

Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014 - 2020

Executive Summary



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



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

SOUTHERN
Regional Assembly
Promoting our Region



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1. A New Investment Programme for the Region

This is the third Regional Operational Programme (ROP) for the Southern and Eastern (S&E) Region. A funding package of around €500 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Irish exchequer will be invested in the region over the programme period. The ERDF aims to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions. Along with the other funds that form the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), the ERDF seeks to contribute to the Union's strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in an effort to address regional imbalances.

Investment will be concentrated on research and innovation, information and communication technologies (ICT) infrastructure, entrepreneurship in small and medium- sized enterprises (SMEs) and promoting a low-carbon economy as required by the regulations. In addition the programme provides for an increased focus on sustainable urban development.

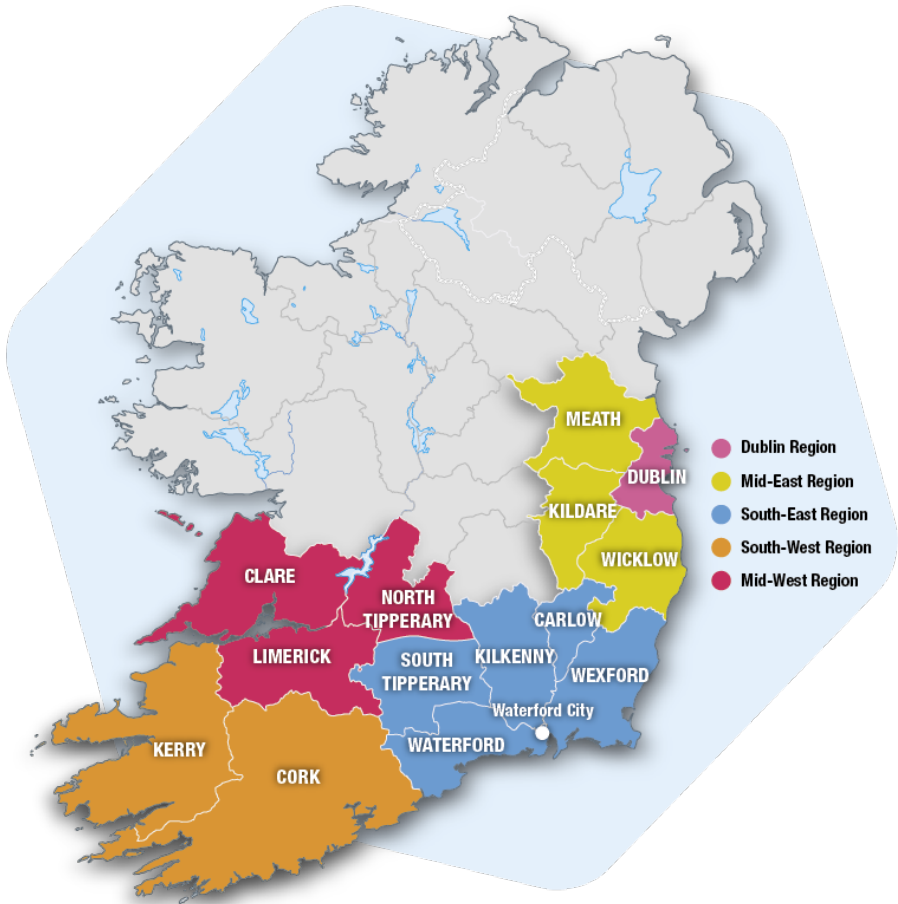
1.1 Definition of the Southern and Eastern region

The Southern and Eastern (S&E) Region which is a NUTS II region is the eligible area for this programme. The region accounts for 53% of the land area of Ireland, 73% of the population and 81% of GVA.

The region is formed by Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, South Dublin; Cork City & County, Kerry; Kildare, Meath, Wicklow; Clare, Limerick City & County, Tipperary; Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford City & County, Wexford.



Map of the S&E Region



Source: S&E Regional Assembly

This booklet provides a brief overview of the programme which was approved by the EU Commission in December 2014.



2. How was the S&E ROP developed?

An analysis of the needs of the region coupled with a process of consultations with a wide range of partners and stakeholders helped informed the design of the programme. Its development was guided by the available financial resources set within parameters of the EU regulatory requirements.

2.1 Programme funding

The Southern Regional Assembly is designated as the Managing Authority for the €500 million investment programme. This represents an increase of over 35% on financial allocation for the 2007-2013 ROP.

The aim of the programme is to promote sustainable, smart growth, create jobs and strengthen the innovation and knowledge base of the region.

2.2 EU Regulatory Requirements

EU legislation which sets out the objectives for the ERDF can be articulated as seeking to reinforce economic, social and territorial cohesion by redressing the main regional imbalances in the Union.

These general long-term goals are given more detailed expression in the 11 Thematic Objectives to facilitate Member States in adopting a common approach to design of their programmes. The thematic objectives that Member States must have regard to are:

1. strengthening research, technological development and innovation;
2. enhancing access to, and use and quality of ICT;
3. enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs;
4. supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors;
5. promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management;



6. preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency;
7. promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures;
8. promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility;
9. promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination;
10. investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure; and
11. enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration

In turn each thematic objective identifies specific areas for intervention known as investment priorities. Specific schemes may impact over a number of focus areas.

As Ireland's regions are classified as 'more developed' the regulation prescribes at least 80% of the ERDF allocation has to focus on the first 4 Thematic Objectives. Hence the programme focuses on a limited number of priorities (thematic concentration).

The S&E ROP was framed in the context of national policies as well as the EU regulatory requirements. For example the programme is consistent with the National Research Prioritisation Exercise which provides the template for public investment in research and development directed at economic outcomes. The National Broadband Plan identifies investment in the infrastructure required to deliver universal high speed broadband as a pivotal factor in the achievement of Ireland's economic and social objectives. The preparation of the programme followed several key overlapping stages, with attention paid to the partnership principle at every stage, taking into account the experience and performance of previous programmes.



2.3 Analysis and Consultation

The preparation for the S&E ROP involved a detailed analysis of the needs of the region, this study was undertaken jointly with the Border, Midland and Western (BMW) Regional Assembly and the Department of Education & Skills (ESF Managing Authority), with the expert assistance of the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA), Maynooth University and the Limerick Institute of Technology.

In accordance with the partnership principle, the S&E ROP was prepared in co-operation with a wide range of partners and stakeholders as required under Article 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation and the 'Code of Conduct on Partnership'.

The consultation steps included:

- The first phase of the preparation process was the issuing of a consultation paper to all identified stakeholders in April 2013;
- From February to November 2013 meetings were held with relevant Government Departments and State 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 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;
- The final draft of the S&E Regional 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;



- An ex-ante evaluation incorporating a Strategic Environmental Analysis of the proposed measures was conducted by independent, external evaluators. This process included further stakeholder consultation.

The strategy and content of the draft Programme was informed by the submissions received through the consultation process and by the analysis of the needs of the region.



3. Priority Axes

Priority 1: Strengthening RTDI in the S & E Region

Strengthening Research, Technological Development and Innovation

Specific Objectives:

To increase the level of research taking place in the S&E region with company engagement by supplying applied research; and

To increase the level of commercialisation of research by the higher education institutions in the S&E region.

This priority seeks to enhance research and innovation (R&I) infrastructure and to build the capacities to develop R&I excellence while promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest;

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. In particular it seeks to promote investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, ecoinnovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation.

The results that this priority seeks to achieve are:

- To increase the number of industry partners engaged with funded strategic research centres in the S&E region
- Increase in the annual number of licenses as a result of research in the S&E Region
- To increase the number of new researchers in supported entities



- To increase the number of commercialisation fund awards

Intermediate Bodies and schemes

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)

- SFI Research Centres Scheme

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. The Centres will 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.

- SFI Spokes Programme

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 aligned with 14 priority areas of research identified in the Research Prioritisation Exercise

Marine Institute

- Marine Research Programme

The objective of the Marine Research Programme is to provide funding to the marine sector in Ireland that will:

- build new research capacity and capability;
- enable sharing of existing knowledge and technology transfer;
- increase competitiveness and opportunities for sustainable



economic growth;

- protect and conserve marine resources;
- inform public policy; and
- increase public awareness of our maritime heritage.

Enterprise Ireland

- Commercialisation Fund Scheme

The objective of the Commercialisation Fund Scheme is to foster and grow a dynamic and commercially aware research community and to create an environment that promotes entrepreneurship. In so doing an accessible route to commercialisation is established for the transfer of knowledge from the research base into industry.

- 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.





Priority 2: Information and Communication Technologies

Enhancing access to, and use, and quality of ICT

Specific Objectives:

To increase the provision of fibre optic links to all un-served settlements in the S&E Region.

This priority seeks to extend broadband deployment and the roll-out of high-speed networks while supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy.

The results this Priority seeks to achieve are:

An increase in the number of settlements with high-speed next generation broadband in the S&E Region (households in the settlements should have access to broadband speeds of 30Mbps at a minimum).

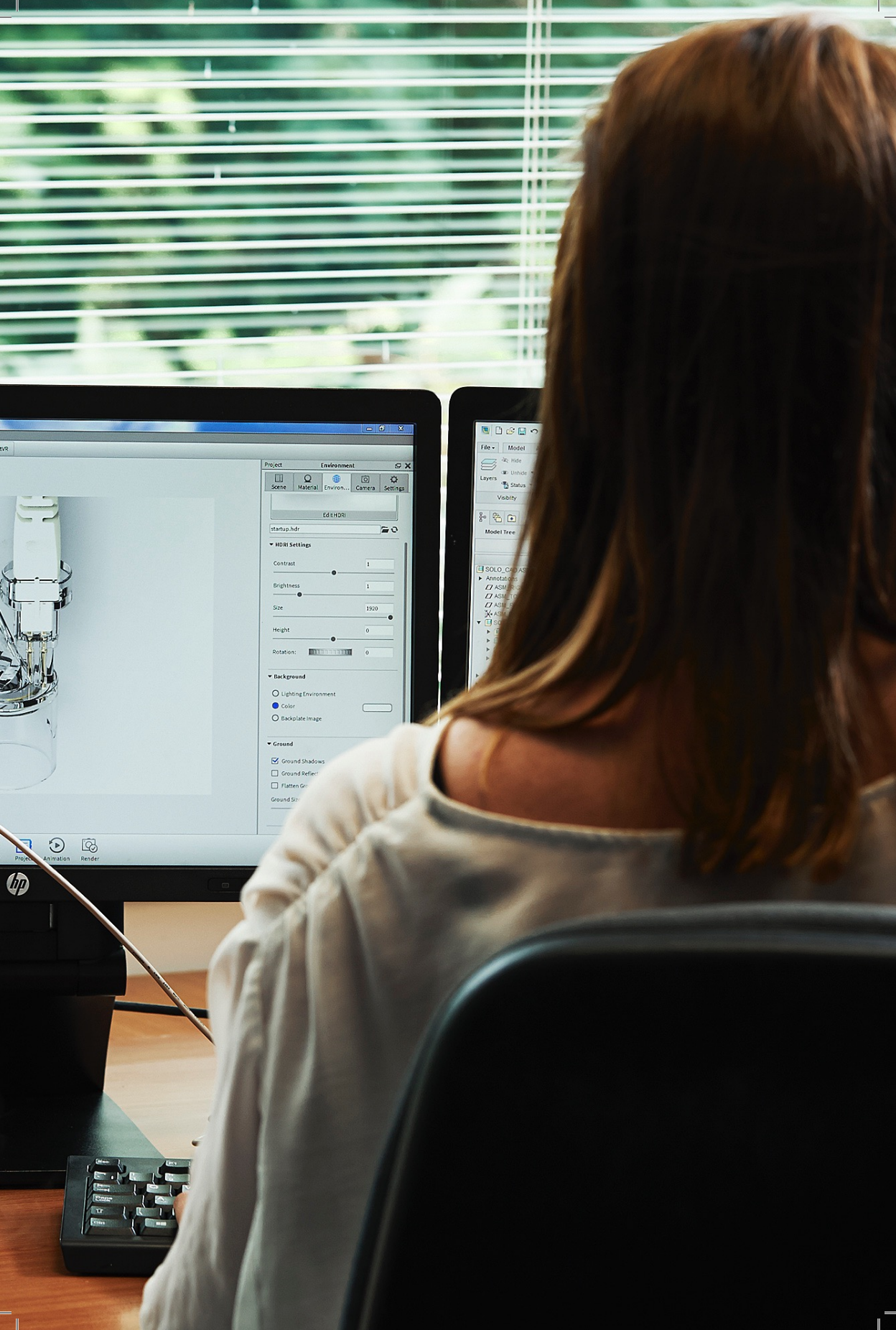
Intermediate Body and scheme

Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

- National Broadband Plan

To overcome identified gaps in the provision of high speed broadband services and consequently harness the potential development opportunities afforded by high speed connectivity in terms of growth, competitiveness, entrepreneurship, jobs and social inclusion. Provision of the enabling infrastructure will ensure that the benefits of the digital economy will be evenly spread and will allow all citizens and businesses to participate fully in, and maximise the benefits of, a digitally enabled economy and society.





Priority 3: SME Support, Promotion and Capability Development

Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs

Specific Objectives:

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.

This Priority 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.

The results this Priority seeks to achieve is:

To increase employment in micro enterprises in S&E Region

Intermediate Body and scheme

Enterprise Ireland

- Entrepreneurship in Micro-Enterprise

The specific objective of this priority is 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.

This investment priority will be delivered by the Local Enterprise Offices and 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.





Priority 4: Low Carbon Economy

Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors in the S&E region

Specific Objectives:

To improve energy efficiency in the housing stock

This Priority focuses on supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructures, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector.

The results this Priority seeks to achieve are:

To improve the average thermal performance of households in the S&E Region

Contribute to the annual decrease of GHG in Ireland.

Intermediate Bodies and schemes

Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

- Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme

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. This scheme is run by the



Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland on behalf of the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

Department of Environment, Community and Local Government

- Social Housing Retrofit

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 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.

The scheme will apply to social housing in public ownership across all local authorities in the S&E region.





Priority 5: Sustainable Urban Development

Preserving and Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency

Specific Objectives:

To revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment in the designated urban centres as part of integrated urban strategies;

To support low carbon sustainable, multimodal urban mobility in designated urban centres.

This Priority will take 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.

It also seeks to promote 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.

The results this Priority seeks to achieve:

An improvement in the social, economic and physical conditions in selected urban centres, based on an urban development index; and

Increase non-private car commuting levels in the designated urban centres.

Intermediate Body and scheme

Southern Regional Assembly

- Designated Urban Centres Grant Scheme

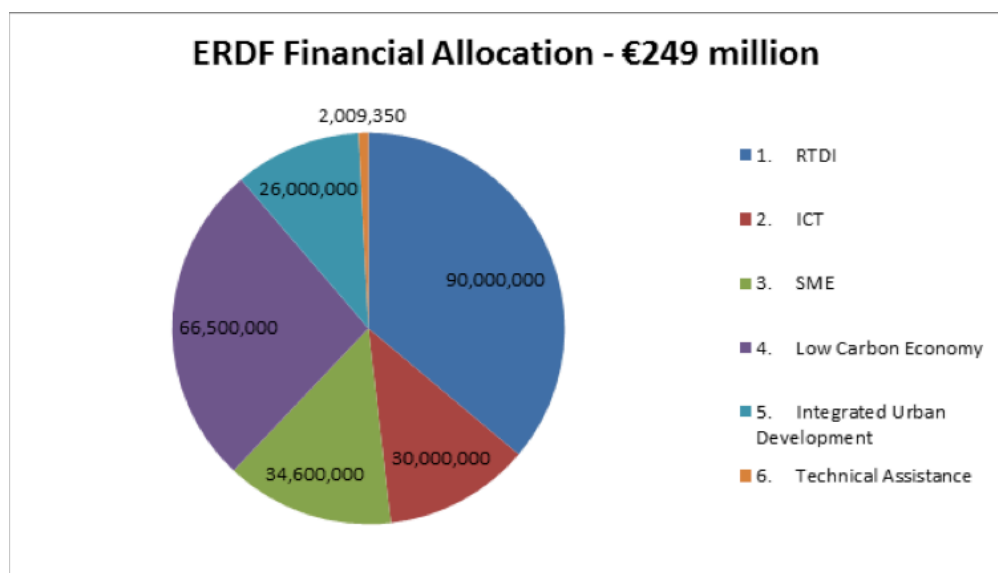


To increase the number of integrated urban regeneration initiatives to improve the urban environment and revitalise urban areas and to support low carbon sustainable, multimodal urban mobility in designated urban centres in the S&E Region.

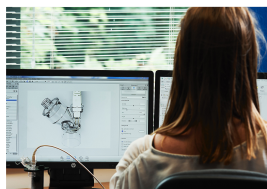




4. Financial Allocation



Notes



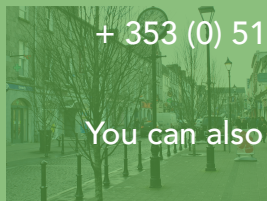
For further information and to download the Citizens' Summary of the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 please visit our website:

<http://www.southernassembly.ie>



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