

# Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme

## Annual Implementation Report 2019

### Citizens' Summary



The Southern & Eastern Regional Programme 2014-20 is an approx. €500 million package of funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and national funding.

The Programme is delivered in the eligible area of the Southern & Eastern NUTS II region of Ireland. The region accounts for 53% of the land area of Ireland, 73% of the population, and 81% of GVA.

The Programme funds activities under five priority areas to improve our quality of life and contribute to Ireland's Europe 2020 targets for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Funding beneficiaries include public sector, academic and private sector organisations in the region.



	Strengthening RTDI
	ICT Infrastructure
	SME Competitiveness
	Low Carbon Economy
	Sustainable Urban Development

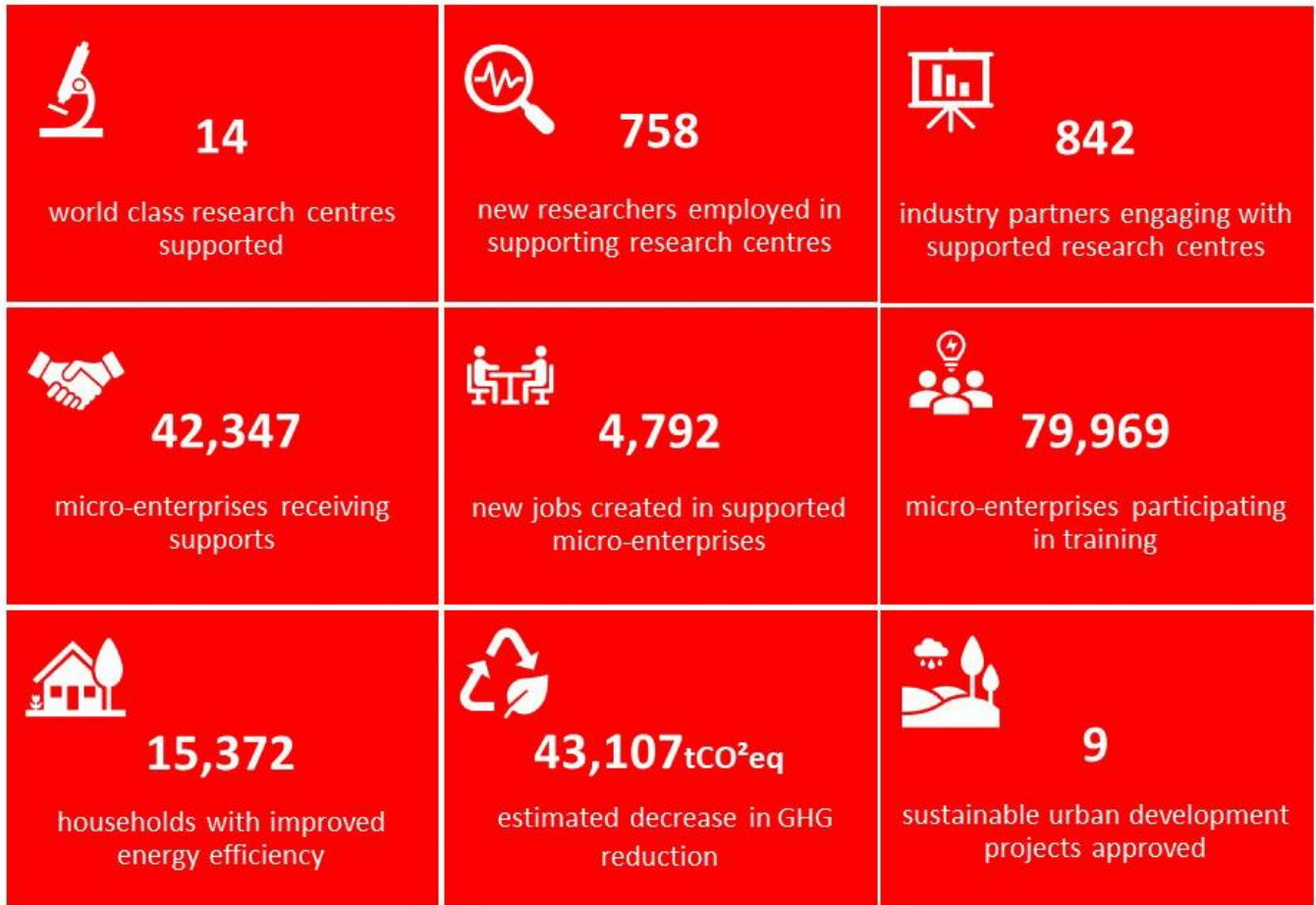
The Southern Regional Assembly is the Managing Authority of the programme, and activities are rolled out by a variety of public organisations, called Intermediary Bodies.

The ERDF co-funds activities with the aim to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the EU by correcting imbalances between its regions.

**This report focuses on progress to the end of 2019. Activity predates the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

# Progress on Targets to 2019

The Programme is progressing well across all priorities and is either achieving or exceeding its targets. The selection rate, outputs and reported expenditure by the Intermediary Bodies is high.



Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority by the end of 2019 was €150,392,353 representing 30% of the total programme allocation.



# Priority 1: Strengthening RTDI

Increasing the level of research with company engagement in the S&E region by fostering applied research and increasing the number of companies undertaking industry R&D.

 <p><b>14</b> world class research centres supported</p>	 <p><b>758</b> new researchers employed in supported research centres (target: 719)</p>	 <p><b>842</b> industry partners engaging with supported research centres (baseline: 529)</p>
 <p><b>247</b> Commercialisation Fund Awards (target: 325)</p>	 <p><b>21</b> Marine Research Awards (target: 21)</p>	 <p><b>19</b> Spokes Programme Awards (target: 25)</p>

## Marine Researchers Programme Intermediary Body: Marine Institute

The scheme supports the marine sector to build new research capacity and technology transfer, increase competitiveness for sustainable economic growth, protect/ conserve marine resources, awareness of maritime heritage, and enhance visibility Irish research internationally. The scheme has reached its target of 21 marine research awards.

## Commercialisation Fund Intermediate Body: Enterprise Ireland

The scheme supports science and engineering researchers in third level institutions and research organisations in applied research projects that generate outputs to benefit the Irish economy. It has two funding levels - Commercial Case Feasibility to support scoping the commercial case for the innovation/project ideas, and Commercialisation Fund to develop innovation for commercialisation. The scheme has made 247 commercialisation fund awards so far.

## Innovation Partnership Programme Intermediate Body: 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. This scheme reported a total of 842 industry partners engaging with Irish research institutes.

## SFI Research Centres Scheme

Intermediate Body: Science Foundation Ireland

The scheme develops world-leading, large-scale research centres that partner researchers with industry to develop new technology, attract international research capital, support commercialisation and increase the number of researchers employed in industry.

***The VistaMilk Research Centre is a unique collaboration between Agri-Food and ICT, higher education and research institutes, and leading food and ICT companies.***

***Vistamilk aims to positively impact the environment, animal well-being and the health of consumers, lead the agri-food technology sector in Ireland through innovation and enhanced sustainability across the dairy supply chain.***



***Internationally, the advances developed at Vistamilk will apply to dairy systems in many countries and will be a catalyst for global growth in the Agri-Tech sector. This is being achieved by greatly improving the soil to gut supply chain connectivity, thereby improving resource efficiency, better meeting consumers' expectations and improving profitability and resilience.***

***Vistamilk is facilitating the development and deployment of new knowledge, new technologies and new decision support tools to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire dairy production chain.***

***Research is being performed by Teagasc, Dublin City University, NUI Galway, Telecommunications Software and Systems Group at Waterford Institute of Technology, the Tyndall National Institute, and University College Dublin.***

## Spokes Programme

Intermediary Body: Science Foundation Ireland

The scheme promotes further development of SFI Research Centres to incorporate new research areas, industry and academic collaborators aligned to the Research Prioritise Exercise for Ireland. The scheme has made 19 awards to date.



## Priority 2: ICT Infrastructure

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.

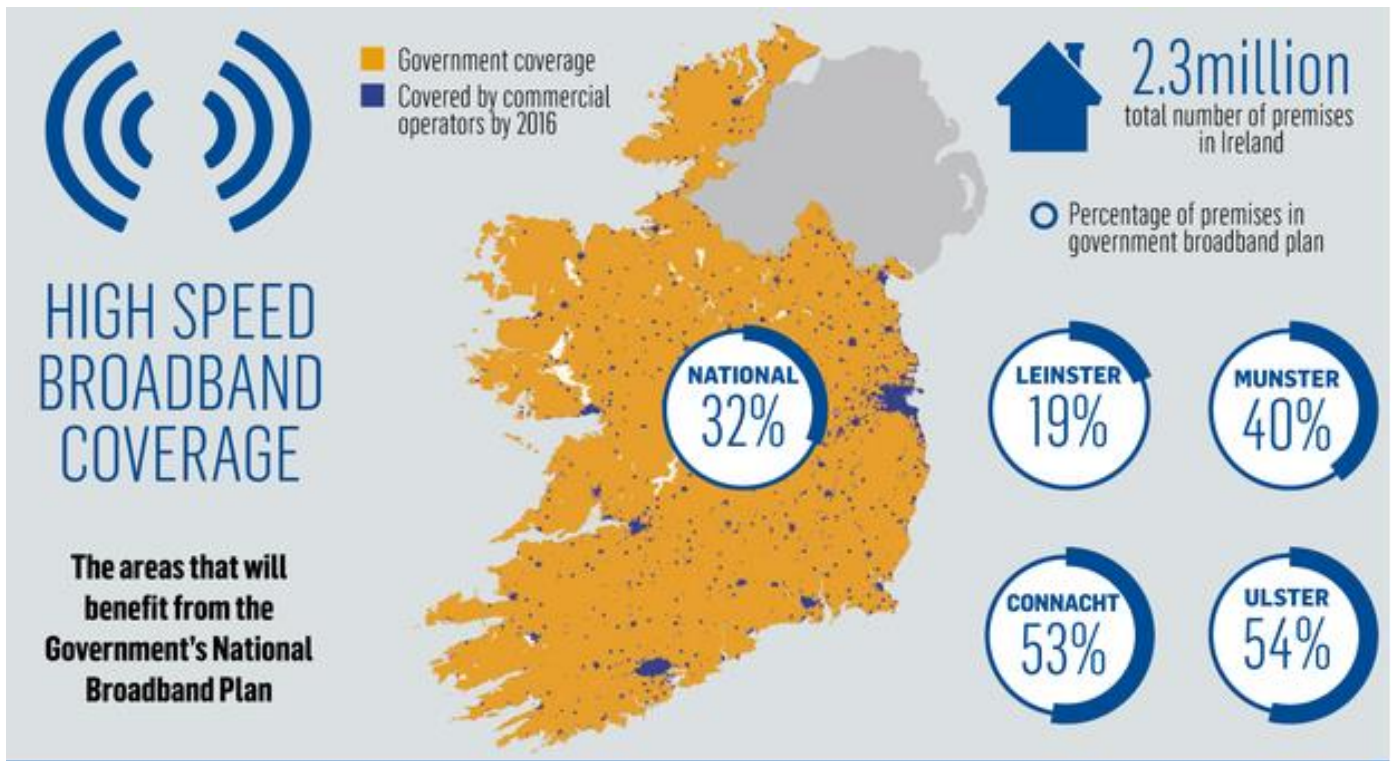
### National Broadband Plan

Intermediary Body: Department of Communications, Climate Action & the Environment

The National Broadband Plan (NBP) was published in 2012 to facilitate the widespread availability of reliable and guaranteed high speed broadband throughout the country. It reflects the Government's objective to deliver new opportunities for jobs, growth and social inclusion and to support wider public policy objectives and initiatives both nationally and within the European context.

Despite no expenditure under Priority 2, it has met its implementation milestone with the launch of procurement process to award contract. In May 2019 the Government approved a recommendation to confer Preferred Bidder status on Granahan McCourt.

In November 2019, the European Commission announced their decision to grant state aid approval to the NBP and the Government signed the contract.



# Priority 3: SME Competitiveness

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.



Intermediate Body: Enterprise Ireland & the 18 Local Enterprise Offices in the S&E region

For the fifth consecutive year, there has been employment growth for businesses supported by Local Enterprise Offices. Enterprise Ireland reported a cumulative increase in employment in supported enterprises in the S&E region for the period 2014 to 2019 of 4,792 amounting to 83% of the Programme’s target.

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

*Established in 2016, Shadetech in Shannon, Co Clare manufactures manual and automated blinds and screening systems for both residential and commercial markets.*

*Exporting to over 200 companies in the UK every month, it received numerous supports from LEO Clare, including Business Priming and Expansion Grants, which have allowed them to employ more staff and purchase machinery to grow their business.*

[www.shadetech.ie](http://www.shadetech.ie)



# Priority 4: Low Carbon Economy

To contribute to Ireland’s commitment in relation to its Europe 2020 carbon reduction targets by improving energy efficiency in the housing stock in the S&E region.



Priority 4 supports energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy in public buildings and the housing sector through two schemes.

## Better Energy Warmer Homes

Intermediate Body: Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland

The scheme delivered energy efficiency improvements to 1,973 households in the S&E region in 2019. Those households could avail of the expansion of the wall insulation measures to include internal and external wall insulation as standard (rather than just cavity wall insulation). This deeper retrofit approach is more expensive but yields greater energy efficiency improvements per household.

This scheme aims to improve the energy efficiency of the household at risk of poverty, reduce the amount of expenditure required for energy, and also to improve health and well-being by reducing the amount of disposable income spent on energy.



## Social Housing Retrofit

Intermediate Body: Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government

This scheme is delivered through the 17 local authorities in the S&E region. They reported that 980 housing units were completed under the Retrofitting of Vacant Social Housing Stock Programme and 1,208 units were completed under the Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme in 2019.

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 major cities and conventional local authority housing schemes across the region which have a poor building energy rating.



# Priority 5: Sustainable Urban Development

To revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment in the designated urban centres as part of the integrated urban strategies and support low carbon strategies for sustainable, urban multi-modal mobility and mitigation-relevant adaptation measures in designated urban centres.



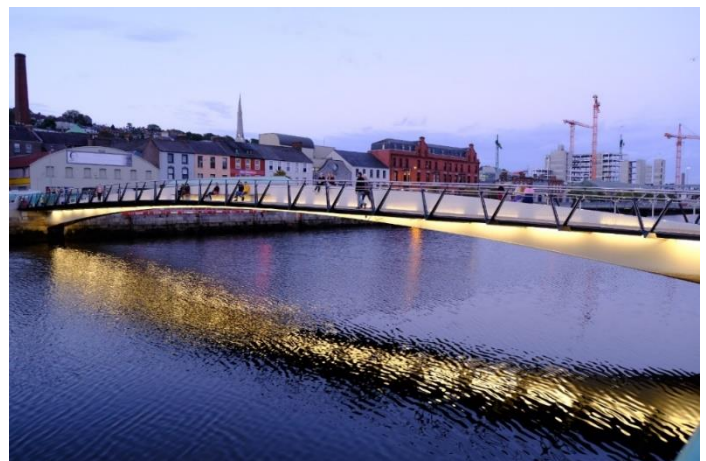
Intermediary Body: Southern Regional Assembly

Local authorities in the S&E region submitted projects which support their strategies to tackle social, economic, environmental, climate and demographic challenges affecting urban centres, in accordance with Art. 7 of Reg (EU) 1301/2013. Nine projects were selected totalling €26m ERDF.

Many projects have progressed well during 2019. The public realm works completed include the Apple Market in Waterford, the Mary Elmes Bridge in Cork City, and Shannon Town Park in Clare and the Crescent Quay in Wexford Town. Other projects making good progress toward completion include Marina Park in Cork City, Mallow Bridge pedestrian extension in Cork County, Swords Castle and Dun Laoghaire Baths in Dublin, and Ennis Town Library in Clare.

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

*The Mary Elmes Bridge in Cork City has delivered much-needed pedestrian and cycle access through in the heart of Cork City - from the Victorian Quarter, known for its lively culture of music, entertainment, restaurants and bars, to Patrick Street which is the main shopping area - for up to 11,000 people daily.*



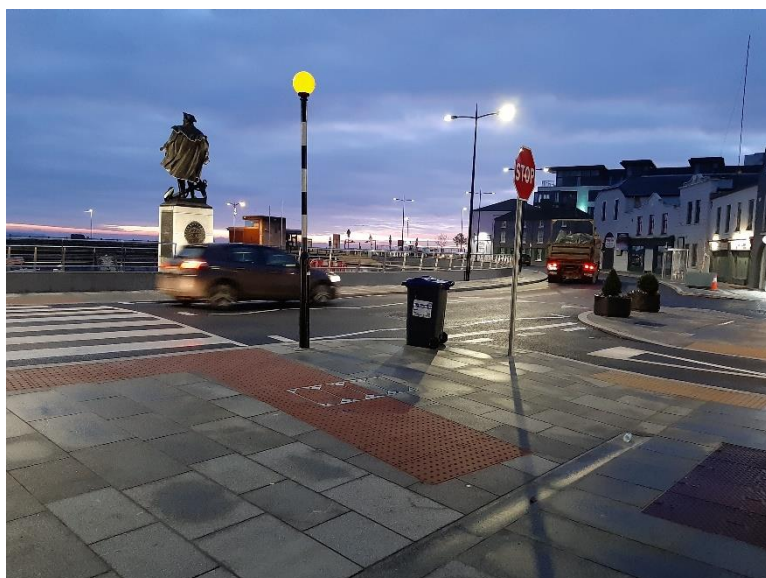


*Shannon Town Park in County Clare contributes to the recreational amenities of Shannon Town and the revitalisation and regeneration of the urban environment in the designated urban centre of Shannon as part of an integrated urban design strategy.*



*The Park caters for the whole community and includes formal footpaths and cycle track, an adventure play area, a cycle pump track, formal and accessible seating areas, picnic areas, lighting and signage, the creation of a natural water feature, all surrounded by new native woodland planting.*

*Wexford County Council is maximising ERDF co-funding to transform the landmark **Crescent Quay in Wexford Town** into a more active commercial and multi-modal public space for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors alike.*



*This €2.2m project, €1.1m from the ERDF and the balance from the Council, has also enhanced connectivity with the Main Street, Trinity Wharf and the Quay.*

*Crescent Quay is home to a statue of Commodore John Barry who was born in County Wexford and is considered the father of the American Navy. EU-supported sustainable urban development works such as Crescent Quay aligns well with the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy objective to improve the attractiveness of Wexford Town centre and ultimately deliver on the goals of Project Ireland 2040.*

# Technical Assistance

To support the management and control of activities of the Managing Authority



As Managing Authority, we continued to work in close partnership with the various Intermediate Bodies and the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform on programme implementation. A searchable and downloadable list of operations funded by the Programme was published on the MA website on three occasions during 2019 following certification of expenditure. An independent Mid-term Evaluation of the Programme was presented to the Monitoring Committee in June 2019.



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



The EU tent was very popular, with a lot of interest in information about the benefit of EU membership. We spotted a few of our research centres and Intermediary Bodies at the event and met with some of our recently elected MEPs.



Tionól Réigiúnach an Deiscirt  
Southern Regional Assembly

## Southern Regional Assembly

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**European Union**  
European Regional  
Development Fund

### Links for further information

[S&E ROP Regional Operational Programme 2014-20](#)

[European Structural and Investment Funds in Ireland 2014-20](#)

[Partnership Agreement Ireland 2014-20](#)

[EU Regulations](#)