.broadband.gov.ie

Priority 3: SME Competitiveness

Micro-enterprises receiving supports	35,843
Micro-enterprises participating in training programmes	65,893
Employment increase in supported micro-enterprises	3,948

Delivered through Enterprise Ireland and the 18 Local Enterprise Offices in the region, Priority 3 aims to increase employment levels in micro-enterprises and SMEs in the S&E region by supporting business start-ups, expansion and higher innovation levels in enterprises.

It seeks to promote entrepreneurship, in particular by facilitating the economic exploitation of new ideas and fostering the creation of new firms, including through business incubators.

Supports include the provision of business information, advisory services, capacity building, mentoring and financial supports.

Progress has been consistently strong in 2018 with employment increasing in supported enterprises to 3,948, and almost 66,000 micro-enterprises participating in training programmes covering a variety of topics including, Brexit and Lean practices.

Support from the S&E ROP also assists the Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur competition (IBYE), an Action Plan for Jobs action to target young entrepreneurs aged 18-35.



Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur, Conor O Loughlin of Glofox, Best Start-Up Business won by Alan Hickey of WeBringg, and Best Business Idea won by Brendan Boland of Loci Orthopaedics

Priority 4: Low Carbon Economy

Households with improved energy consumption classification	8,573
Estimated decrease in GHG reduction (tCO ₂ eq)	42,080

Priority 4 aims to contribute to meeting Ireland's commitments in relation to its Europe 2020 carbon reduction targets by improving energy efficiency in the housing stock in the S&E region. It focuses on supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructures, including in public buildings and the housing sector. Priority 4 is delivered through two schemes:

Better Energy Warmer Homes

Managed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, this scheme aims to improve the energy efficiency of the household at risk of poverty and reduce the amount of expenditure required for energy. A secondary objective is to improve the health and well-being of citizens by reducing the amount of disposable income spent on energy.

Social Housing Retrofit & Social Apartments

Managed by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, this scheme aims to meet Ireland's carbon reduction commitments and energy reduction targets under Europe 2020 through the implementation of energy efficiency measures in buildings. It targets both large apartment complexes in the major cities of the S&E region and conventional local authority housing schemes across the region which have a poor building energy rating.

Activity under both schemes is strong. The financial milestone for Priority 4 has been achieved. The programme target for GHG reduction has been exceeded. The milestone value for the number of households with improved energy consumption classification has been achieved.

Priority 5: Sustainable Urban Development

Sustainable urban infrastructure projects approved | 9

Priority 5 aims to revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment in the designated urban centres as part of the integrated urban strategies and to support low carbon strategies for sustainable, multimodal urban mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures in designated urban centres.

Under this priority, the Designated Urban Centre Grants Scheme is delivered by the Southern Regional Assembly. Local Authorities for the designated growth centres in the S&E region submitted projects which fit with their integrated strategies to tackle the social, economic, environmental, climate and demographic challenges affecting urban centres, in accordance with Art. 7 of Reg (EU) 1301/2013, and which support the development strategy for the urban area concerned.

Nine projects have been selected with a total allocation of €26m ERDF which align with the integrated growth strategies of their respective areas. The public realm works in Waterford City were completed in 2018 while significant progress was made on works in Cork (Mary Elmes Bridge, Marina Park, Mallow Bridge Pedestrian Extension), Dublin (Swords Castle, Dun Laoghaire Baths), Wexford (Crescent Quay) and Clare (Ennis Town Library and Shannon Town Park). The funding is fully allocated under Priority 5 and while progress on some of the projects is slower than expected, these projects will ramp up considerably during 2019-2020.

Gateway	Hub	Project	ERDF Allocation
Waterford		Public realm works, incl. Apple Market	€4m
Cork		Mary Elmes Bridge	€5m
		Marina Park	
Dublin		Swords Castle	€7m
		Dodder Greenway	
		Dun Laoghaire Baths	
		Liffey Street Area Public Realm	
Limerick		Limerick - Patrick Street	€4.5m
		Shannon Town Park	
	Wexford	Crescent Quay Redevelopment	€1m
	Ennis	Ennis Library	€1m
	Mallow	Mallow Bridge Pedestrian Extension	€1m
	Tralee	Island of Geese	€1.5m
	Kilkenny	Redevelopment of Abbey Quarter	€1m

Priority 6: Technical Assistance

The Technical Assistance Priority covers the management and control activities of the Southern Regional Assembly in its capacity as Managing Authority of the S&E ROP. Expenditure on these activities for 2018 was €247,722.

Activities during 2018 focused on roll out and implementation of the 2014-20 eCohesion IT system which was developed by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and Provident. During 2018 the Managing Authority was heavily involved in the testing and rollout of the new eCohesion system and held a joint training event for all Intermediate Bodies and the Local Enterprise Offices. It also provided advice and guidance to users and has developed and circulated detailed IT user manuals.

The Managing Authority also published a searchable and downloadable list of operations funded by the S&E ROP 14-20 on its website following certification of expenditure in compliance with Article 115.2 of Commission Regulation 1303/2013.

The Managing Authority engaged publicity activities during 2018 to highlight the ERDF in the S&E region, such as presentations to outside bodies, publications, online activities and media releases.

The highlight of the year involved the “When Science Met Business” event which took place in Waterford in association with the Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference. The event showcased how EU funding supports collaborations between research and industry to strengthen the innovation dividend of the S&E region, a core objective of the S&E ROP 14-20.

It created a forum for researchers and industry to explore the potential for mutually beneficial collaborations and highlighted exciting joint research-industry projects funded by the S&E ROP 14-20. This event was part of the #euinmyregion campaign which is coordinated by DG Regio.

The MA returned to the National Ploughing Championships to share good news stories of projects funded by the S&E ROP. The biggest outdoor event in Europe, the Ploughing has proven to be a very effective way to reach citizens, also as part of the #euinmyregion campaign.

Kindly hosted by the European Commission Representation in Ireland, the Assembly joined a wide array of EU colleagues to promote the benefits of EU membership to Ireland.

The MA was delighted to contribute to *45 Stories*, the European Commission’s travelling exhibition of the ways that EU membership has benefitted Ireland over the past 45 years. It told the story of the re-establishment of Waterford Crystal in Waterford City in 2010, with €2.76m ERDF grant assistance from the ROP 07-13.



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Useful Links

European Structural and Investment Funds in Ireland 2014-2020

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

EU Regulations:

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

S&E ROP Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020:

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

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

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

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statement

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

Partnership Agreement Ireland 1 January 2014 – 31 December 2020:

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

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