



Tionól Réigiúnach an Deiscirt
Southern Regional Assembly

CORPORATE PLAN 2020 - 2024



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

This Corporate Plan 2020-24 is our strategic framework for action that will deliver for the Southern Region.

It explains our place within the regional tier of government.

It outlines our responsibility in relation to regional spatial planning and economic development and details our role in supporting balanced regional development through EU programme and project management.

It considers how we will maximise the resources available to us to deliver within these two intertwined remits against the backdrop of global events.



Goals

Regional Leadership
Valuing Our People
Promoting Sustainable
Regional Development

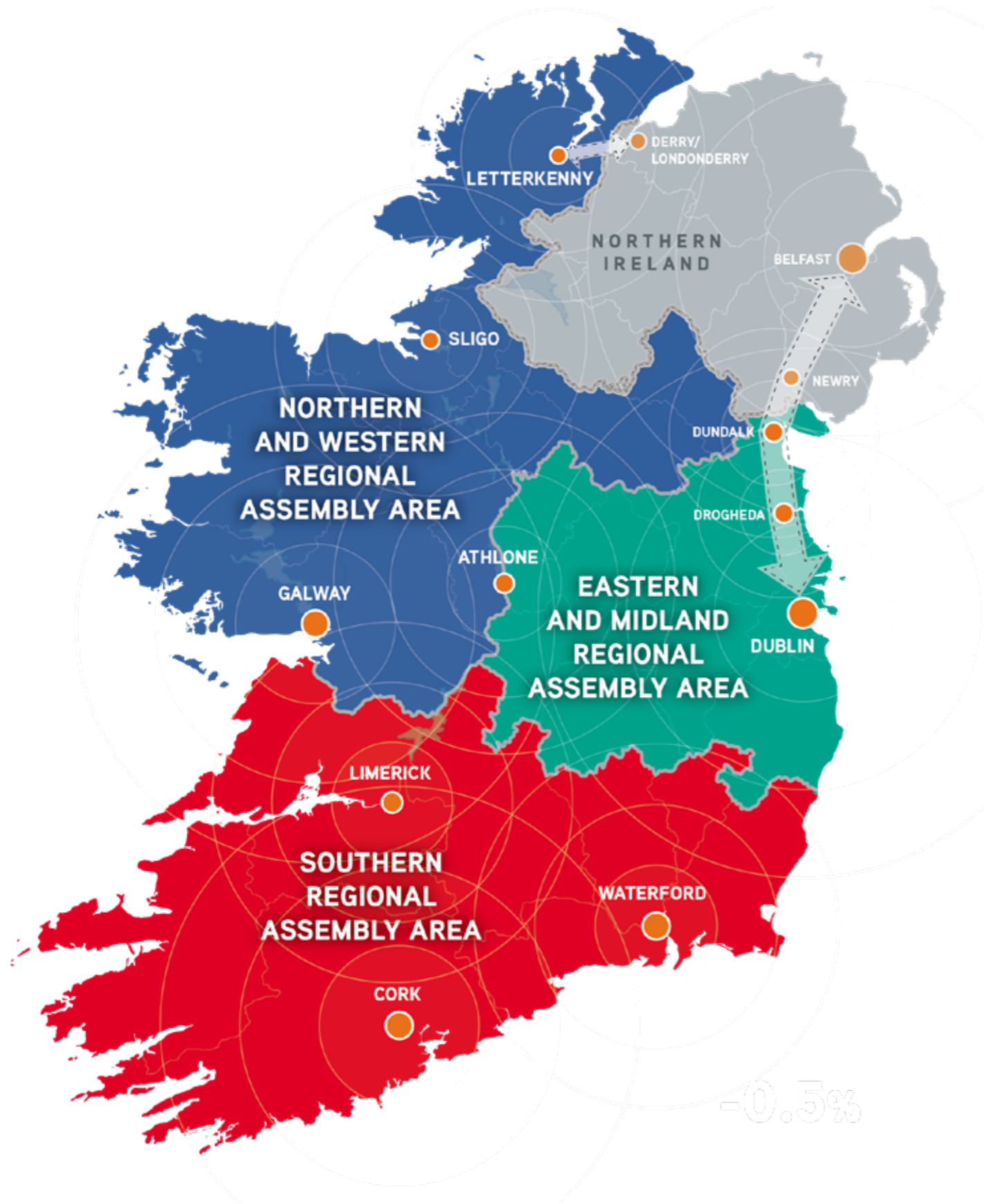
Mission

To be the leader of regional development through effective, sustainable spatial planning and the delivery of EU programmes, with the support of our stakeholders.

Vision

A region that is economically strong, inclusive, connected, climate-resilient and sustainable.

Table of Contents



Foreword	4
1. Background.....	5
Southern Regional Assembly	6
The Southern Region	7
2. Functions	9
Assembly Members	10
Regional Planning	11
EU Programme Management	12
EU Programme Support, Audit & EU Project Participation	13
Irish Regions European Office.....	13
Resources.....	14
3. Operating Context	15
A New Regional Era	16
Legislative & Policy Context	17
Our Stakeholders	17
4. Goals	19
5. Evaluating Progress	23
Appendices	25
Assembly Members.....	26
Staff	27
Southern Region in Numbers	28
Glossary of Terms.....	30
Image Credits.....	32

Foreword

I am delighted to present the Southern Regional Assembly's corporate plan for the period 2020-24.

This is the Assembly's roadmap for delivering for the Southern Region. We will be delivering our goals in the face of COVID-19, Brexit, a climate crisis and other global events, so we are acutely aware that it must be capable of responding to what life presents to the people of our Region.

The Southern Region is at a natural advantage as a strong economic space to facilitate an open society with a high quality of life.

The Assembly will use its leadership role within regional economic and spatial planning and EU funding to support the Region as a whole as it grows in the face of both the challenges and opportunities our future will bring.

The Regional Assembly will continue to develop as a public sector organisation that is both proactive and responsive in its ability to deliver for the Region.

The Members of the Assembly are committed to championing the regional agenda at local level to deliver a connected, sustainable and climate-resilient Region for all.

Cllr. John Sheahan
Cathaoirleach



The Southern Region has so much to offer to its people from an economic and social perspective.

We have set ourselves ambitious goals as an organisation for what, and how, we want to deliver for the Region in this corporate plan.

The Assembly's remit in regional spatial planning and EU funds management have many common goals. Marrying regional development and economic and regional planning will strengthen our delivery for the Region.

Priorities for the Assembly include implementing the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, managing the S&E Regional Programme, participation in EU programmes and projects, and auditing of EU funds. Overarching these priorities is the strategic positioning of the regional agenda at local, national and EU levels.

We begin to implement our plan against a backdrop of challenging times and we intend for it to be adaptable to the changing economic and social climate.

Above all, we recognise that responsiveness and resilience are key to delivering a region that is altogether economically strong, inclusive, connected, climate-resilient and sustainable.

David Kelly
Director



1. Background



Southern Regional Assembly

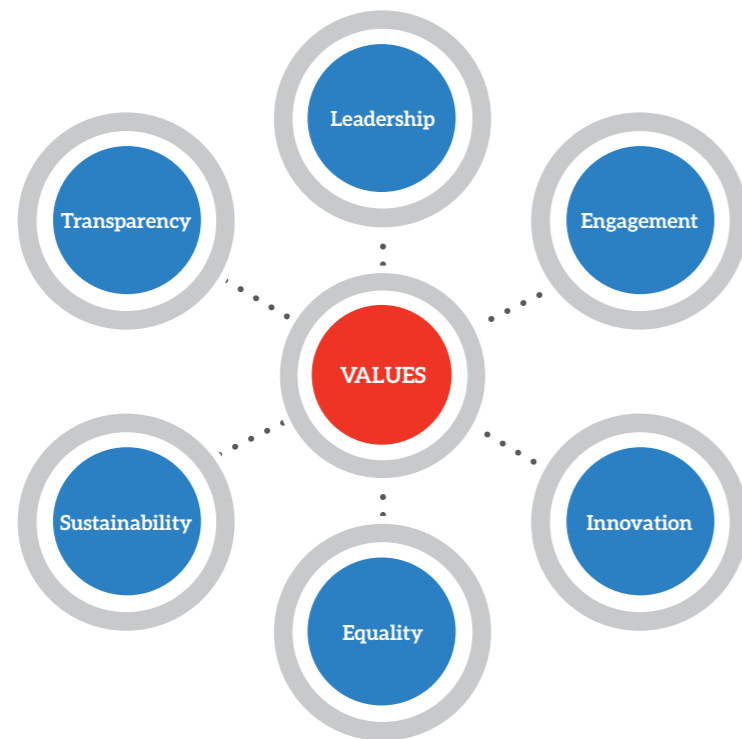
Established in 2015, the Southern Regional Assembly is part of the regional tier of government in Ireland.

It covers local authorities of Kilkenny, Carlow, Waterford, Wexford, Tipperary, Cork (Cork City, Cork County), Kerry Clare and Limerick

Part of the Local Government sector, our 33 Assembly Members represent the 10 local authorities at regional level, 27 appointed by their local authority and six nominated as Committee of the Regions Members.

The Assembly forges links between the EU, and national and local levels through regional spatial and economic planning and European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) for the benefit of the Southern Region.

We interact with a wide variety of Government Departments, agencies, local authorities and stakeholders from the private and the third sectors at local, regional national and EU levels.



We are responsible for strategic regional and economic planning and supporting balanced, sustainable regional development.

- Regional tier of government, represented by local councillor nominees from our local authorities and the Committee of the Regions;
- Leading the implementation of the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy;
- Promoting balanced regional development through the management of, support for and involvement in European Regional Development Funded programmes and projects;
- Linking local, regional, national and EU policy goals through regional planning and EU regional development.

The Southern Region

The Southern Region is facing many challenges and opportunities as it changes in the coming decades, such as population growth and how people live and work. We need to plan for each change, particularly within a wider background of international events, such as climate crisis, Covid-19 and Brexit.

The SRA supports the Region through its regional governance remit in the area of economic and spatial planning and EU funds for regional development.

1 REGION



3 STRATEGIC PLANNING AREAS

- Mid-West
- South-East
- South-West

9 COUNTIES

Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Cork, Kerry

3 CITIES

Limerick
Cork
Waterford

10 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Clare County Council, Limerick City & County Council, Tipperary County Council, Waterford City & County Council, Carlow County Council, Kilkenny County Council, Wexford County Council, Cork City Council, Cork County Council, Kerry County Council

Approx. **40%** of the national landmass



33% of the population

Largely rural region supported by a strong urban structure



Almost **1/3** of the national labour force

Over **84,000**

active enterprises and a strong multinational presence

Almost **40%** Ireland's active farms



Internationally-renowned third level institutes and research centres



international and regional airports



all tier one/ two ports outside of Dublin

Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands tourism areas active in the Region



Wealth of environmental, natural, cultural and heritage assets

The Southern Region

Publishing the first **Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy** for the Southern Region.



Successfully delivering



€1.6 billion

in combined funds (€780m ERDF)

to the S&E Region by managing three S&E Regional Programmes.

Overseeing First Level Control auditing of Irish partner budget spend

worth approx.

€26.5m



to European Territorial Cooperation (incl. Interreg) partners.

Participating in

6

EU projects



bringing expertise on key topics from other European regions to benefit the Southern Region.

Raising the profile of the regional agenda through

over

400

submissions



to policy development and planning at local, national and EU level.

Successfully implementing

a fully remote and online working opportunity

across the organisation.



Supporting the successful participation of Irish organisations in more than

104

Interreg projects

through Interreg NWE, Interreg Europe & the Ireland Wales Programme.



54

Assembly meetings

held with our Members as the regional tier of government.



2. Functions

Assembly Members

Our 33 Assembly Members represent our constituent 10 local authorities at regional level.

Our constituent local authorities appoint 27 Members and a further six are nominated due to their representative role on the Committee of the Regions. They meet monthly to discuss issues related to regional economic and spatial planning, EU programme management and statutory issues related to the Assembly functioning. They also sit on committees related to the monitoring of EU programmes, such as the Ireland Wales Programme and the S&E Regional Programme.

Southern Regional Assembly Members



Committee of the Regions Representatives – Southern Region

The EU’s assembly of local and regional representatives, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) informs the development of EU legislation and future European policies focusing on that most greatly affect regions and cities.

The Government nominates the Irish CoR delegation of nine representatives and 9 alternates from the local authorities who subsequently are nominated to the Regional Assemblies - six of which represent the Southern Region.



Regional Planning

The Regional Assembly has a statutory role in relation to regional spatial planning and economic development of the Southern Region.

- Preparation, adoption and implementation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES);
- Oversight role for the preparation of Local Economic & Community Plans, the preparation of statutory submissions and Development Plan Variations.

The RSES is a 12-year strategic regional development framework to guide change at regional level, for the way our society, environment, economy, and the use of land should evolve.

As the regional tier of the national planning process, the RSES supports the delivery of Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan 2018-27 (NDP) and ensures coordination between the City and County Development Plans and Local Enterprise and Community Plans of the local authorities in the Region.

The RSES is primarily driven at the local level by our Members, local authorities, and stakeholders from the public, private and third sectors, including individuals who have shaped this shared strategy.



EU Programme Management

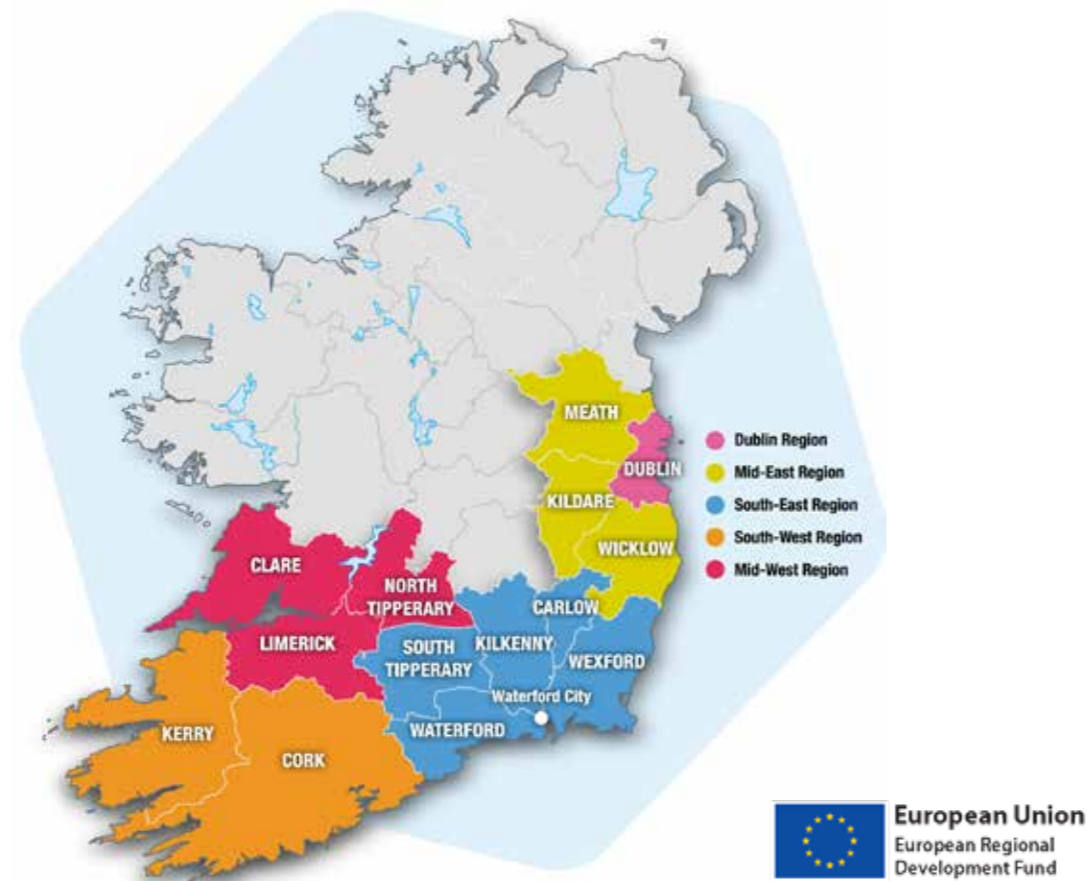
The SRA is the Managing Authority for the €500 million Southern & Eastern (S&E) Regional Programme 2014-20.

This is the third successive Regional Programme for the S&E Region that the Southern Regional Assembly has managed.

The funding package of €500 million approx. from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Irish Exchequer targets growth opportunities in the S&E region in five areas:

- Strengthening RTDI;
- ICT Infrastructure;
- SME Supports;
- Low Carbon Economy;
- Sustainable Urban Development.

The Programme complements wider investment programmes in targeted high growth and innovative sectors to support the creation of new quality jobs, boost innovation, increase licenses granted, as well as helping to grow the local economies in the Southern & Eastern region of Ireland.



EU Programme Support, Audit & EU Project Participation

We are actively involved in EU Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes (Interreg) in a variety of ways.

- Supporting Irish organisations in applying for projects and supporting them during implementation as contact points and programme partners;
- First Level Control audit function on the spend of Irish project partners of six ETC programmes;
- Representing regional and national interests on programme monitoring committees;
- Project partner on EU projects on a variety of topics aimed to support the sustainable economic development of the Southern Region. Projects we participate on are linked to the aims of Operational Programmes and the RSES.

Irish Regions European Office

The Irish Regions European Office (IREO) is a Brussels-based specialised support service, acting as a bridge between Irish local and regional government and the EU, guiding its stakeholders through the Brussels scene and promoting Irish interests and best practices at the European level.

The IREO is a shared service between the Regional Assemblies and local authorities of Ireland and the Secretariat to the Irish delegation to the CoR.



Resources

We are committed to maximising our resources to deliver for the Region.

Human Resources & Workforce Planning

The Assembly has 27 staff members across two overarching divisions. We take a flexible approach to the alignment of staff abilities and experience to meet our corporate goals. Developing our human resources focuses on enhancing staff capacity to undertake tasks and responsibilities. We will ensure the possibility of ongoing development and training in line with our training plan.

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Financial Resources

Value for money and efficiency underpins all Assembly financial management processes.

We are financed through three streams, local authority contributions, technical assistance from EU programmes, and funding from Interreg roles and participation in EU-funded projects. Realising our corporate goals depends on the availability of these resources.

We publish an annual programme of work and accompanying budget in accordance with the Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Assemblies) (Establishment) Order 2014, which takes account of our corporate goals and statutory requirements.

Effective Local Government & Public Services

We support Our Public Service 2020, the Government framework that supports continuous development and innovation across the public service - Delivering for our Public, Innovating for our Future, and Developing Our People and Organisations.

We adhere to our obligations under the Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights.

3. Operating Context

A New Regional Era

Our corporate plan relates to a very dynamic period. We aim to approach this with a resilient and determined regional leadership role.

Following the adoption of the RSES the Corporate Plan co aligns with the key Implementation phase of the RSES. Alongside this, we are embarking on a new funding period in EU programmes and will have to adopt to the challenges and opportunities this brings.

We also need to consider the impact of international risks, including climate change, geopolitical uncertainty, Brexit, and the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Brexit

The withdrawal of the UK from the EU will affect future interactions with our nearest neighbour. While Brexit brings risk to our economic dealings with the UK, it also places Ireland in a position of opportunity as the only English speaking country in the EU.

Climate Crisis

Climate change is happening at a much faster pace than originally feared. In 2019, the Irish Government declared a climate and biodiversity emergency in response to the growing crisis which will need to be addressed through all aspects of our daily lives.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every aspect of our lives – our health, our economy, education and our movement – and will most likely do so for quite some time. This crisis will leave behind it, many long-term changes to how and where we work, study, live, and the increasing importance of technology.



Crescent Quay Wexford

Legislative & Policy Context

The Regional Assembly is governed and guided by legislation and policy drivers at local, regional national and EU levels.

Local Government Reform Act 2014 Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Assemblies) (Establishment) Order 2014
Common Provisions Regulations
EU Cohesion Policy
Europe 2020/ Post-2020 EU Growth Strategy
Partnership Agreement for Regional Operational Programmes
UN Agenda for Sustainable Development
European Green Deal
Planning and Development Acts
Project Ireland 2040 - The National Planning Framework
National Development Plan
Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy
Local Authority Development Plans
Local Economic & Community Plans
Climate Action Plan

Our Stakeholders

The Regional Assembly actively engages with a wide variety of stakeholders at local, regional, national and EU level to deliver its goals.

- Local Authorities of the Southern Region
- Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government
- Office of Planning Regulator
- National Oversight Audit Commission
- Department of Public Expenditure & Reform
- European Commission
- Committee of the Regions
- Other EU Institutions and Bodies
- S&E Regional Operational Programme Monitoring Committee
- Irish Regions European Office
- Other Government Departments and State Agencies
- Eastern & Midland and Northern & Western Regional Assemblies
- S&E Regional Programme Intermediary Bodies
- ESIF & Interreg Programmes Managing Authorities
- Higher Education/ Further Education Institutions & Research Centres
- Private sector and their representative organisations
- Third Sector and their representative organisations

Kerry Blennerville



4. Goals



Goal 1: Regional Leadership

Regional Governance: A Region Driving Sustainable Regional Development and Regional Governance in Ireland

- We foster, promote and develop Regional Governance to support strategic sustainable development of the region that is reflective of the citizens /societal needs;
- Provide a clear, accountable and ethical framework for the delivery of the goals and objective of the Regional Assembly;
- Empower our Members to deliver for their areas on the benefits of Regional Governance;
- We deliver on our statutory obligations to local authorities, national government and the EU on time and for the benefit of the Region.

Strategic Collaborations: A Region that engages, collaborates and forms partnerships for the benefit of the Region.

- We engage with the public, statutory bodies, stakeholders, local authorities, other regional bodies, national government and the EU for the benefit of the Region;
- We collaborate with the other Regional Assemblies in supporting the wider regional agenda;
- We foster the flow of information and open communications to support collaborations;
- We foster and cultivate strong collaborations and partnerships to support the delivery of better regional development.

Regional Representation: Support, foster and develop democratic regional representation

- We serve Regional Assembly Members of the Region in the execution of their duties as regional representatives;
- We support and assist our Members in championing the regional agenda within their local authorities;
- We support our Members on the Committee of the Regions, including input to regional policy development and communicating their activities and achievements for the Region;
- We represent the Region on policy matters relating to the functions of the Regional Assembly.

Climate Action & Sustainability: A Sustainable Region

- Strive to lead with responsible environmental best practice;
- Champion sustainability across all Assembly policies and activities;
- Implement RSES Climate Action policies;
- We support national, local authorities and regional stakeholders in achieving a transition to a low carbon society.



Goal 2: Valuing Our People

Public Sector Duty: Ensure we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the people of our Region and our employees, in an inclusive, open, and responsible manner, based on the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights of staff

- Actively promote and fully comply with our statutory obligations in relation to our public sector equality and human rights duty;
- Conduct business in a way that is transparent, prudent, responsible and accountable.

Organisational Development: An innovative, adaptive and responsive organisation

- Respond to the changing nature of the environment we operate in;
- Develop and sustain a dynamic, healthy and safe workplace that consistently attracts and retains top-quality people and enables them to perform at their best;
- Be a first mover in the public service in the adoption of remote (home) working as a fundamental component of our workplace environment;
- Ensuring business continuity at all times utilising the latest information and communications technologies and remote working best practices.

Human Resources Management: Value and develop our staff

- Continue to implement 'Our Public Services 2020';
- Develop a People Strategy for the Assembly;
- Develop an agile and innovative workforce to deliver a high performing and efficient service;
- Develop and Implement a Performance Management and Development System (PMDS);
- Promote health and well-being in the workplace;
- Review the training needs analysis for the organisation.



Goal 3: Promoting Sustainable Regional Development

Deliver on the Objectives in the RSES

- Implement the RSES to ensure the successful delivery of Regional Policy Objectives;
- Ensure successful monitoring and evaluation of the RSES and widely disseminate the reports and results;
- Actively promote and support collaboration to implement the RSES.

EU Programmes and Projects: Harness the potential and opportunities for the Region

- Actively promote and support participation in EU programmes and projects to support the delivery of sustainable regional development (including RSES and other regional initiatives) to the benefit of the region;
- Continue to manage the ERDF co-funded programmes to support the sustainable development of the region;
- Continue to support Irish partners in their participation in EU funded projects and programmes through advice, mentoring and control checking;
- Co-manage the Ireland Wales Programme and continue to collaborate with the Welsh Government through any future arrangements.

Research and Regional Data

- Carry out of research, studies, surveys or the collection of information, data or statistics in relation to any of its functions and widely disseminate the results;
- Utilise regional data and identify research opportunities to support the regional development agenda.



5. Evaluating Progress

Annual actions will be captured, monitored and reviewed through our Annual Work Plans.

Our corporate goals for 2020-24 will be subject to ongoing monitoring and progress will be set out in the Assembly's Annual Reports. Along with the measurable actions attached to each objective, a variety of other activities will assist with assessing our performance against our goals.

Meetings

Assembly Meetings

RSES implementation/monitoring committee meetings

S&E Regional Programme Monitoring Committee meetings

Interreg North-West Europe Monitoring Committee meetings

Ireland Wales Programme Monitoring Committee meetings

EU Projects implementation meetings

ETC Project Officers' Network meetings

Reports

Assembly Meeting Minutes

RSES implementation reports

Regional Programme Annual Implementation Reports

Interreg North-West Europe Annual Implementation Reports

Ireland Wales Programme Annual Implementation Reports

Southern Regional Assembly Annual Reports

Assembly's Annual Financial Statement

Evaluations

RSES midterm evaluation

European Structural and Investment Fund Programmes evaluations

EU Public Attitude and Awareness Studies

PMDS and staff evaluations

Appendices

Assembly Members

Name	Local Authority
Cllr. John Sheahan - Cathaoirleach	Limerick
Cllr. Deirdre O'Brien - Leas-Cathaoirleach	Cork County
Cllr. Thomas Kinsella	Carlow
Cllr. Ken Murnane	Carlow
Cllr. Alan O'Callaghan	Clare
Cllr. P.J. Kelly	Clare
Cllr. Kieran McCarthy (CoR)	Cork City
Cllr. Dan Boyle (CoR Alt)	Cork City
Cllr. Terry Shannon	Cork City
Cllr. Garret Kelleher	Cork City
Cllr. Deirdre Forde (CoR)	Cork City
Cllr. Gillian Coughlan (CoR alt)	Cork County
Cllr. Gerard Murphy	Cork County
Cllr. Joe Carroll	Cork County
Cllr. Sean O'Connor	Cork County
Cllr. Sheila O'Callaghan	Cork County
Cllr. Michael O'Shea	Kerry
Cllr. Séamus Cosáí Fitzgerald	Kerry
Cllr. Robert Beasley	Kerry
Cllr. Andrew McGuinness	Kilkenny
Cllr. John Brennan	Kilkenny
Cllr. Frankie Daly	Limerick
Cllr. Michael Collins	Limerick
Cllr. Michael Murphy (CoR)	Tipperary
Cllr. Noel Coonan	Tipperary
Cllr. Siobhán Ambrose	Tipperary
Cllr. Michael O'Meara	Tipperary
Cllr. Conor D. McGuinness (CoR alt)	Waterford
Cllr. Thomas Phelan	Waterford
Cllr. Tom Cronin	Waterford
Cllr. Oliver Walsh	Wexford
Cllr. Pip Breen	Wexford
Cllr. Maura Bell	Wexford

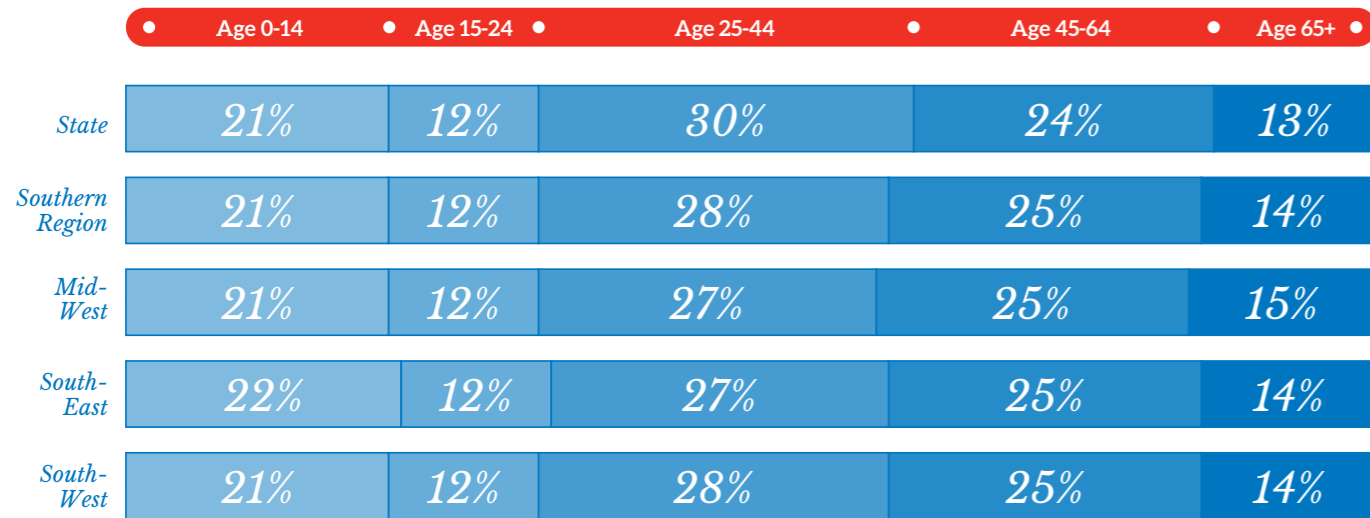
Staff



Name	Title
David Kelly	Director
Derville Brennan	Assistant Director, EU Programmes & Corporate Affairs Division
Kevin Lynch	Assistant Director, Regional Planning, Finance & HR Division
Dominic Walsh	Regional Planning Officer
Robert Fennelly	Regional Planning Officer
Bryan Riney	Regional Planning Officer
Sharon Murray	Administrative Officer - HR & Finance
Vincent Dunphy	Administrative Officer - Financial Management & Control
Enda Hogan	Administrative Officer - Financial Management & Control
Michael Buckley	Auditor
Siobhán Rudden	Senior Staff Officer - Communications & Corporate Affairs
VACANT	National Contact Point - Interreg NWE
Breda Curran	Ireland Wales Programme Development Officer
Samantha Richardson	Ireland Wales Programme Development Officer
Karen Coughlan	EU Projects Officer
Rose Power	EU Projects Officer
Eve Hayden	Senior First Level Controller
Marie Harnett	Senior First Level Controller
Edel Hunt	Acting Senior First Level Controller
Yvonne Cooney	Acting Assistant Staff Officer
Róisín Kiely	Assistant Staff Officer
Colm Walsh	Clerical Officer
Alice Byrne Kelly	Clerical Officer
Anna Higgins	Clerical Officer
Elaine Gallagher	Clerical Officer
Maria Murphy	Clerical Officer
Teresa Burke	Clerical Officer

Southern Region in numbers

Overall Population (total persons and age breakdown) 2016



Source: CSO Census 2016

Settlement Structure



Active Enterprises 2017 (excluding activities of holding companies)

State	Southern Region	Mid-West	South-East	South-West
271,166	84,489	16,629	28,973	38,887

Source: CSO Business Demography 2017

Employment in IDA Supported Companies 2018

Ireland	Southern Region	Mid-West	South-East	South-West
229,057	75,636	18,948	15,580	41,108

Source: IDA Annual Report 2018

Number of Farms 2016 (thousand)

State	Southern Region	Mid-West	South-East	South-West
137.5	54.7	15.9	16.5	22.3

Source: CSO Farm Structure Survey 2016



Glossary of Terms

CPR	Common Provisions Regulation
DHPLG	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
DCCAIE	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EMR	Eastern & Midland Region
FLC	First Level Control
FOI	Freedom of Information
GDPR	Data Protection and the General Data Protection Regulation
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IRO	Irish Regions Office
LECPs	Local Economic and Community Plans
NOAC	National Oversight and Audit Commission
N&W	Northern and Western Region

OP	Operational Programme
OPR	Office of the Planning Regulator
R&D	Research and Development
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
S&E	Southern and Eastern
SDZ	Special Development Zones
SME	Small & Medium Enterprises
SPA	Strategic Planning Area
SRA	Southern Regional Assembly

View of Waterford City at Night



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